

NOTE: Two months after her twentieth birthday and two days before Christmas, **Mary Pindell Shelby** appears to be in New York, where she stops at 389 Broadway to have a Phrenologist give her a character sketch. Walt Whitman was one of those people; Fowler & Wells was a Phrenological business whose Phrenological Cabinet he visited frequently in New York. This Cabinet was a kind of museum with over a thousand plaster heads of savages, murders and madmen. Phrenology portrayed the brain as divided into different faculties that controlled the various aspects of personality. APPROBATIVENESS. -- Love of praise; affability; ambition to be approved and promoted. Excess: Vanity; self-praise; and extreme sensitiveness. Deficiency: Indifference to public opinion, or to praise or blame; and disregard for personal appearance. "Philoprogenitiveness" its name for the love of offspring, and so on. There was disagreement among the different versions of phrenology as to how many faculties there were, the number ranging from thirty-five to ninety-six. I have no idea why Mary Pindell would be attracted to such, although it was popular fad. **Nelson Sizer** did her examination and Edward Hayes was the short hand report. In a few months she would have Orson Squire Fowler, himself, do a reading in Lexington. It is dated **December 23, 1865**. This is so easy to read that I will not do my usual line by line transcription.

PHRENOLOGICAL CHARACTER

of

Miss Mary P. Shelby

given at Fowler & Wells Phrenological Cabinet

No. 389 Broadway, New York

by Nelson Sizer, Practical Phrenologist

Dec. 23rd

1865

Miss Mary P. Shelby.

You have a large head when we consider the size of the person. 22'2 inches is a large head for a woman, and we think a man should weigh 150 pounds with a 22 inch head and 160 with a 22's inch head. You ought to weigh instead of 125 pounds at least 150 pounds in order to carry that head grandly, strongly, enduringly and effectively. Persons who have too much head for their body may be likened to a big mill on a small stream of water – it will run as long as the stream hold out but when that is run out the mill has to stop. Many a man goes into business and works five or six hours hard, but his body is totally unfit for his business the balance of the day. A lawyer that has a case lasting seventeen days, as many of our modern trials now do, wants a body to carry him through and bring him out strongly at last. Your health being good, your temperament predominantly of the vital or nourishing cast, you can get along nicely in your present condition; but when life acts upon you with its burdens and its cares it would be better for you to have more bodily vigor or less brain. In order to improve your condition in this respect the best way for you is to eat no pepper, drink no coffee, nor use tobacco in any form. We mention these three articles because they tend to disturb the nerves, they operate upon the heart and the digestive system; and many a man dies of apoplexy because he uses coffee, tobacco or spices, for the blood is sent spasmodically to the head by the irregular action of the heart and in two minutes the man is dead. We mention to you to avoid these things – coffee, tobacco and spices – because the blood comes to your head sufficiently now with out being prompted by these stimulants. You should sleep abundantly; be is the sunshine all you can so as to get all the benefit of the sunlight, as every ignorant cottager knows that plants thrive best in the sunlight. Celery is weak and tender because it grows under cover; if it were to grow in the light it would be as tough as tomato stalks: and human beings that are too much in the house are tender and feeble.

You have some remarkable developments, and an elucidation of then may be of service to you. One of the larger organs in your head is Cautiousness which give great width to the upper and back part of the head. If you were sickly or nervous you would suffer very much; you would think everything that contained any possibility of disaster would be sure to ripen into disaster. Be careful and not get morbid on your Cautiousness or it will be a perpetual night-mare to you.

You have large Con-scientiousness which demands of the rectitude or else it follows you as a bailiff does a delinquent. If you don't do right you need no accusation from the outside world for your inner life will accuse you until you repent.

Your love of Approbation is decidedly strong, almost too strong; you are very sensitive as to what people may say or think of you. You may sometimes borrow trouble, for with your large Approbativeness and large Cautiousness combined you are afraid you have said something that is displeasing, or that you have done something or failed to do something that you ought to have done; and you magnify these conditions so that you go to apologize to the person who if you had not noticed it or said anything about it would not know whether you had said it or would have forgotten it altogether. You should cultivate Self-Esteem; if you had more independence so the you could stand aloof without caring about what other people may say or think it would be a good acquisition to you. It may be difficult for you to put on this independent character but you should put on as much of it as you can and thereby cultivate that spirit. Take responsibilities anywhere you can; if anybody asks you to lead off in anything do your best and try to think you have done well. If anybody calls you to be superintendent or controller in any department accept the trust and do your best. If they want you to be foreman of a jury or chairman of a committee take it, the presumption is that they know better than you do your qualifications. If you use them intellectually and courageously you be firstrate; but if you take counsel of your fear and sensitiveness you wander away in the corner.

You have Combativeness and Destructiveness enough to give you what the British call pluck; and when you are really provoked and aroused you have the power to fight you way through to almost any extent. If you were placed in a position where you must use severe means there are very few women who would stand up to them as you would. If a robber were to break into your house and were to deserve killing for it you would be just the one to give him his deserts in defence of yourself and friends; and your very fear which under common circumstances might weaken you would give you power in an emergency that is not very often equaled by women: a cat caught in the corner fights better than a dog does.

You are extremely fond of friends, and you like to have a great many. Given your wealth and the culture which you ought to have and you would have a large circle of friends than most persons. You like a long table, and to have the whole family come often and have a good time. You believe in big family parties where the children and the old grand-mother and all shall form a part of the company. Merry Christmas is to you a great occasion provided you have the means to do as you would. Your interest in pets is well indicated; your capacity to love as a wife is strongly marked. You ought to marry a man of dark complexion with a prominent brow, high retreating forehead, a narrow long head running up high at the crown; a man who is tall, bony – a kind of a cavalier, noble and spirited. But see to it that he has not half as much Caution as you, and you can find the location of all the organs in the book we gave you. You are capable of using a good deal of policy. If you had large Perceptives nobody could corner you. By cross questioning you sometimes do not see the drift of questions because your perceptives are hardly large enough, and if you answer indiscreetly it is done with a kind of honest abruptness. But where you have occasion to speak you can be very jealous and very wary; you are not easily trapped, easily inveigled into any admissions that you do not wish to make, and you know well your defects and hide your discrepancies.

Your intellect is theoretical rather than practical; your judgement is broad and sound rather than quick. You should marry a man who has a mind that is quick, prompt, and who is full of facts; one who will come home loaded with facts; and you would take his facts and with your large reasoning organs string them as we do beads on a line of philosophic thought. You ask a great many questions; are always trying to reason our every thing. But if you do not string your facts as a fisherman does fish they are apt to slip away again.

You enjoy mechanical matters thematically. If you can stand and look at a machine or engine and watch its workings you feel very much interested in its philosophy but you have enough of the practical talent to reduce your ideas to practice. You have ideas like gold in bullion rather than like gold coined. You can tell all you know and people give you credit for more power the longer they know you. If you have but half an hour's interview with a person you don't pass for half what you are really worth. Some people can show off for half an hour and then they are like clocks run down. Some people strike twelve to begin with; you strike one and keep on increasing.

You generally don't pass for half what you are really worth. In the first place your intellect is theoretical not practical, and your large Caution and small Self-Esteem and large Approbativeness leads you to take the background and keep your self out of an active sphere of thought and conversation. You almost always when you are introduced want a third person to keep the conversation along; but after a few interviews you would want the third person out of the way. You have Acquisitiveness rather large, and if you were placed in a situation where it required financiering you would do firstrate; you would theorize well and manage judiciously. If you were left with a family of children and an income that was comparatively restricted, you would study, plan and contrive very judiciously; would think what would wear best, what would look best when it was half worn out, what would never go out of fashion, and thus you would make very wise projects. While some persons would adopt showy patterns that would do to be worn in May and June when all the earth is smiling and would be good for nothing in October or for every day uses when worn a dozen times, you would buy something to wear in May that would answer just as well in December.

You have a fondness for beauty and grandeur, for wit and for mirth. You relish whatever is witty and crucial, and sensitive as you are you accept jokes at your expense rather than not to have some fun, but generally you are able to pay back as much as others can give you. You initiate readily; are exceedingly fond of theatricals; and you glide into the usages of society without apparently knowing it. If you were to go to France you would learn to shrug your shoulders as if you had been born in Paris, and you would put on all the little airs which belonged to the people which you might be with. And sometimes you even copy the errors of people. If you had large Self-Esteem, large individuality and small Invitation you would carry you peculiarities with you to the grave no matter by whom you might be surrounded; and if you had any errors of speech or action they would stick by you. Hence it is necessary for you to associate with just the right kind of people because you are bound to imitate them.

You have strong Faith but your Caution is so large that it undermines your belief and throws darkness over the brightest places of life. We would recommend you to use your Mirthfulness all you can, and remember what we have said relative to your large Cautiousness and Approbativeness, that it is not always so dangerous as it seems, and that you are more capable than you think yourself to be; and you have only to dash ahead when you have an invitation: if you are invited to take the highest seat by the host – take it and run the risk.

Edward Hayes, Short Hand Reporter, 389 Broadway, N.Y.

NOTE: Mary Pindell Shelby would be half way through her twentieth year when this **Phrenological Character** (head reading). It was taken by a well known **Orson Squire Fowler** on **March 22, 1866**. I believe she would have been finished with boarding schools and formal education. It certainly would be edifying for her and I am sure she brought it out more than once to read. It would be thirteen years before she met such a man as described, John Calhoun Stallcup, in this report and two years after that before she put herself in a position to be proposed to. I also feel that the Judge saw this at least once.

I could find nothing about R. P. Lewis, recorded at the end of this as "Reported by", making me think this was a secretary who wrote out O. S. Fowler's reports. This is so easy to read that I will not do my usual line by line transcription.

PHRENOLOGICAL CHARACTER
of
M. P. Shelby
given by
Prof. O. S. Fowler
(Phrenological Author, Editor and Lecturer)
March 22, 1866
Lexington, Ky

M.. P. Shelby.

Cause and effect is your predominant intellectual characteristic and remarkably developed. For a woman you have an unusual amount of sense, judgement, thought, forethought, reason, planning power, depth, originality, and are governed much more by your judgement and less by your feelings than most of your sex. You are peculiarly long headed and clear headed, looking way through to ultimate results, and first-best in bringing to pass your respective ends. You think out your plan beforehand and then prosecute it with untiring assiduity. You have been, will be unusually successful. You are good in arguing: excel in convincing people. You wield powerful influence over those around you because you address yourself right to their common sense. Your's is withal clear discerning, discriminating, analytical cast of mind. You are almost hypercritical. You see faults and idiosyncrasies and absurdities clearly and excel in exposing them. You are an A No. 1 in ridicule. I mean in showing up the absurdities and errors of people. You are naturally lady-like and agreeable. All who know you like you because you are excellent company, pleasing, fond of fun, and make lots of it; a great natural talker and always talk to the point. You never talk without saying something. Your conversational powers are far above the average. You somehow make your mark when you talk. Your talent for learning languages is A No. 1 and for talking them. You will create quite a sensation in any company. You are endowed with a great amount of real dignity and genuine force of character; are eminently womanly; will occupy some elevated position or none – where you cannot lead you will not follow. You are very well adapted to mingle in the highest walks of life and if you can't walk there will not walk at all. I hope you may marry rich. You have little idea of the value of dollars and spend your money very freely. You will have what is nice even if it does cost. I doubt whether you have been educated economically enough, but have the judgement requisite for managing matters probably economically; I mean will save from sense rather than from closeness. Possess a great amount of policy, know how to keep your feelings to yourself. Have a full share of art and management. Are cautious, judicious, careful, wise, indiscreet. Have an unusually large head and are one of the smartest women – I speak strongly, my science requires it. I pronounce you A No. 1 as to the human capacities and feminine virtues. You are perhaps a little too emotional – your feelings are intense in the extreme – you will be perfectly happy or perfectly miserable but half way is nothing. You express yourself very strongly for or against, and ought to be christened Miss All-soul.

You have an excellent body, first rate lungs, good digestive organs, great muscular activity, but not so much endurance as action. Are very tough, are adapted to live to an immense age. Are altogether too cautious – this is your strongest trait and amounts to a weakness. It takes you forever and a day to make up your mind, but once make up you are not likely to change it. You will be worried all your

life and about trifles – afraid the cow will swallow the grindstone: and keep those around you in a perpetual tease on that account. Please remember this fact and offset it by your judgement. You see the worst side of all things. you deliberate until the favorable moment or action is past.

You are singularly just, I cannot express myself to strongly as to your integrity. What you promise to do you will do and to the very utmost. You will be faithful to your pecuniary engagements and pay every farthing you agree to pay. With you duty is paramount, and you will do it at any and all sacrifices. You often condemn yourself when you need not, and suffer much from a feeling of unworthiness, and need more self-justification. You have not quite combativeness enough. I wish you would cultivate a certain get-out-of-my-way feeling. You are sometimes rather badly troubled with the “I cants”. Your social faculties are really very hearty. When you love at all it will be with all your soul, and if you marry any way appropriately your husband will have occasion to congratulate himself, and you deserve one of the best of men. You should not marry a short, thick-set, round-headed, broad-faced, small man; instead should select one small-faced, long-headed, tall, prominent features, Roman nose, with the chin and forehead retiring, and a profile of the new-moon order; one in whom the perceptives predominate; one dark complexioned in preference to light; one very firm; you never could bear to see a husband of yours back down even if you and he knew he was wrong. You love firmness in a man above everything except talents. You are preeminently fond of children and pets, will be of your own children. Have an eminently, even preeminently affectionate nature. Are heartily attached to spot and place. But friendship is your predominant social faculty, and not often equaled. Have a great amount of consecutiveness and dwell eternally – make thorough work. Should not threaten much, if you do you will not keep your word. Will find the utmost difficulty in transferring your affections after they are once planted. So be careful where you plant and once thoroughly in love see that nothing breaks in upon that love, and don't be too particular. You are likely to be quite exacting as to the qualities of your husband, would not be quite liberal enough. Are so conscientious that you would insist on his living up to your standards, which would be difficult. Should cultivate charity. Have unbounded benevolence; are too generous for your own good; full of sympathy. A hearty worshipper of the Deity; guided by spiritual premonition which tells you beforehand how things will eventuate. Follow it in everything, especially in matrimonial matters. You will take a great amount of pleasure in religious observances, and as a church member make an excellent one. You have the highest order of taste. You appreciate the beautiful, in flowers, scenery, manners, poetry, everything. I advise you to try your hand at writing. You write elegant letters, all your correspondents are delighted to get one. You have a fine music taste, appreciate music very much. Are a natural dancer. Have much more reason and memory than judgement and observation, and depth than practicality. Can imitate and copy. Nature has really done splendidly by you. Your power over the man you love and who loves you will be perfectly magical both to guide him in the right channel and to mold him into the highest order of manhood of which he is capable. Your influence every way will be most beneficial as it certainly will be most potential. There were some very favorable parental combinations to produce as fine a head and body as yours, though your head is some stronger than your body, enough so to warrant your taking good care of your health. Take plenty of exercise, sleep abundantly, and above all things get married.

Reported by
R. P. Lewis
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