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THE
Philosophy of Rhetoric
BY
George Campbell

EDITED BY

FOREWORD BY

Lloyd F. Bitzer

David Potter

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FOREWORD

By David Potter

FIRST PUBLISHED in 1776, George Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric* was adopted as a textbook in many of our early colleges. Its popularity in the classroom was lessened considerably by the appearance of Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* in 1783 and Whately's *Elements of Rhetoric* in 1828 but throughout the nineteenth century new editions of the book and reprints of old editions continued to appear and influence scholars. However, despite general acknowledgment that the *Philosophy of Rhetoric* is a, if not *the*, major contribution of its period to rhetorical theory, no complete edition of the work has been published in the twentieth century. And copies that infrequently appear for sale are usually reprints or reissues of the error-ridden American edition of 1844. This photo-offset reproduction of the edition of 1850 (London: William Tegg & Co.), made possible by the co-operation of the Princeton University Library, will make the best edition of the *Philosophy of Rhetoric* generally available for the first time in over one hundred years.

The introductory essay in our Landmarks edition is the work of Professor Lloyd F. Bitzer of the University of Wisconsin. Dr. Bitzer's concern with eighteenth century philosophers and rhetoricians stems from an academic specialization in rhetoric and philosophy and the study of contemporary philosophical influences upon Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric*. The essay itself is the culmination of three years of intensive research. The consequence should be a clarification of the thinking of a new generation of rhetoricians.

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

By Lloyd F. Bitzer

WITH THE PUBLICATION of this volume, the complete text of *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, which George Saintsbury called "the most important treatise on the New Rhetoric that the eighteenth century produced,"¹ is newly available for the first time in more than seventy-five years. George Campbell's *Rhetoric* was reprinted at least forty-two times after its initial publication in 1776. All but two editions (the original one and the 1911 Kleiser condensation) appeared in the nineteenth century. During this period the book was highly favored as a text for students of oratory, composition, and criticism; in addition, it was common stock for many writers on rhetoric—among them Richard Whately, John Bascom, and Henry Day—whose works gradually superseded it.²

A general surge of interest in the study of human communication is partially responsible for renewed interest in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* during recent years. However, the greatest stimulation to new interest in the *Rhetoric* results from a growing opinion among scholars that Campbell's work is an important contribution to rhetorical theory—a contribution which deserves study along with such traditionally honored works as Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, Cicero's *De Oratore*, Quintilian's *Institutes of Oratory*, and Longinus' *On the Sublime*. The locus of the recent revival of interest and hence the sphere of influence of the book have been confined principally to the field of speech. With the publication of this edition, both locus of interest and sphere of influence may be expected to enlarge, for *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* is actually what its title announces, a *philosophy* of rhetoric in the broad sense, not a textbook on the art of speaking. All students of the theory of language and of the language arts should find it provocative and fruitful both as a treatment of rhetorical phenomena, ranging from sentence structure to tragic pleasure,

1. *A History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe* (3 vols.; New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1905), II, 470.

2. Warren Guthrie, "The Development of Rhetorical Theory in America, 1635-1850," *Speech Monographs*, XV (1948), 61-71.

and as a model of the purposes and productions of a philosophical rhetorician.

The Rev. Dr. George Campbell was a clergyman and theologian of the Church of Scotland, a teacher and principal of Aberdeen's Marischal College, and a rhetorician. Moreover, in both learning and temper he was a philosopher. The fact that he wrote the *Rhetoric* as a philosopher, or as a philosophical rhetorician, is significant, because the book's distinctive contributions to the literature on rhetoric result from the encounter of a philosophic mind with material issues of metaphysics and epistemology to spill over into the theory of rhetoric; he believed, furthermore, that discussion of rhetorical phenomena are fragmentary when they lack philosophical explication. As a result, questions concerning the existence of external objects, the kinds of mental contents and the possibility of certain knowledge, the sources of knowledge and the laws of both thought and feeling are entwined in his book with questions concerning belief and persuasion, method in discourse, logical and ethical proof, language and style, tragic pleasure, laughter, qualities of effective discourse, and other elements of rhetoric. *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* should be understood as a manifestation of Campbell's purposes and materials and insights as a philosopher of rhetoric.

Life and Writings

Born at Aberdeen on the 25th of December 1719, George Campbell was the youngest son among the six children of Rev. Colin Campbell and Margaret Walker Campbell. He received his first years of education at the grammar school in Aberdeen and later received instruction at Marischal College in the same town. Intending to pursue a career in law, he served an apprenticeship in Edinburgh until he became convinced that the church rather than the law was his calling. In 1741, while still an apprentice in Edinburgh, he began attending lectures on divinity. Shortly thereafter he returned to Aberdeen and began studies at both King's and Marischal College to prepare for the ministry. He was licensed to preach in 1746 and two years later secured a pastorate at Banchory Ternan, a town seventeen miles west of Aberdeen. There he remained for nine years, during which time he married Grace Farquharson. Campbell returned to Aberdeen as a minister in 1757, and two years later became Principal of Marischal College. In addition to this office, he was elected Professor of Divinity in 1771, replacing Alexander Gerard who had transferred to King's. He continued to preach regularly and to serve as both Principal and Professor of Divinity until 1795 when he resigned his positions after a period of ill health and certain decline. He died in 1796.

The move from Banchory Ternan to Aberdeen in 1757 was a significant event in Campbell's career. His new position as an Aberdeen minister was an immediate professional advancement, one which opened the way for later appointments as Principal and Professor at Marischal College. At Marischal, he gained stature as an educator and theologian; in the course of his responsibilities there, he prepared lectures on theology, church history, and pulpit eloquence which were published after his death. Moreover, his move to Aberdeen marked the beginning of several years of intensive philosophical thinking and writing, the fruits of which were *A Dissertation on Miracles* (1762) and *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1776). Although Campbell had written the first two chapters of the *Rhetoric* by 1750 (this he asserts in the Preface), he did nothing more until 1757. After the move to Aberdeen, he resumed his writing in earnest, producing in five years not only the remainder of Book One and probably a portion of Book Two, but also the whole of the *Dissertation on Miracles*. The *Dissertation*, a lengthy 288 pages in the original edition, was his first major work. In it he boldly attacked an essay penned by David Hume,³ whose reputation as historian, essayist, and philosopher was unequalled at that time in Britain. The *Dissertation* firmly established Campbell's reputation as an able philosopher, disputant, and defender of religion.

Campbell's particular intellectual environment in Aberdeen both stimulated and influenced his thought and writing. In 1758 he had helped found the Philosophical Society of Aberdeen, the organization he identifies in his Preface as a "private literary society" whose members induced him to resume work on the *Rhetoric*. Besides Campbell, the Society's most active members were Thomas Reid, John Stewart, Alexander Gerard, John Gregory, and James Beattie. Total membership from 1758 to 1773 was fifteen, although the usual complement was seven or eight; as some members departed, others were added. Campbell was an active member during the fifteen years of the Society's existence. The purpose of the Society was defined in its Rules: the group would meet twice monthly to hear and comment on a "discourse" presented by one of its members or to discuss a "question" formally proposed at a previous meeting.

The subject of the discourses and questions shall be philosophical. . . . And philosophical matters are understood to comprehend: every principle of science which may be deduced by just and lawful induction from the phenomena either of the human mind or of the material world; all observations and experiments that may furnish materials for

3. Hume's essay, "Of Miracles," originally intended as a part of *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40), appeared as Section X of *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1748).

such induction; the examination of false schemes of philosophy and false methods of philosophizing; the subservience of philosophy to arts, the principles they borrow from it, and the means of carrying them to their perfection.⁴

The last lines of this definition clearly allow discourses and questions on the art of eloquence, and Campbell provided them. Nearly all of the papers which later formed *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* were prepared as discourses for the Society. Born in the same manner were several other works, most notably Thomas Reid's *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense* (1764)⁵ and James Beattie's *Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth; in Opposition to Sophistry and Scepticism* (1770).⁶ Of the fifteen members of the Society, these three were to achieve wide reputation: Campbell for his *Dissertation and Rhetoric*, Reid for his *Inquiry*, and Beattie for his *Essay on Truth*. It is true of each man that his first important work resulted from inquiries stimulated by participation in the Philosophical Society. Furthermore, it is true of each man that he wrote his first work in response to the philosophy of David Hume.

Hume was not a member of the Society, but his writings—chiefly *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40) and later philosophical essays—provided its members with materials for debate and criticism, praise and censure. In March 1763, Reid addressed a letter to Hume, part of which indicates the Society's estimation of Hume and its indebtedness to him.

Your Friendly Adversaries Drs Campbell & Gerard as well as Dr Gregory return their compliments to you respectfully. A little Philosophical Society here of which all the three are members, is much indebted to you for its entertainment. Your company would, although we are all good Christians, be more acceptable than that of Saint Athanasius. And since we cannot have you upon the bench, you are brought

4. Minutes of the Philosophical Society of Aberdeen, 1758-1771; Aberdeen University Library, MS 539. To this document are appended the Rules. (On microfilm in the library of the State University of Iowa.) This document breaks off abruptly in the middle of an account of the meeting of March 12, 1771 and therefore fails to report the meetings which occurred during the remainder of 1771 and the two following years.

5. A. Campbell Fraser compared Reid's "discourses" with his *Inquiry*, in which I find them mostly embodied." Fraser's *Thomas Reid* (Edinburgh: Oliphant Anderson and Ferrier, 1898), p. 52.

6. Beattie, writing to Sir William Forbes in 1766, said that he recently delivered a "discourse," which furnished groundwork for a major work, two-thirds finished. He referred probably to a *Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth*. Margaret Forbes, *Beattie and His Friends* (Westminster: Archibald Constable and Co., Ltd., 1904), p. 42.

oftener than any other man to the bar, accused and defended with great zeal but without bitterness. If you write no more in morals politics or metaphysics, I am afraid we shall be at a loss for subjects.⁷

Reid later identified Hume as the philosopher who caused him to suspect and reject the philosophical framework he had previously embraced and who stimulated him to original efforts in philosophy.⁸ Campbell publicly expressed his indebtedness to Hume in the Advertisement to the *Dissertation on Miracles*: "I have not only been much entertained and instructed by his works; but, if I am possessed of any talent in abstract reasoning, I am not a little indebted to what he hath written on *human nature*, for the improvement of that talent."⁹ The most striking evidence of Hume's influence on Campbell, however, is to be found in *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* itself. Campbell's philosophy and his theory of human nature, both of which profoundly affect his treatment of rhetoric, are drawn mainly from Hume.¹⁰ Thus, the philosophy of Hume was pre-eminent not only in the private discussions of the Society's members, but in their public utterances as well. Hume, who was in a sense the absent member of the Philosophical Society of Aberdeen, was the leading figure in the intellectual environment in which Campbell conceived and tested nearly the whole of his *Philosophy of Rhetoric*.

Three of Campbell's major works were published during his lifetime. The first two were *Dissertation on Miracles* and *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. The third was *New Testament, Gospels: The Four Gospels Translated from the Greek, with Preliminary Dissertations and Notes* (1789). Three sets of lectures to students of Marischal College were published posthumously in two volumes: *Lectures on Ecclesiastical History* (1800) and *Lectures on Systematic Theology and Pulpit Eloquence* (1807). To the first volume George Skene Keith added "Some Account of the Life and Writings of Dr. George Campbell," which is an invaluable source. Campbell's additional publications consist of a number of sermons and addresses.

Campbell's conduct in literary disputes plus evidence from his writings and from Keith's biography furnish insight into

7. J. Y. T. Greig, *The Letters of David Hume* (2 vols.; Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1932), I, 376, n. 4.

8. See Reid's Dedication to *An Inquiry into the Human Mind* (2nd ed.; Edinburgh: A. Kincaid and J. Bell, 1765), p. v.

9. *A Dissertation on Miracles: Containing, An Examination of the Principles Advanced by David Hume, Esq. in an Essay on Miracles* (3rd ed.; Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1790), p. vi.

10. See Lloyd F. Bitzer, "The Lively Idea: A Study of Hume's Influence on George Campbell's *Philosophy of Rhetoric*," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, State University of Iowa, 1962).

his character. As a clergyman he was a moderate, shunning extreme dogmatism on the one hand and rationalistic theology on the other. In matters of both religion and philosophy he was cautious in his own views and tolerant of the reasons and opinions of others. In conversation he was pleasant and entertaining, but sometimes lapsed into periods of reflective absence. In Keith's firsthand account of Campbell's character are these comments:

He was uncommonly liberal to those who differed from him in religious opinions; so liberal, indeed, that he did not appear to prove of considering some modern writers as infidels, who profess to be Christians, though they have written rather freely on certain articles. . . . He proceeded, with great caution, in forming his own opinion upon any subject, and without suspecting the veracity, or good sense, of others took nothing upon trust; but even in matters of science wished to consider every thing himself. [xliv] . . . The most prominent feature, in his moral character, was his love of truth. No man was ever more strict in speaking truth, and the least deviation from it was accompanied with the strongest marks of his disapprobation. [xlvii]

The Philosophy of Rhetoric

Campbell's definitions of rhetoric, or eloquence, clearly indicate the breadth of his conception of the art. According to one definition, rhetoric is "that art or talent by which the discourse is adapted to its end." According to another, it is "the grand art of communication, not of ideas only, but of sentiments, passions, dispositions, and purposes." At one point Campbell refers to rhetoric as "the art of speaking, in the extensive sense in which I employ the term." (xlix, 1) He gives these definitions, any instance of written or oral discourse which aims to inform, convince, please, move, or persuade, and which has as its communicative substance some passion, idea, sentiment, disposition, or purpose is an instance of rhetorical discourse. The materials of rhetoric consist of the principles, concepts, rules, and techniques by means of which discourse of nearly every kind may be managed and thereby improved. Rhetoric, therefore, is a general art of discourse; it comprehends tragedy as well as private conversation, poetry as well as oratory, the purest expository writing as well as the most sublime oral persuasion.

Although it contains lengthy discussions of rhetorical materials, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* is not a definitive treatment of the art of rhetoric. Hugh Blair, in his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1783), treats many more rhetorical topics than does Campbell, who is not concerned primarily

with practical rhetoric. Campbell's central subject matter is the philosophy of rhetoric, and he generally discusses those rhetorical materials which permit an exposition and confirmation of his views.

In his Introduction, Campbell says that the philosophy of rhetoric is the fourth and ultimate stage in the development of the art. The first and primitive stage consists of whatever rules and procedures a man may derive from an awareness of "what operates on his own mind, aided by the sympathetic feelings, and by that practical experience of mankind, which individuals, even in the rudest state of society, are capable of acquiring." The second stage marks the beginning of rhetoric as a critical science, for in this stage men distinguish types of discourse and arguments. In the third stage, practical rhetoric is formalized and perfected through scientific investigation.

[Men] compare, with diligence, the various effects, favourable or unfavourable, of those attempts, carefully taking into consideration every attendant circumstance by which the success appears to have been influenced, and by which one may be enabled to discover to what particular purpose each attempt is adapted, and in what circumstances only to be used.

These three stages comprise practical rhetoric, which provides subject matter for the philosophy of rhetoric. The two are not coincident, however, and the primary task of the philosophical rhetorician does not consist in repeating the rules for invention, disposition, style, and delivery or in proposing major innovations in these traditional branches of rhetoric. Campbell had only a peripheral interest in practical rhetoric; he had little new to say about traditional rhetorical materials and maintained that the moderns made little or no improvement over the ancients in this regard. His interest lay in the fourth and final stage, the philosophy of rhetoric, which he described as a "new country" explored only partially by a few of his predecessors. (l-h)

The philosophy of rhetoric, in Campbell's view, is the area of relationships between the art of rhetoric and its foundation—science, human nature, a new "science" in the eighteenth century. To illuminate this area is the philosophical rhetorician's task; to establish the art of rhetoric in the science of human nature is his ultimate purpose. In order to do this, Campbell intended to discover in human nature the principles which explain the art of rhetoric; he thus began with the conviction that the science of man supplies the principles by which rhetorical phenomena are fully explained. This does not mean that the philosopher of rhetoric establishes the soundness of rhetorical rules, techniques, and procedures—

the materials of practical rhetoric—by deducing them from the science of human nature. On the contrary, Campbell insisted that evidence for the soundness of such materials come from the actual practice of the art and from the observations of rhetoricians who function at the third—the scientific—stage. Campbell, he shared it with many eighteenth century writers of rhetoric. To prove that the presence of certain conditions hinders or helps a particular kind of discourse is the task of the scientific rhetorician; to explain why the facts are so, is the task of the philosopher of rhetoric. The exploration of human nature, which Campbell considered an essential part of rhetoric, consists chiefly in the exploration of the human mind, the leading explanatory principles of rhetoric are therefore principles of mind. The union of rhetoric and human nature is the central task of the philosophy of rhetoric and the implied in this declaration of purpose from the Preface:

It is his purpose in this Work, on the one hand, to exhibit he does not say, a correct map, but a tolerable sketch of the human mind; and, aided by the lights which the Poet and the Orator so amply furnish, to disclose its secret movements, tracing its principal channels of perception and action, as near as possible, to their source: and, on the other hand, from the science of human nature, to ascertain with greater precision, the radical principles of that art, which object it is, by the use of language, to operate on the soul of the hearer, in the way of informing, convincing, pleasing, moving, or persuading. [xliii]

As this declaration indicates, Campbell aimed not only to uncover in human nature the principles that explain rhetorical behavior but also to use rhetorical data in his exploration of human nature. Throughout his book, the art of rhetoric and the science of human nature are made to illumine one another. Indeed, his exploration of human nature is hardly distinguishable at times from his treatment of rhetorical materials. The second chapter of Book One, for example, the treatment of wit, humor, and ridicule serves two purposes: it explains the kinds of wit, humor, and ridicule and their manner of operation; at the same time, it confirms a very important doctrine in the theory of human nature—the doctrine of the association of ideas. Similarly, his discussion of tragic pleasure in Chapter Eleven of Book One serves not only to explain a perplexing point but also to confirm two elements of the theory—that the passions, like ideas, are connected by principles of association, and that the compelling power of ideas and passions is a function of their close relationship to impressions of sense. Some of Campbell's discussions—especially Chapters Five and Seven in Book One—are primarily attempts to uncover the principles of human nature. Other chapters—several in Book Two and all in Book Three—clearly

frustrate Campbell's use of the principles of human nature to explain a variety of topics in rhetoric.

The view that a principal function of philosophy is to ground the arts and sciences in human nature was not unique with Campbell; he shared it with many eighteenth century writers. Lord Kames announces in the early pages of *Elements of Criticism* (1762) that his task is "to examine the sensitive branch of human nature, to trace the objects that are naturally disagreeable, as well as those that are naturally agreeable; and by these means to discover, if we can, what are the genuine principles of the fine arts."¹¹ Hume—whose *A Treatise of Human Nature* strongly influenced numerous theorists including Campbell and the other major Scottish critics, Kames and Blair—had claimed that the study of human nature is the condition of success in all fields of learning. In the Introduction to the *Treatise* he says,

Here then is the only expedient, from which we can hope for success in our philosophical researches, to leave the tedious lingering method, which we have hitherto followed, and instead of taking now and then a castle or village on the frontier, to march up directly to the capital or center of these sciences, to human nature itself; which being once masters of, we may every where else hope for an easy victory.¹²

Hume understood this assault to be no less than revolutionary; the result would be "a compleat system of the sciences, built on a foundation almost entirely new." Campbell was less vocal in his enthusiasm, but he was not less confident of his philosophic endeavor and its potential result—the perfection of rhetoric, or eloquence, through its relationship to its foundation, human nature.

Campbell, in presenting his views, leaves much for his reader to supply. The significance of a number of discussions and the purpose of others are not immediately apparent. Moreover, no section or chapter contains a definitive statement of his philosophical framework and theory of human nature. There is, of course, an explanation for these inconveniences. All but three of the essays which comprise his book were prepared not for public reading but for presentation to members of the Philosophical Society of Aberdeen—men who were well acquainted with Campbell's views and able to supply the ideas which render his discussions completely intelligible. Most modern readers will find that some understanding of Campbell's philosophy, and of the theory of human nature

¹¹ *Elements of Criticism* (New York: F. J. Huntington and Co., 1838), p. 13.

¹² *A Treatise of Human Nature*, ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1888), p. xx.

power of the sense perceptions which serve as evidence; the energy of a piece of fiction derives primarily from its likeness to impressions of sense; the compelling quality of any simile varies according to its close or remote relation to sensation. Campbell usually calls this felt quality or energy ideas "vivacity."

Naturalism. The study of human nature is very important not only because it yields principles which underlie rhetoric but also because nature—especially human nature—confirms values on whatever springs from it or accords with it. "Natural" emotional response is a correct response. The good practitioner of rhetoric is likely to communicate more effectively than the deceiver because the former's processes of communication are "natural" and the latter's are "unnatural." The mental processes which operate instinctively to produce judgments are nearly infallible because they are "natural." Human nature, rather than reason, assures the truth of common sense axioms and supplies the machinery which makes the world of perceptions an intelligible one. Nature, rather than reason, finally overcomes the objections of radical scepticism.

THEORY OF HUMAN NATURE

Campbell's theory of human nature—actually a theory of mind—exhibits the foregoing general features. A statement of the main elements of his theory should be prefaced, perhaps, with the observation that his interest in the science of mind cannot be considered mere interest in the relationship between rhetoric and psychology. For a phenomenalist such as Campbell, the sum total of knowable reality is indistinguishable from the world of perceptions; the exploration of reality is the same as the exploration of perceptions, the relations, qualities, and behavior. The study of the mind and its contents is, in a very significant sense, the study of everything that can be known through natural processes.

Mental Contents. In his exploration of human nature Campbell begins with entities which we cannot question: perceptions immediately present to the mind. He divides them into three classes. Sensations, the first class, reveal either internal states such as pleasures and pains, or qualities, such as color and figure, in seemingly external objects. All other legitimate perceptions originate in sensations. Ideas of memory, the second class, are derived exclusively from sensations; they are "prints that have been left by sensible impressions" (47). Ideas of imagination, the third class, are complex ideas whose constituents are derived from memory and ultimately from sensation; as totalities, however, they are not copies of either sensations or ideas of memory, and they may or may not correspond to observable objects. This class

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Precisely what is vivacity? We must answer from our own experience, for Campbell never defines it, perhaps because as a feeling it is impossible to define. He remarks that to define the difference between "those lively signatures of memory, which command an unlimited assent, and those fainter traces which raise opinion only, or even doubt, is perhaps impracticable; but no man stands in need of such assistance to enable him in fact to distinguish them, for the direction of his own judgment and conduct" (41). Campbell uses the following terms to signify the quality of vivacity: liveliness, force, energy, brightness, brilliancy, steadiness, and lustre. He describes ideas lacking vivacity or possessing it in small degree as faint, languid, or feeble. Although difficult to define, vivacity is unmistakable in its effects. It commands attention and is therefore prerequisite to nearly every significant mental activity (73, 75). It arouses emotion: "passion must be awakened by communicating lively ideas of the object" (81). Vivacity is also largely responsible for assent, or belief (73).¹⁴ Because they possess strong vivacity, sensations readily command assent from the mind. Most ideas of imagination do not secure assent readily, since they possess little or no vivacity. Sometimes, however, they do require

¹⁴ Belief and vivacity, although closely related, are not identical: vivacity is usually a factor in belief, but either can occur in the absence of the other. See pp. 73-74 where Campbell chides Hume for saying that "Belief consisteth in the liveliness of our ideas."

belief as readily as sensations because they somehow become infused with vivacity: as energy passes from one body to another, so vivacity apparently transfers from lively ideas to sense or memory to languid ideas of imagination. The methods by which ideas of imagination can be infused with vivacity and thereby made to compel attention and induce belief are of great interest to Campbell. The reason for this interest? Discourse deals almost entirely with ideas of imagination.

The Association of Ideas. Of the multitudes of perceptions that appear in consciousness, some vanish, others reappear frequently, a few reappear with perfect regularity; some appear vague and fleeting, others generate a degree of attention, a few overpower the mind. These perceptions are of three kinds—sensations, ideas of memory, and ideas of imagination. Furthermore, the degree of attention and belief which they require of the mind is determined chiefly by the vivacity they possess. Before Campbell can progress further in his study of mind and of nature, he must attempt to establish general laws governing the occurrence of perceptions. If there were no observable patterns or relationships among perceptions, significant generalizations and predictions—both of which require that relevant perceptions occur regularly—would be impossible, knowledge would be limited to acquaintance with particulars only, and the sequence of perceptions (hence, of the universe) would be chaotic. We know from introspection, of course, that perceptions do not occur randomly; although some perceptions seem to be loosely joined, others seem inseparable. The philosopher of mind is vitally interested in the pattern among perceptions because they suggest the presence of laws or principles which govern the association of ideas and which do no less than hold together the world of ideas. As Humboldt aptly remarked in his *Abstract*, the natural principles of association are really “to us the cement of the universe.”¹⁵

Although a number of relations among ideas are mentioned by Campbell (76-77, 81-90, 258), the three most important natural principles of association are resemblance, contiguity, and causation: the mind tends to associate ideas which are similar, ideas which are contiguous in space or time, and ideas related as causes and effects. Mind passes easily from the idea of a bird to that of an airplane by the principle of resemblance, from the idea of a candle to that of a flame by the associative principle of contiguity, and from the idea of lightning to that of thunder by the principle of causation (and perhaps by the principle of contiguity). These principles are not absolutely binding, of course. The mind is able to join

15. *An Abstract of A Treatise of Human Nature*, reprinted and with introduction by J. M. Keynes and P. Straffa (Cambridge: The University Press, 1938), p. 32.

ideas which are dissimilar (the ideas of a handle and of a three-legged stool, for example); it can join ideas that are remote in both space and time; it can conceive of any idea as the cause or effect of any other. These natural tendencies thus seem to be general tendencies of mind rather than absolute laws of thought.

Most important of these associative principles is causation, since this relation among ideas is the basis of everything we know by inference about real existence. In reasoning properly about things, the mind passes from ideas conceived as causes to ideas conceived as effects of those causes, or vice versa. However, the causal connection is not sensed; that is, ideas do not present themselves as causes or as effects. The causal relation between thunder and lightning, for instance, is not itself perceived; “all that comes under the cognizance of our senses, in the operations either of Nature or of Art, is the causes which precede, and the effects which follow” (366). How, then, does the mind supply the relation? The explanation lies in a natural process of mind which Campbell calls *experience* and which he defines as “the tendency of the mind to associate ideas under the notion of causes, effects, or adjuncts” (50). The mind observes the constant or frequent conjunction of perceptions (x and y); as a result, it acquires a habit or determination to conceive of one (y) when the other (x) is newly given. For example, after numerous observations of the constant conjunction of lightning and thunder, we begin to expect that a present perception of lightning will be followed by a perception of thunder; that is, upon perceiving one member of the pair, we imaginatively perceive the other, which is not actually given. This habit or determination to pass from one perception to the other is the causal relation. The strength of this relation depends upon the number of times we witness a conjunction, the constancy of the conjunction (whether frequent or invariable), and the similarity of the perceptions thought to be repeated—variables which account for the degree of probability afforded by the varieties of experience identified by Campbell. The complete explanation of this process appears under the heading “The Nature and Origin of Experience,” in Chapter Five of Book One.

The pervasive influence of experience must not be underestimated. Experience, as the vehicle of all reliable inferences regarding “actual truth, or matter of fact,” is the heart of the logical method used by natural sciences—even by natural theology. It is the method of inference which produces nearly all common judgments in everyday life and which underlies logical proof in rhetorical discourse. In other words, it is probably the foundation and unmistakably “the criterion of all moral reasoning whatever” (52). There must be no mis-

conceptions regarding the nature of experience. It is basically mechanical operation of the mind which functions best—automatically and infallibly—when the mind is least aware of it. Nature controls it as surely as she controls digestion and respiration, and she has given this process experience (reasoning, “if you please to call it so”) to the beasts as well as to man.

This conception of experience acquires added importance when coupled with Campbell's attack both on syllogistic logic and on the rationalists' method of strict demonstration. He maintains that syllogistic logic functions mainly to clarify language. Because it fails to uncover real knowledge, he rejects it. He attacks strict demonstration in two ways: first, he limits it to the realm of abstract ideas and their necessary relations—chiefly to mathematics and geometry (40, 42); second, through his sceptical attack on it (58–61), he actually makes the method of demonstration subservient to moral reasoning and experience. These attacks result in the downfall of both syllogistic logic and strict demonstration as infallible instruments of “actual truth.” Experience (and the formal method of reasoning based upon it) emerges as the fundamental method of inquiry and proof.

Other Elements. Campbell discusses other elements of the theory of mind—among them *sympathy*, the *association of passions*, and the *view that emotions ultimately determine human conduct*. Sympathy, like experience, is a term which refers to a definite process of mind—that operation by which passion is communicated from one person to another. One person, when he experiences fear, exhibits signs which another perceives; these perceptions trigger fear in the second person. “It is by sympathy we rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep” (131). Sympathy is universally important because it “attacheth us to the concerns of others” (89). It is important in rhetoric because it is “one main engine by which the orator operates on the passions” (96). The doctrine that passions (emotions), like ideas, are associated appears in Campbell's discussion of tragic pleasure. He uses it as part of his explanation of tragic pleasure, but the doctrine itself is a basic one. The final element in Campbell's theory of mind to be mentioned here is the view that feeling does not reason, ultimately rules human conduct. Moral reasoning does function in discovering means, but the ends of conduct are determined by feeling. Emotional responses to objects both great and small may be described as natural or unnatural, but not as reasonable or unreasonable. Campbell maintains that it is not “by any reasoning we are ever taught that such an object ought to awaken such a passion. This we must learn originally from feeling, not from argument” (92, 80). Strictly speaking, there are no rational appeals in rhetorical persuasion.

Of the philosophers who might have influenced Campbell, only one expounded a correspondent philosophy and theory of human nature. In Hume's *Treatise* can be found Campbell's division of mental contents, the association of ideas, the principle of vivacity, the process of experience, plus other elements in the theory of human nature. On philosophical matters, Campbell cites Hume more often than he cites any other writer. Even his terminology at times is Hume's: “For instance, Campbell says, ‘There is an attraction or association among the passions, as well as among the ideas of the mind’” (129); Hume, in the *Treatise*, had said, “There is an attraction or association among impressions, as well as among ideas” (283). Abundant evidence indicates that Hume was the primary influence on Campbell's philosophy, including his philosophy of rhetoric.

The Theory of Rhetoric

The core of Campbell's theory of rhetoric is a cluster of notions, derived from his theory of human nature, which may be expressed in three propositions and accompanying explanations.

1. *The vivacity or liveliness of ideas is the quality primarily responsible for attention and belief.* Vivacity (liveliness, energy, force, brilliancy) is a felt quality in ideas to which we give attention and in most ideas which we believe; the amount of vivacity in an idea chiefly determines the degree of attention or belief which it compels. As a general rule, effective rhetorical discourse must compel attention and belief. Therefore, the rhetor—whether he proposes to inform, convince, please, arouse passion, or persuade—must communicate ideas which feel lively and vivid to his hearers or readers. Vivacity must permeate discourse; the effectiveness of nearly all instances of rhetorical discourse depends upon its presence. Vivacity, or the lively idea, is without doubt the key concept in Campbell's theory of rhetoric—the concept which fixes the character of his theory.

2. *Of the kinds of perceptions, sensations are typically most vivid, ideas of memory are less vivid, and ideas of imagination are least vivid.* The ideas that rhetors attempt to communicate are usually ideas of imagination for the hearers or readers (often, too, for the rhetor). Sensations cannot be communicated directly; a moment after entering consciousness, they actually become ideas of memory. Ideas of memory are occasionally communicated by the rhetor, but ideas of imagination are his chief stock. The tragedian's presentation, the statesman's expression of his country's destiny, the crusader's description of future blessings or evils, the physicist's account of infinitesimal matter and energy—these are not objects of sensation or memory for the audience. Rhetorical

discourse, then, is typically imaginative, a fact which creates the central and persistent problem of practical rhetoric: How can the rhetor infuse vivacity into ideas of imagination, which possess the least natural vivacity? He must find ways to make his ideas as lively and vivid as sensations or ideas of memory, because ideas of imagination, when given the power (vivacity) of sensible impressions or ideas of memory, will tend to compel attention, induce belief, and arouse passion (81, 119).

3. *"There is an attraction or association among . . . the ideas of the mind."* Another element of the theory of human nature—the doctrine of the association of ideas—is involved in several methods given by Campbell for infusing vivacity into ideas. It seems to be Campbell's view (it undoubtedly was Hume's) that not only do the laws of association govern or describe the behavior of ideas, but they also provide routes for the transfer of energy. Resemblance, contiguity, causation, and other relations among ideas can become circuits through which vivacity transfers from an already lively idea to a languid one. The remembrance of a childhood home is not only aroused upon seeing a photograph of the home (by the principle of resemblance), but the present lively perception (of the photograph) also leads to a more lively and vivid remembrance. A present sensation of blinding lightning not only leads to an imaginative perception of thunder, but the imaginative idea that we are compelled to predict with absolute confidence that the sensation of thunder is imminent. If typically languid ideas of imagination—the usual stuff of discourse—are enlivened by relating them to perceptions which already possess vivacity, then the rhetor's success largely depends upon discovering and employing methods which will enliven his ideas through their relationship with other lively perceptions.

The rhetorical topics in Book One concern ideas, not their mode of expression. Books Two and Three deal with the expression of ideas through language. According to Campbell, we learn a language in the same manner that we learn about things—through experience. Knowledge of the connection between words and their referents is the product of observing the frequent or constant conjunction of these objects (258). This word-idea relation is crucial, because the communication of lively ideas requires finding in language the words which stand for the ideas, although the possibilities for failure are numerous. Such faults as barbarism, solecism, and impropriety impair this relation and hinder the communication of lively ideas; upon removal of these faults, discourse exhibits "purity." Such faults as obscurity, double meaning, and unintelligibility also destroy the relation between language and thought; upon their removal, discourse exhibits

"perspicuity." Purity and perspicuity, the chief subjects of Book Two, are prerequisites for compelling discourse; their presence does not assure it, but their absence prevents it. Finally, the relation between language and thought is itself a source of energy, or vivacity. Ideas of imagination may be enlivened not only through their relationship with other already vivid ideas, but through stylistic devices as well. Campbell treats style as exclusively functional. Skillfully employed, it serves not merely to clothe thought but rather to infuse energy into discourse.

One or more of the foregoing elements of Campbell's theory underlie virtually all his discussions of rhetorical topics. For instance, beneath his analysis of wit, humor, and ridicule lies the doctrine of the association of ideas. Association, particularly the causal relation, and the principle of vivacity underlie his explanation of experience, the logical method that generates lively ideas. Campbell asserts that the syllogism operates in opposition to the production of vivacity, and consequently in opposition to belief. Two very important discussions in Chapter Seven of Book One are Campbell's analysis of persuasion and his enumeration of seven "circumstances which are chiefly instrumental in operating on the passions." The communication of "lively and glowing ideas" is essential in persuasion, and the seven "circumstances" are ways to enliven ideas by relating them to other ideas which already possess vivacity. His explanation of tragic pleasure (Chapter Eleven, Book One) is based on the doctrine of the association of passions, and also upon his view that tragedy, like other forms of "oratory," must present objects which produce in the mind so much vivacity that they approximate reality. Both association and experience underlie his theory of signs (256-60) and his standard of language usage. Book Three contains the most clear-cut illustration of Campbell's application of his theory: the entire book is devoted to explaining how lively ideas are produced through the choice, number, and arrangement of words, and through the use of connectives.

Some important constituents of Campbell's theory of rhetoric have been incorporated into the works of later rhetoricians and are well known to students of rhetoric: his classification of the ends of rhetoric (informing, convincing, pleasing, moving, persuading) and the manner in which these ends serve one another; his statement of factors for the analysis of discourse (in terms of the communicator, audience, subject, occasion, and end); his view concerning the relation of rhetoric to logic, the science of thought, and to grammar, the science of language; finally, his definition of rhetoric and his broad conception of the art.

Campbell's theory of rhetoric has three major deficiencies.

First, in terms of his own plan, his theory is obviously incomplete. Although he distinguishes five "simple and original qualities of style"—perspicuity, vivacity, elegance, animation and music (216)—and implies that he will treat each, he discusses only perspicuity and vivacity. Discussion of these two qualities requires half of Book Two and the whole of Book Three, a fact which suggests that a substantial part of *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* is absent. This neglect of the aesthetic qualities of style constitutes a serious omission. Second, the psychology underlying his theory can be charged with gross oversimplification. Measured by recent psychological theories it is indeed naive. However, it should be remembered that the science of human nature was in its infancy; other descriptions of the mind—for instance, Hume's and Hartley's—were hardly less naive. Third, Campbell's theory of rhetoric is presented piecemeal, almost haphazardly, and must be extracted from discussions of a variety of topics. In fact, the whole book lacks methodical presentation—doctrines evolve and become clarified, sometimes altered, as the work progresses. The book betrays signs of being (as it actually was) a collection of papers written over a span of approximately twenty-three years, and published without careful pruning and necessary rewriting.

The deficiencies in Campbell's work are more than counterbalanced by the major contributions which it makes to the literature on rhetoric. In the first place, Campbell fulfills his philosophic purpose—to explore human nature and find therein the principles which underlie and explain the art of rhetoric. He was able to explain a variety of rhetorical techniques, concepts, rules, and procedures by means of the principles which he derived from human nature. He thus succeeded in elaborating a systematic theory of rhetoric established—empirically and authoritatively, he thought—upon the science of man. Second, a number of Campbell's specific doctrines are important additions to rhetorical theory. The foremost ones—his definitions of rhetoric and the broad conception they imply; his classification of the ends of eloquence and of factors for rhetorical analysis; his analysis of persuasion and the forms of evidence; his principle of vivacity, or the liveness of ideas—have been adopted by several of Campbell's successors. Third, more than any other major rhetorician in modern times, Campbell tried to elevate rhetoric and save it from Locke's condemnation: he defined it as the general art of communication, inclusive of poetry, public oratory, pulpit eloquence, even of philosophic discourse; he treated it as a discipline worthy of philosophical explication and founded in the science of man; he provided a noble conception of its function. Although it is generally overlooked, Campbell sought to elevate rhetoric in another very important way. Through his analysis

of evidence, he provided for rhetoric a method of inquiry and proof which is neither different from nor inferior to the legitimate method of natural science and of philosophy; in other words, rhetoric, science, and philosophy share the method of observation and experience. Fourth, by announcing that the instrument of effective rhetorical discourse is *the lively idea*, Campbell introduced a revolutionary rhetorical theory in which the power of discourse to command attention, induce belief, arouse passion, and persuade is ultimately a matter of feeling. Vivacity—the energy in ideas—is a quality which is felt, not one which is rationally apprehended. Campbell did not overlook the efficacy of argument, well-ordered discourse, and clearly expressed thoughts; these things, in his analysis, became means of producing vivacity.

Finally, Campbell contributed a philosophy of rhetoric: a theory which consists of a fairly precise view of the nature of rhetoric, its scope and its functions; an activity of inquiry, in search of fundamental reasons, which indicates a struggle with radical problems of the most perplexing kind; a general approach exhibiting not only caution, careful scrutiny, and honesty, but also a considerable breadth of vision and a willingness to follow his "lights" beyond the existing boundaries of his discipline. Few persons today would agree with his view that the chief function of the philosophical rhetorician is to ground rhetoric in human nature. However, his generalized view is sound: The philosophy of rhetoric involves exploring the relationship of rhetoric to other arts and fields of knowledge in order to illumine rhetoric's nature, to provide solutions to its radical problems, and to reveal its essential and authoritative ground.

EDITIONS OF *THE PHILOSOPHY OF RHETORIC*

Production of the present edition by the photo-offset process has necessitated an examination of nearly all known editions of *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* to determine which one should be the prototype for a new edition. After many inquiries to libraries and private owners, the editor was able to compile a bibliography of editions which, if not definitive, is the most exhaustive bibliography to date. With the exception of condensations and abridgments, all editions (but not all reprints) were obtained and sampled for quality of typography, and most were sampled for accuracy of content. The examination of texts which was required to estimate accuracy and the collation of texts on selected items form the basis for the judgments, regarding probable derivation of editions, which accompany entries in the following bibliography. A double asterisk before an entry indicates that the edition was examined

destitute of it, who is not accounted a monster in his kind; for such, doubtless, are all idiots and changelings. By madness, a disease which makes terrible havoc on the faculties of the mind, it may be in a great measure, but is never entirely lost.

It is purely hence that we derive our assurance of such truths as these: "Whatever has a beginning has a cause" — "When there is in the effect a manifest adjustment of the several parts to a certain end, there is intelligence in the cause." "The course of nature will be the same to-morrow that it is to-day; or, the future will resemble the past." — "There is such a thing as body; or, there are material substances independent of the mind's conceptions." — "There are other intelligent beings in the universe besides me." — "The clear representations of my memory, in regard to past events, are indubitably true." These, and a great many more of the same kind, it is impossible for any man by reasoning to evince, as might easily be shown, were this a proper place for the discussion. And it is equally impossible, without a full conviction of them, to advance a single step in the acquisition of knowledge, especially in all that regards mankind, life, and conduct.

I am sensible that some of these, to men not accustomed to inquiries of this kind, will appear at first not to be primary principles, but conclusions from other principles; and some of them will be thought to coincide with the other kinds of intuition above mentioned. Thus the first, "Whatever hath a beginning hath a cause," may be thought to stand on the same footing with mathematical axioms. I acknowledge that in point of evidence they are equal, and it is alike impossible, in either case, for a rational creature to withhold his assent. Nevertheless, there is a difference in kind. All the axioms in mathematics are but the enunciations of certain properties in our abstract notions, distinctly perceived by the mind, but have no relation to any thing without themselves, and can never be made the foundation of any conclusion concerning actual existence; whereas, in the axiom last specified, from the existence of one thing we intuitively conclude the existence of another. This proposition, however, so far differs, in my apprehension, from others of the same order, that I cannot avoid considering the opposite assertion as not only false but contradictory; but I do not pretend to explain the ground of this difference.

The faith we give to memory may be thought, on a superficial view, to be resolvable into consciousness, as well as that we give to the immediate impressions of sense. But on a little attention one may easily perceive the difference. To believe the report of our senses doth indeed commonly imply to believe the existence of certain external and corporeal objects, which give rise to our particular sensations. This, I acknow-

ledge, is a principle which doth not spring from consciousness, (for consciousness cannot extend beyond sensation,) but from common sense, as well as the assurance we have in the report of memory. But this was not intended to be included under the second branch of intuitive evidence. By that firm belief in sense, which I there resolved into consciousness, I meant no more than to say, I am certain that I see, and feel, and think, what I actually see, and feel, and think. As in this I pronounce only concerning my own present feelings, whose essence consists in being felt, and of which I am at present conscious, my conviction is reducible to this axiom, or coincident with it, "It is impossible for a thing to be and not to be at the same time." Now when I say, I trust entirely to the clear report of my memory, I mean a good deal more than, "I am certain that my memory gives such a report, or represents things in such a manner," for this conviction I have indeed from consciousness; but I mean, "I am certain that things happened heretofore at such a time, in the precise manner in which I now remember that they then happened." Thus there is a reference in the ideas of memory to former sensible impressions, to which there is nothing analogous in sensation. At the same time it is evident, that remembrance is not always accompanied with this full conviction. To describe, in words, the difference between those lively signatures of memory, which command an unlimited assent, and those fainter traces which raise opinion only, or even doubt, is perhaps impracticable; but no man stands in need of such assistance to enable him in fact to distinguish them, for the direction of his own judgment and conduct. Some may imagine that it is from experience we come to know what faith in every case is due to memory. But it will appear more fully afterwards, that unless we had implicitly relied on the distinct and vivid informations of that faculty, we could not have moved a step towards the acquisition of experience. It must, however, be admitted, that experience is of use in assisting us to judge concerning the more languid and confused suggestions of memory; or, to speak more properly, concerning the reality of those things, of which we ourselves are doubtful whether we remember them or not.

In regard to the primary truths of this order, it may be urged that it cannot be affirmed of them all at least, as it may of the axioms in mathematics, or the assurances we have from consciousness, that the denial of them implies a manifest contradiction. It is, perhaps, physically possible that the course of nature will be inverted the very next moment; that my memory is no other than a delirium, and my life a dream; that all is mere illusion; that I am the only being in the universe, and that there is no such thing as body. Nothing can be

juster than the reply given by Buffier, "It must be owned," says he,³ "that to maintain propositions, the reverse of the primary truths of common sense, doth not imply a contradiction; it only implies insanity." But if any person, on account of this difference in the nature of these two classes of axioms, should not think the term intuitive so properly applied to the evidence of the last mentioned, let him denominate it, if he please, instinctive: I have no objection to the term; nor do I think it derogates in the least from the dignity, the certainty, or the importance of the truths themselves. Such instincts are no other than the oracles of eternal wisdom.

For, let it be observed further, that axioms of this last kind are as essential to moral reasoning, to all deductions concerning life and existence, as those of the first kind are to the sciences of arithmetic and geometry. Perhaps it will appear afterwards that, without the aid of some of them, these sciences themselves would be utterly inaccessible to us. Besides, the mathematical axioms can never extend their influence beyond the precincts of abstract knowledge, in regard to number and extension, or assist us in the discovery of any matter of fact; whereas, with knowledge of the latter kind, the whole conduct and business of human life is principally and intimately connected. All reasoning necessarily supposes that there are certain principles in which we must acquiesce, and beyond which we cannot go—principles clearly discernible by their own light, which can derive no additional evidence from any thing besides. On the contrary supposition, the investigation of truth would be an endless and a fruitless task; we should be eternally proving, whilst nothing could ever be proved; because, by the hypothesis, we could never ascend to premises which require no proof. "If there be no first truths," says the author lately quoted,⁴ "there can be no second truths, nor third, nor indeed any truth at all."

So much for intuitive evidence, in the extensive meaning which hath here been given to that term, as including every thing whose evidence results from the simple contemplation of the ideas or perceptions which form the proposition under consideration, and requires not the intervention of any third idea as a medium of proof. This, for order's sake, I have distributed into three classes, the truths of pure intellection, of consciousness, and of common sense. The first may be denominated metaphysical, the second physical, the third moral; all of them natural, original, and unaccountable.

³ Premières Vérités, Part i. Chap. xi.

⁴ Ib. Dessin de l'Ouvrage.

SECTION II.—Of deductive evidence.

PART I.—Division of the subject into scientific and moral, with the principal distinctions between them.

All rational or deductive evidence is derived from one or other of these two sources: from the invariable properties or relations of general ideas; or from the actual, though perhaps variable connexions subsisting among things. The former we call demonstrative, the latter moral. Demonstration is built on pure intellection, and consisteth in an uninterrupted series of axioms. That propositions formerly demonstrated are taken into the series, doth not in the least invalidate this account; inasmuch as these propositions are all resolvable into axioms, and are admitted as links in the chain; not because necessary, but merely to avoid the useless prolixity which frequent and tedious repetition of proofs formerly given would occasion. Moral evidence is founded on the principles we have from consciousness and common sense, improved by experience; and as it proceeds on this general presumption or moral axiom, that the course of nature in time to come will be similar to what it hath been hitherto, it decides, in regard to particulars, concerning the future from the past, and concerning things unknown from things familiar to us. The first is solely conversant about number and extension, and about those other qualities which are measurable by these. Such are duration, velocity, and weight. With regard to such qualities as pleasure and pain, virtue and vice, wisdom and folly, beauty and deformity, though they admit degrees, yet, as there is no standard or common measure, by which their differences and proportions can be ascertained and expressed in numbers, they can never become the subject of demonstrative reasoning. Here rhetoric, it must be acknowledged, hath little to do. Simplicity of diction, and precision in arrangement, whence results perspicuity, are, as was observed already,⁵ all the requisites. The proper province of rhetoric is the second, or moral evidence; for to the second belong all decisions concerning fact, and things without us.

But that the nature of moral evidence may be better understood, it will not be amiss to remark a few of the most eminent differences between this and the demonstrative.

The first difference that occurs is in their subjects. The subject of the one is, as hath been observed, abstract independent truth, or the unchangeable and necessary relations of ideas; that of the other, the real but often changeable and contingent connexions that subsist among things actually existing. Ab-

⁵ Chap. i.

compared to an arch, no part of which can subsist independently of the rest. If you make any breach in it, you destroy the whole. The latter may be compared to a tower, the height whereof is but the aggregate of the heights of the several parts reared above one another, and so may be gradually diminished, as it was gradually raised.

So much for the respective natures of scientific and of moral evidence, and those characteristic qualities which discriminate them from each other. On a survey of the whole, it seems indubitable, that if the former is infinitely superior in point of authority, the latter no less excels in point of importance. Abstract truth, as far as it is the object of our faculties, is almost entirely confined to quantity, concrete or discrete. The sphere of Demonstration is narrow, but within her sphere she is a despotic sovereign, her sway is uncontrollable. Her rival, on the contrary, hath less power but wider empire. Her forces, indeed, are not always irresistible; but the whole world is comprised in her dominions. Reality or fact comprehends the laws and the works of nature, as well as the arts and the institutions of men; in brief, all the beings which fall under the cognizance of the human mind, with all their modifications, operations, and effects. By the first, we must acknowledge, when applied to things, and combined with the discoveries of the second, our researches into nature in a certain line are facilitated, the understandings are enlightened, and many of the arts, both elegant and useful, are improved and perfected. Without the aid of the second, society must not only suffer but perish. Human nature itself could not subsist. This organ of knowledge, which extends its influence to every precinct of philosophy, and governs in most, serves also to regulate all the ordinary but indispensable concerns of life. To these it is admirably adapted, notwithstanding its inferiority in respect of dignity, accuracy, and perspicuity. For it is principally to the acquisitions procured by experience that we owe the use of language, and the knowledge of almost every thing that makes the soul of a man differ from that of a new-born infant. On the other hand, there is no despot so absolute as not to be liable to a check on some side or other; and that the prerogatives of demonstration are not so very considerable, as on a cursory view one is apt to imagine; and this, as well as every other operation of the intellect, must partake in the weakness incident to all our mental faculties, and inseparable from our nature, I shall afterwards take an opportunity particularly to evince.

PART. II.—*The nature and origin of Experience.*

I should now consider the principal tribes comprehended under the general name of moral evidence; but, that every

difficulty may be removed, which might retard our progress in the proposed discussion, it will be necessary, in the first place, to explore more accurately those sources in our nature which give being to experience, and consequently to all those attainments, moral and intellectual, that are derived from it. These sources are two, sense and memory. The senses, both external and internal, are the original inlets of perception. They inform the mind of the facts, which in the present instant are situated within the sphere of their activity, and no sooner discharge their office in any particular instance than the articles of information exhibited by them are devolved on the memory. Remembrance instantly succeeds sensation, inasmuch that the memory becomes the sole repository of the knowledge received from sense; knowledge which, without this repository, would be as instantaneously lost as it is gotten, and could be of no service to the mind. Our sensations would be no better than the fleeting pictures of a moving object on a camera obscura, which leave not the least vestige behind them. Memory, therefore, is the only original voucher extant of those past realities for which we had once the evidence of sense. Her ideas are, as it were, the prints that have been left by sensible impressions. But from these two faculties, considered in themselves, there results to us the knowledge only of individual facts, and only of such facts as either heretofore have come, or at present do come, under the notice of our senses.

Now, in order to render this knowledge useful to us, in discovering the nature of things, and in regulating our conduct, a further process of the mind is necessary, which deserves to be carefully attended to, and may be thus illustrated. I have observed a stone fall to the ground when nothing intervened to impede its motion. This single fact produces little or no effect on the mind beyond a bare remembrance. At another time, I observe the fall of a tile, at another of an apple, and so of almost every kind of body in the like situation. Thus my senses first, and then my memory, furnish me with numerous examples, which, though different in every other particular, are similar in this, that they present a body moving downwards, till obstructed either by the ground or by some intervening object. Hence my first notion of gravitation. For, with regard to the similar circumstances of different facts, as by the repetition such circumstances are more deeply imprinted, the mind acquires a habit of retaining them, omitting those circumstances peculiar to each wherein their differences consist. Hence, if objects of any kind, in a particular manner circumstanced, are remembered to have been usually, and still more if uniformly, succeeded by certain particular consequences, the idea of the former, in the supposed circumstance introduced into the mind, immediately associates the idea of the latter;

and if the object itself, so circumstanced, be presented to the senses, the mind instantly anticipates the appearance of the customary consequence. This holds also inversely. The retention and association above explained are called Experience. The anticipation is in effect no other than a particular conclusion from that experience. Here we may remark by the way, that though memory gives birth to experience, which results from the comparison of facts remembered, the experience or habitual association remains, when the individual facts on which it is founded are all forgotten. I know from an experience which excludes all doubt, the power of fire in melting silver, and yet may not be able at present to recollect a particular instance in which I have seen this effect produced, or even in which I have had the fact attested by a credible witness.

Some will perhaps object that the account now given makes our experimental reasoning look like a sort of mechanism, necessarily resulting from the very constitution of the mind. I acknowledge the justness of the remark, but do not think that it ought to be regarded as an objection. It is plain that our reasoning in this way, if you please to call it so, is very early, and precedes all reflection on our faculties, and the manner of applying them. Those who attend to the progress of human nature through its different stages, and through childhood in particular, will observe that children make great acquisitions in knowledge from experience long before they attain the use of speech. The beasts also, in their sphere, improve by experience, which hath in them just the same foundations of sense and memory as in us, and hath, besides, a similar influence on their actions. It is precisely in the same manner, and with the same success, that you might train a dog, or accustom a child to expect food on your calling to him in one tone of voice, and to dread your resentment when you use another. The brutes have evidently the rudiments of this species of rationality, which extends as far in them as the immediate purposes of self-preservation require, and which, whether you call it reason or instinct, they both acquire and use in the same manner as we do. That it reaches no further in them, seems to arise from an original incapacity of classing and (if I may use the expression) generalizing their perceptions; an exercise which to us very quickly becomes familiar, and is what chiefly fits us for the use of language. Indeed, in the extent of this capacity, as much, perhaps, as in any thing, lies also the principal natural superiority of one man over another.

But that we may be satisfied, that to this kind of reasoning, in its earliest or simplest form, little or no reflection is necessary, let it be observed, that it is now universally admitted by opticians, that it is not purely from sight, but from sight aided by

experience, that we derive our notions of the distance of visible objects from the eye. The sensation, say they, is instantaneously followed by a conclusion or judgment founded on experience. The point is determined from the different phases of the object found, in former trials, to be connected with different distances, or from the effort that accompanies the different conformations we are obliged to give the organs of sight, in order to obtain a distinct vision of the object. Now, if this be the case, as I think hath been sufficiently evinced of late, it is manifest that this judgment is so truly instantaneous, and so perfectly the result of feeling and association, that the forming of it totally escapes our notice. Perhaps in no period of life will you find a person, that, on the first mention of it, can be easily persuaded that he derives this knowledge from experience. Every man will be ready to tell you that he needs no other witnesses than his eyes, to satisfy him that objects are not in contact with his body, but are at different distances from him as well as from one another. So passive is the mind in this matter, and so rapid are the transitions which, by this ideal attraction, she is impelled to make, that she is, in a manner, unconscious of her own operations. There is some ground to think, that the discovery of distance from the eye is borne to ours, that the analogy which their organs attained by brutes in the same manner as by us. As to this, however, I will not be positive. But though, in this way, the mind acquires an early perception of the most obvious and necessary truths, without which the bodily organs would be of little use; in matters less important her procedure is much slower, and more the result of voluntary application; and as the exertion is more deliberate, she is more conscious of her own activity, or, at least, remembers it longer. It is then only that in common style we honour her operation with the name of reasoning; though there is no essential difference between the two cases. It is true, indeed, that the conclusions in the first way, by which also in infancy we learn language, are commonly more to be regarded as infallible, than those effected in the second.

PART III.—*The subdivisions of Moral Reasoning.*

But to return to the proposed distribution of moral evidence. Under it I include these three tribes, experience, analogy, and testimony. To these I shall subjoin the consideration of a fourth, totally distinct from them all, but which appears to be a mixture of the demonstrative and the moral; or rather a particular application of the former, for ascertaining the precise force of the latter. The evidence I mean is that resulting from calculations concerning chances.

that the effects ascribed to them ought often solely to be ascribed to one or more of the component parts; that the others noway contribute to the production: that, on the contrary, they sometimes tend to hinder it. If the parts in the composition of similar objects were always in equal quantity, their being compounded would make no odds; if the parts, though not equal, bore always the same proportion to the whole, this would make a difference: but such as in many cases might be computed. In both respects, however, there is an immense variety. Perhaps every individual differs from every other individual of the same species, both in the quantities and in the proportions of its constituent members and component parts. This diversity is also found in other things, which, though hardly reducible to species, are generally known by the same name. The atmosphere in the same place at different times, or at the same time in different places, differs in density, heat, humidity, and the number, quality, and proportion of the vapours or particles with which it is laden. The more then we become acquainted with elementary natures, the more we are ascertained by a general experience of the uniformity of their operations. And though perhaps it be impossible for us to attain the knowledge of the simplest elements of any body, yet when any thing appears so simple, or rather so exactly uniform, as that we have observed it invariably to produce similar effects; on discovering any new effects, though but by one experiment, we conclude, from the general experience of the efficient, a like constancy in this energy as in the rest. Fire consumes wood, melts copper, and hardens clay. In these instances it acts uniformly, but not in these only. I have always experienced hitherto, that whatever of any species is consumed by it once, all of the same species it will consume upon trial at any time. The like may be said of what is melted, or hardened, or otherwise altered by it. If then, for the first time, I try the influence of fire on any fossil, or other substance, whatever be the effect, I readily conclude that fire will always produce a similar effect on similar bodies. This conclusion is not founded on this single instance, but on this instance compared with a general experience of the regularity of this element in all its operations.

So much for the first tribe, the evidence of experience, on which I have enlarged the more, as it is, if not the foundation, at least the criterion of all moral reasoning whatever. It is, besides, the principal organ of truth in all the branches of physiology (I use the word in its largest acceptation), including natural history, astronomy, geography, mechanics, optics, hydrostatics, meteorology, medicine, chemistry. Under the general term I also comprehend natural theology and psychology, which, in my opinion, have been most unnaturally dis-

joined by philosophers. Spirit, which here comprises only the Supreme Being and the human soul, is surely as much included under the notion of natural object as body is, and is knowable to the philosopher purely in the same way, by observation and experience.

II.—*Analogy.*

The evidence of analogy, as was hinted above, is but a more indirect experience, founded on some remote similitude. As things, however, are often more easily comprehended by the aid of example than by definition, I shall in that manner illustrate the difference between experimental evidence and analogical. The circulation of the blood in one human body is, I shall suppose, experimentally discovered. Nobody will doubt of this being a sufficient proof from experience, that the blood circulates in every human body. Nay, further, when we consider the great similarity which other animal bodies bear to the human body, and that both in the structure and in the destination of the several organs and limbs; particularly when we consider the resemblance in the blood itself, and blood-vessels, and in the fabric and pulsation of the heart and arteries, it will appear sufficient experimental evidence of the circulation of the blood in brutes, especially in quadrupeds. Yet, in this application, it is manifest, that the evidence is weaker than in the former. But should I from the same experiment infer the circulation of the sap in vegetables, this would be called an argument only from analogy. Now, all reasonings from experience are obviously weakened in proportion to the remoteness of the resemblance subsisting between that on which the argument is founded, and that concerning which we form the conclusion.

The same thing may be considered in a different way. I have learnt from experience, that like effects sometimes proceed from objects which faintly resemble, but not near so frequently as from objects which have a more perfect likeness. By this experience I have been enabled to determine the degrees of probability from the degrees of similarity in the different cases. It is presumable that the former of these ways has the earliest influence, when the mind, unaccustomed to reflection, forms but a weak association, and consequently but a weak expectation of a similar event from a weak resemblance. The latter seems more the result of thought, and is better adapted to the ordinary forms of reasoning.

It is allowed that an analogical evidence is at best but a feeble support, and is hardly ever honoured with the name of proof. Nevertheless, when the analogies are numerous, and the subject admits not evidence of another kind, it doth not

is necessary, the greatest exactness in collecting them on each side, and due care that there be no discoverable peculiarity in any of them, which would render them unfit for supporting a general conclusion.

PART IV.—*The superiority of Scientific Evidence re-examined.*

After the enumeration made in the first part of this section, of the principal differences between scientific evidence and moral, I signified my intention of resuming the subject afterwards, as far at least as might be necessary to show, that the prerogatives of demonstration are not so considerable, as on a cursory view one is apt to imagine. It will be proper now to execute this intention. I could not attempt it sooner, as the right apprehension of what is to be advanced will depend on a just conception of those things which have lately been explained. In the comparison referred to, I contrasted the two sorts of evidence, as they are in themselves, without considering the influence which the necessary application of our faculties in using both, has, and ought to have, on the effect. The observations then made in that abstracted view of the subject, appear to be well founded. But that view, I acknowledge, doth not comprehend the whole with which we are concerned.

It was observed of memory, that as it instantly succeeds sensation, it is the repository of all the stores from which our experience is collected, and that without an implicit faith in the clear representations of that faculty, we could not advance a step in the acquisition of experimental knowledge. Yet we know that memory is not infallible: nor can we pretend that in any case there is not a physical possibility of her making a false report. Here, it may be said, is an irremediable imbecility in the very foundation of moral reasoning. But is it less so in demonstrative reasoning? This point deserves a careful examination.

It was remarked concerning the latter, that it is a proof consisting of an uninterrupted series of axioms. The truth of each is intuitively perceived as we proceed. But this process is of necessity gradual, and these axioms are all brought in succession. It must then be solely by the aid of memory, that they are capable of producing conviction in the mind. Nor by this do I mean to affirm, that we can remember the preceding steps with their connexion, so as to have them all present to our view at one instant; for then we should, in that instant, perceive the whole intuitively. Our remembrance, on the contrary, amounts to no more than this, that the perception of the truth of the axiom to which we are advanced in the proof, is accompanied with a strong impression on the memory of the

satisfaction that the mind received from the justness and regularity of what preceded. And in this we are under a necessity of acquiescing; for the understanding is no more capable of contemplating and perceiving at once the truth of all the propositions in the series, than the tongue is capable of uttering them at once. Before we make progress in geometry, we come to demonstrations, wherein there is a reference to preceding demonstrations; and in these perhaps to others that preceded them. The bare reflection, that as to these we once were satisfied, is accounted by every learner, and teacher too, as sufficient. And if it were not so, no advancement at all could be made in this science. Yet, here again, the whole evidence is reduced to the testimony of memory. It may be said that, along with the remembrance now mentioned, there is often in the mind a conscious power of recollecting the several steps, whenever it pleases; but the power of recollecting them severally, and successively, and the actual instantaneous recollection of the whole, are widely different. Now, what is the consequence of this induction? It is plainly this, that, in spite of the pride of mathesis, no demonstration whatever can produce, or reasonably ought to produce, a higher degree of certainty than that which results from the vivid representations of memory, on which the other is obliged to lean. Such is here the natural subordination, however rational and purely intellectual the former may be accounted, however mysterious and inexplicable the latter. For it is manifest, that without a perfect acquiescence in such representations, the mathematician could not advance a single step beyond his definitions and axioms. Nothing therefore is more certain, however inconceivable it appeared to Dr. Priestley, than what was affirmed by Dr. Oswald, that *the possibility of error attends the most complete demonstration.*

If from theory we recur to fact, we shall quickly find, that those most deeply versed in this sort of reasoning are conscious of the justness of the remark now made. A geometer, I shall suppose, discovers a new theorem, which, having made a diagram for the purpose, he attempts to demonstrate, and succeeds in the attempt. The figure he hath constructed is very complex, and the demonstration long. Allow me now to ask, Will he be so perfectly satisfied on the first trial as not to think it of importance to make a second, perhaps a third, and a fourth? Whence arises this diffidence? Purely from the consciousness of the fallibility of his own faculties. But to what purpose, it may be said, the reiterations of the attempt, since it is impossible for him, by any efforts, to shake off his dependence on the accuracy of his attention and fidelity of his memory? Or, what can he have more than reiterated testimonies of his memory, in support of the truth of its former testimony? I acknowledge, that after a hundred attempts he