

**ENGLISH EDUCATION: BEING AN  
ATTEMPT TO PLACE THE TEACHING AND  
STUDY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ON  
A TRUER AND BROADER BASIS THAN IS  
AT PRESENT RECOGNISED: AN ESSAY**

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English Education: Being an Attempt to Place the Teaching and Study of the English Language on a truer and broader basis than is at present recognised: an essay by Angus Macpherson

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**ANGUS MACPHERSON**

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# ENGLISH EDUCATION

BEING AN ATTEMPT TO PLACE THE TEACHING AND STUDY OF  
THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ON A TRUER AND BROADER  
BASIS THAN IS AT PRESENT RECOGNISED.

## AN ESSAY

BY

ANGUS MACPHERSON,

FORMERLY HEAD-MASTER OF THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT IN THE  
"GLASGOW COLLEGIATE ACADEMY,"  
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"A system in which religion and science, like twin beautiful sisters, moving together through the country hand in hand, shall extend to a nation ripe, ready, and anxious to receive them, the blessed fruits of the tree of knowledge—a knowledge which shall qualify men to discharge their duties as citizens here—a knowledge which shall qualify them hereafter to be members of that far more enduring, far more desirable city, whose builder and whose maker is God."

LORD FAIRFAX.

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Nov 19, 1931

TO  
MY BROTHER,  
THROUGH  
WHOSE COUNTENANCE AND SUPPORT  
I HAVE BEEN ENABLED TO REDUCE TO PRACTICE  
THE PRINCIPLES THEREIN EXHIBITED,  
THE FOLLOWING ESSAY  
IS GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED.





## ESSAY.

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IF MAN consists of a material body, and an immaterial soul, the former connecting him with the creatures of the material world, the latter linking him to those of the spiritual, it follows, that while his material being is impelled by physical necessities, his soul as naturally soars heavenward, in obedience to laws as necessary.

This theory of the natural necessity of spiritual aspiration is deeply qualified, we all know, by the free-will of man being perverted to unnatural issues. "What man has made of man," is recorded in the annals of the past. What man still makes of man, is stamped upon the consciousness of the present.

This being admitted, we have here, then, we may almost say, a being of two natures, one the given condition and basis of the other, placed in a sphere consisting of material and spiritual reactive agents, for the developing of its inborn capacities into efficient powers.

Doubtless this being has been created for some high and noble purpose, for it possesses energies adequate thereto, and has been placed in a situation eminently fitted to develop and strengthen these. Moreover it has been gifted beyond any other creature with reason and religion.

The spirit of the brute goeth downward, and its purpose ends with its life; but reason and religion demand that the purpose for which man was made be beyond himself, and his short-lived existence here—that the material be but the cradle of the infant soul, and that at death it but casts aside the swaddling bands of mortality to step into the eternal youthfulness of spirit life.

That education which will best fit us to act a manly part in this life, and enable us to work out our salvation for the next “with fear and trembling,” ought to be the one pursued by us. A full and harmonious development of all the powers of body and mind, and their controlment by a pure religious morality, will place us in this position.

Physical education is the first in point of time, being in fact the groundwork of the mental. Juvenal’s well-known phrase, “*Mens sana in sano corpore*,” pithily embodies this fact; and it has been admirably commented on by Locke in his work on Education, “A sound mind in a sound body is, indeed a short but full description of a happy state in this world; he that has these two, has little more to wish for; and he that wants either of them, is but little the better for anything else: men’s happiness or misery is for the most part of their own making.”

On the development of our physical constitution depend greatly the extent and power of the available means for fulfilling the ends of our being. The mental power should be made as effective as possible to perform the commands of the will. The condition of the body modifies the character and power of the mind. Physical training should be consistent with the nature and prescribed by the laws of the physical constitution, as then alone can it possess a tendency to give the body the full use of its powers.

ESSAY ON EDUCATION.

There are natural laws  
that exist cannot be  
in the lower range of  
Mind for any other

Thus, by studying the constitution of the body, we find out proper exercises for training it to full development. Ought we not to do the same in reference to the mind? As there are natural laws to which the body is subject, and obedience to which we must prescribe the exercises, so there are natural laws which the mind must obey to render its training successful.

In the first stages of education, more attention ought to be paid to the physical and moral than to the intellectual. Important as the training of the intellect undoubtedly is, it must give place to the training of the heart—that is, the implanting there of true and enduring habits of virtue and piety. "For one man made wretched in life for want of knowledge, there are an hundred through immorality and vice."

Though nature allows us an earlier control over the physical and moral, yet we must not delay too long the cultivation of the intellectual powers, as the mind and body should be as early as possible under the guidance of reason. There is a danger, however, of expanding the mind too early, to the damaging of the physical organisation. We must keep always in view the relation these three parts of our nature bear to each other. We must not overtask one, to the hurt of the others. All three must be developed harmoniously together.

Education may be divided into four great periods.

*First*—The Education of Infancy; during which period parents and nurses are naturally the fittest guides, and the forming of a healthy constitution and good habits their principal care. This period extends over the first five or six years.

*Second*—School Education; during which parents and