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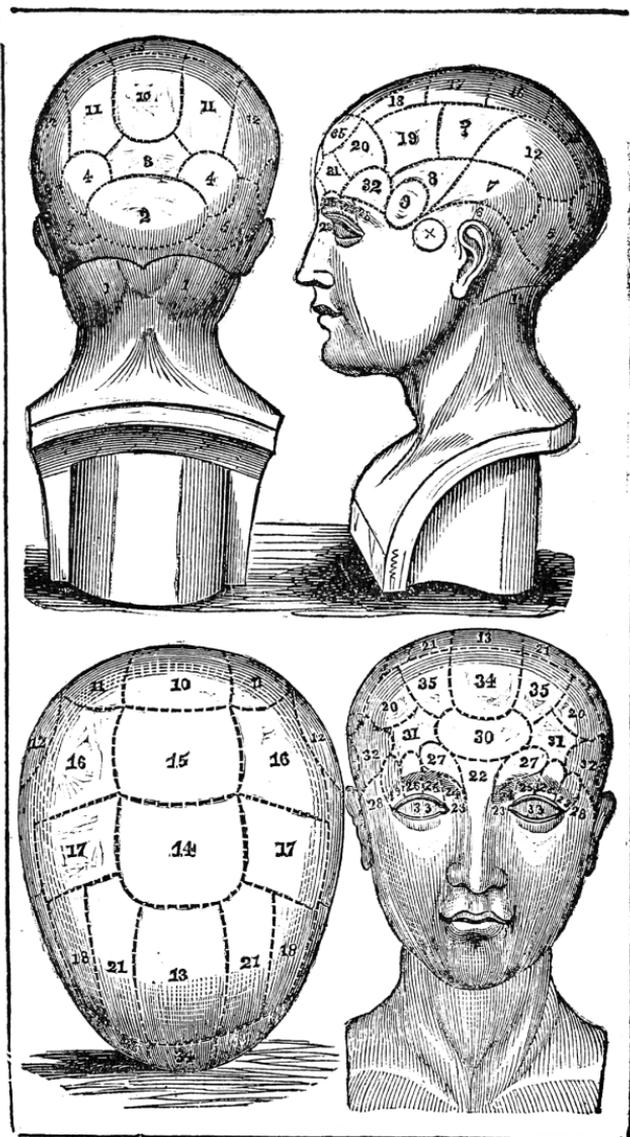
Having Your Bumps Felt

The physical measurements of the skull correlate to a person's personality

THE MAJORITY OF the scientific frivolities of previous centuries inflicted little or no real harm during their reign, and evaporated without much trace in the light of new discoveries. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the pseudoscience of phrenology, which caused wide-ranging injustices and misery in its time and, most damaging of all, reached out from its own grave to promote genocide at the close of the twentieth century.

THE GALL OF IT

The father of phrenology was the German physician Franz Josef Gall (1758–1828), a product of the University of Vienna, an institution that served as a breeding ground for several other spurious notions about the human race (see box on page 11). Gall developed the theory that the human brain is comprised of twenty-seven distinct zones, each of which is a wholly separate and autonomous organ with



The phrenological bust

individual responsibility for certain functions, characteristics and predispositions.

LESSONS IN IDIOCY

By 1925 the University of Vienna had become an intellectual hotbed of racist ideology. The most notorious and far-reaching of such notions was *Rassenpflege* – the quest for racial hygiene. Professor Otto Reche, director of the university's Department of Anthropology, was the most vocal proponent of such ideas, proclaiming, '*Rassenpflege* must be the basis for all domestic policy and at least a part of foreign policy as well.'

The more an individual used one of the zones, or allowed themselves to be driven by the emotional or physical urges dictated by it, the larger that zone would become – similar to an overused muscle. In Gall's defence, his findings were not completely off the mark: it is now known that certain areas of the brain are linked to specific functions or temperament, and that some of these areas can become enlarged with mental exercise.

Had Franz Gall finalized his research at this point, no harm would have resulted. His error was in expanding the basic premise into the foundation stone of a sizeable edifice of speculation and assumption. By 1805 Gall had decided that the twenty-seven zones must be responsible for the