

spinal cord and its prolongations as far as the crura cerebri and corpora quadrigemina), and all the nerves of motion arise from it, it follows that all motions must be the result of some stimulus applied to this system, and this stimulus may be either given by an impression from without or by a mental change within (or in the brain above.) If we regard the cineritious matter of the brain as a seat of consciousness, sensation, the intellectual powers, and volition, the medullary part of the hemispheric ganglia being merely a conductor, (a position which I do not wish to be understood as advocating), it necessarily follows from the position previously taken, that the sensory and motor tracts in the brain simply convey upwards to the cineritious matter the influence of the impressions existing in the cerebro-spinal axis, and downwards the motive action resulting either immediately from sensation or volition.”—(*Edin. Med. and Surg. Journ.*, vol. 48, pp. 43 and 44.)

The reasons given by Dr. Carpenter for his adhesion to Dr. Marshall Hall's opinion regarding the distinctness of the excito-motor from the sensorio-volitional tract, do not appear satisfactory to my mind; I think they do not warrant him in repudiating his former opinion. There can be no doubt, however, that this subject will engage the attention of men of talent who can devote much more time to physiology and comparative anatomy than I can. I have done nothing but open a debate in which, I trust, many will take part, and I shall endeavour to take an unprejudiced view of the arguments that may be adduced.

If Dr. Carpenter will look into my paper, and examine the context, he will find that, in speaking of what had been done by Dr. Hall and others, before the publication of his essay of 1837, I alluded solely to experiments on animals.

With regard to Dr. Carpenter's claim of priority, the necessary *originality* of prize essays and other matters, I shall say nothing, for various reasons,—1st. Dr. Carpenter has asserted his claims at considerable length in the same Journal in which my paper appeared; 2nd. A portion of his communication is apparently addressed to Dr. M. Hall himself, and consequently any remarks of mine would be an intrusion; and 3dly. Because I am unwilling to trespass unnecessarily upon your space. I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

MARTIN H. LYNCH.

Queen-square, Newcastle,
19th Nov. 1839.

THE ORGAN OF THE LOVE OF LIFE.

To the Editor of THE LANCET.

SIR:—It is often the case that men spend their time in seeking in remote causes for the origination of phenomena, when an efficient explanation lies within their immediate grasp. This is peculiarly the case with respect to mental phenomena—men search for causes in tortuous speculations, when a just observation would afford a speedy and certain solution of the problem. This is illustrated by the discussion at the Westminster Medical Society, on the “Cause of Suicide,” which, however interesting from the facts elicited, occasions regret that the doctrines of phrenology were not brought to bear upon the consideration of a subject, which, from its cerebral origin, lies peculiarly within its province.

Dr. Andrew Combe was the first writer who threw any light upon the subject, or, rather, who first preferred observation to conjecture. It appears, when he examined the brain of a lady, in whom a love of life was the chief characteristic, that he noticed (to use his own words) “an immense development of one convolution at the base of the middle lobe of the brain; it was that lying towards the mesial line on the basilar and inner sides of the middle lobe, and consequently of destructiveness.” As this organ cannot, from its situation, be demonstrated during life, dissection can alone prove whether it has any existence; and, as the fact related by Dr. Combe is supported by confirmatory facts, I consider that his opinion deserves further investigation.

There can be no doubt that some persons manifest a love of life with the energy of a primitive impulse, whilst others appear almost devoid of the feeling. Dr. Johnson may be noticed as a person who manifested “Love of life to an extraordinary extent:” in him it became a virulent disease, embittering his fairest prospects, and making life miserable through his morbid fear of death. This was the case before he became a successful author; and even when reduced, with his friend Savage, to the greatest extremities, he still clung to life with the tenacity of a drowning man. The case of Dr. Johnson is not, however, a solitary one, nor is the reverse infrequent. Cowper attempted self-murder several times, although his private circumstances were altogether favourable. Considering, therefore, that love of life is not merely the result of satisfaction with present things, but that it can exist vividly when all is black and lowering, and be deficient when prosperity clothes the individual with its smiling dower, I think that love of life is the result of a primitive faculty.—I am, Sir, yours truly,
November, 1839. E. J. HYTCHE.