

*The noble aim of education is
to awaken the divinity
that slumbers within*



Abstract and train of thoughts¹

The cultivation of mere intellect, as the means of material advancement, is the cause of ill-shapen monstrosities.

Review of *Moral Education: Its laws and methods*, a monograph by Professor J.R. Buchanan, M.D. 3

Pampering the intellect to the utter starvation of the inner faculties of man can only lead to perdition. 4

The first eighteen years of life, after the first dawn of intelligence, are more than enough for the whole curriculum to be delivered. 5



¹ Title page illustration: Immanuel Kant, by Maa-Chaan.

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Review of *Moral Education: Its laws and methods*,¹ a monograph by Professor J.R. Buchanan, M.D.

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IT AFFORDS US REAL PLEASURE to give an old and respected friend a greeting through the new edition of his valuable work — Professor Buchanan's latest thoughts on a complete scheme of education. This learned gentleman, as our readers may recollect, is the discoverer in the western world of that mysterious power latent in man, which has been further enlarged upon by Prof. Denton in his *Soul of Things*. It is Professor Buchanan who is the real founder of the Science of Psychometry.² The present work shows more than ever that like a few other spiritually wise men, the Professor does not feel himself at ease in the broad seat of modern civilization; he seems to have lost his way in the jungle of western materialism, but his brave spirit is struggling hard for the welfare of his race, who seem to be [46] even unconscious of their degradation. He has hit upon the real source of danger which is so gloomily overhanging the Western world and threatening it with moral and spiritual ruin.

- The cultivation of mere intellect, as the means of material advancement, leaving out the higher nature of man to go to seed, utterly untended and uncared for.
- The whole system of modern education is entirely at fault and the result is the production of ill-shapen monstrosities.

Education is the attempt to realize the harmony between nature and man. It is to find out the real aim and object of life and, when found, to render them an unswerving and life-long devotion. Education is the acquirement of the capacity of enjoying life to the fullest extent, its want is suicide, partial or complete. Professor Buchanan's ideal lies in the same direction as our own. Says the author:

A satisfactory knowledge of the psychic and physiological functions of life and their definite association with the brain and body and laws of interaction would necessarily indicate the laws of their development. That development is education. . . .³

In this present juncture when a commission is embarked on a perilous voyage for the discovery of a new and sounder basis for education in this country, Prof. Buchanan's work possesses a peculiar value and interest. Before the mould is prepared upon the western model for casting the minds of our future men and women, it is profitable to

¹ [Joseph Rodes Buchanan, M.D., *Moral Education: Its laws and methods*. Governments, Churches and Colleges for many thousand and years have striven in vain to conquer crime, disease and misery — a new method must therefore be adopted — if that method can be found in this volume, does it not indicate a better future for humanity? New York: Printed for the author by S.W. Green, c1882; 2nd ed.]

² [Consult "Psychometry is the natural but latent faculty in us," in the same series. — ED. PHIL.]

³ [Introduction, p. vi]

consider what competent experts declare as to the value of that model. Prof. Buchanan, after half a century's experience, delivers his opinion thus:

There seems to be nothing in existence at present on a large scale in the leading institutions which can be properly called a *liberal education* for that which makes the most imposing claims to be recognised as liberal education in the universities appears, when viewed from the standpoint of anthropology, not only lame, feeble, and defective in the *most essential* elements of a liberal education, but positively *illiberal* in its contractile influence upon the intellect and soul, as well as its degenerative influence upon the body.¹

Pampering the intellect to the utter starvation of the inner faculties of man can only lead to perdition.

The eminent Italian Professor, Signor Angelo de Gubernatis,² bears his testimony to the same effect: [47]

Under the present system the university is too widely estranged from everyday life, and too indifferent to it. Where vital force should be most felt it is wholly lacking. Students enter the universities and issue therefrom in much the same manner as did the prophet Jonah enter and come forth from the gloomy recesses of the whale. They go there to learn the mysteries of science, but of the science of life, by far the most important of all, they come away ignorant. One student studies four years, another five, another six; but they are all equally ignorant of the art of living. The university should properly be the *mother of genius and of character*; it is instead merely the censor for a certain number of years of a crowd of boys, who are forced to cheat at the examinations in order to rise from grade to grade till the desired doctor's vote is obtained. Then they are all obliged to feed together like sheep in a pasture; the examinations are the same for all; votes are cast with the same judgment, or rather lack of judgment, since *the best parrot of the class* can pass the most brilliant examination, and consequently gain the vote, while the greatest genius may perhaps lose the contest, disheartened by the trying formalities of the proceedings. It is never taken into account that one student might perhaps merit the title of doctor after only a month of trial, while another might fail to deserve it even at the expiration of twenty years. Should there be a few intellects more active than those around them, this discipline speedily brings them to the common level. . . . At present there is almost no intercourse between the university and the world without, and while from within it appears to be a great institution, outside its walls its influence is unfelt.

It is needless to multiply instances. Every thoughtful observer has found that the present pernicious system of pampering the intellect to the utter starvation of the other faculties can lead to no good result — not even lead the much favoured one to the highest pitch of development it is capable of attaining.

¹ [Chapter I, pp. 2-3]

² [Count Angelo De Gubernatis, 1840–1913, Italian man of letters, born in Turin and educated there and at Berlin, where he studied philology. He was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature fourteen times.]

The first eighteen years of life, after the first dawn of intelligence, are more than enough for the whole curriculum to be delivered.

Professor Buchanan, a student of the true science of man, has put forward a system of education which is as scientific as beneficial. Education naturally admits of division into five classes, in accordance with the different classes of faculties to be dealt with.

- 1 Physiological Development, aiming [at] the formation of the manly, healthy constitution capable of lasting a hundred years and competent to enjoy life and make it a source of benefit to humanity.
- 2 Industrial Education, which alone can lead to the disappearance of those unproductive classes, now preying upon the life-blood of society like [48] vampires.
- 3 Medical Education, supplying the people with means to stamp out diseases at their first approach and eradicate our splendid heritage of diseases.
- 4 Moral or Religious Education, whereby the life secured by the other three kinds of education, is made worth living.
- 5 And lastly comes Intellectual Education, which now holds its revels on the ruin and degradation of man.

The scheme is complete but it is likely to provoke a sneering smile on the self-satisfied dogmatic lip, as being quite utopian. Life is not long enough, it may be urged, for such elaborate training. But the utter silliness of such objection has been conclusively shown by the learned Professor. The first eighteen years of life after the first dawn of intelligence is quite enough for the whole curriculum being gone through. We heartily commend this able and original work to our readers. Let it not be taken as unforgivable sin that the book has come into the world a little too soon. It will be at all events one of the necessary missing-links in the evolution of human thought and institutions.



“Love is the healing power of the successful physician,” in our Higher Ethics and Devotion Series.

“Psychometry is the natural but latent faculty in us,” in our Constitution of Man Series.

“The ennobling power of thoracic expansion,” in our Living the Life Series.