

AN
INAUGURAL DISSERTATION
ON

Megalanthropogenesis,

SUBMITTED TO THE
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BY

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It has always appeared most strange to me, that, a subject so deeply interesting to all men, - should have received so little attention from Medical Philosophers, or from intelligent men generally.

Considering the importance of the subject it is to be wondered at, that those, who possess the ability and requisite learning to investigate it, should have withheld from it their attention.

I candidly confess my inability to treat the subject, as those better qualified might do:

I confess I have not formed my opinions from the revelations

of science, that I do not view the facts, in the distinct light of pure science. Yet one cannot withhold belief from facts, because, unable to account for them scientifically.

The fact of the transmissibility of features, form, expressions of countenance, and voice from parent to offspring, is familiar to the most casual observer;

That the faculties of the understanding - that the features of character - are likewise transmissible, I am led to believe, from reason, from personal observation of living illustrations, but chiefly

from the study of Biography.

It is a principle in nature, that like produces like, a principle too familiar to need illustration, which we all admit and one which we act in the ^(improvement of the) ^(all) breed of kinds of domestic animals; in the instance of the race horse, who does not know and acknowledge the importance of pedigree, for the history of the turf shows, without exception, that there never was a great racer that was not as the term is "full blooded."

But it may be said, that the principle holds good with man, only so far as his physical

constitution is concerned, but, without debating—how far a man's inner nature is influenced by his physical conformation, I find innumerable instances showing that qualities of mind are as hereditary as facial features.

In my observations of men I have found, peculiarities of mind, and ruling passions, to characterize whole families, as frequently as hook noses, gruff voices, or large eyes.

I appeal to Biography, not alone for the many notable instances, significant indeed, in which the parent and offspring are alike distinguished for the same great characteristics— not to show that

Alexander was the son of a Philip Pitt the son of a Chatham, &c &c; but to prove that, although the parents may not be distinguished for those qualities, which render the child great, yet nevertheless they do possess them,

It is most important that a distinction should be made, between the possession of certain qualities of mind and character, and their development and successful display; it must be remembered that these qualities may slumber latent, unknown alike to their possessor, as to the world; but may again manifest themselves in their posterity.

Just as we ^(see) a blue eyed child of dark eyed parents, and yet by

carrying our observation a little farther we will find that the child fairly inherited them.

But it may be asked why do not the children of great men more generally partake of those traits which marked the fathers;

Answer. The child may be endowed with those self-same qualities, but they are undeveloped on the circumstances, which gave occasion for the display of them by the parent, may be lacking with the child — or the child, I do not pretend to deny, may lack them altogether;

For the child is not the offspring of one parent, but of both; — A great man's seed planted in poor soil cannot

be expected to bring forth fruit, worthy of the seed, - And prominent traits of the father, will, of course be more or less modified in the child, if the mother, though she be of good understanding, have qualities directly antagonistic,

Another important condition of *Megalanthogenesis*, is the age, physical health, and state of mind of both parents; This it is, which makes the difference, which is always more or less marked, in the children of the same parents,

But the conditions, absolutely necessary are that both parents should be

endowed with no inconsiderable powers of mind; and all history proves that, there never was a man of great inventive genius, or of great general powers of mind, whose parents were of mean understanding.