

Emile, or Education

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

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Author's Preface

[After Locke. Developmentalism.]

... the most useful of all arts, the art of training men, is still neglected. Even after Locke's book was written the subject remained almost untouched ...

We know nothing of childhood; and with our mistaken notions the further we advance the further we go astray. The wisest writers devote themselves to what a man ought to know, without asking what a child is capable of learning. They are always looking for the man in the child, without considering what he is before he becomes a man.

... There are two things to be considered with regard to any scheme. In the first place, "Is it good in itself?" In the second, "Can it be easily put into practice?"

With regard to the first of these it is enough that the scheme should be intelligible and feasible in itself, that what is good in it should be adapted to the nature of things, in this case, for example, that the proposed method of education should be suitable to man and adapted to the human heart. ...

BOOK I

[Nature vs. "civilization." Horticulture metaphor]

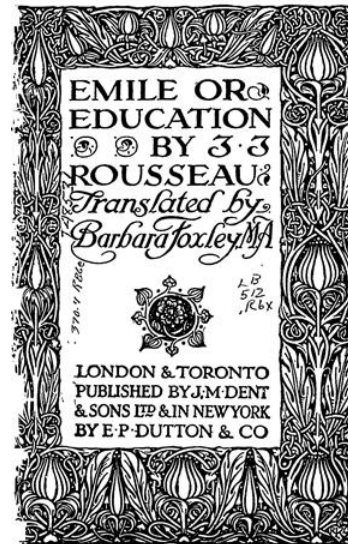
God makes all things good; man meddles with them and they become evil. He forces one soil to yield the products of another, one tree to bear another's fruit. He confuses and confounds time, place, and natural conditions. He mutilates his dog, his horse, and his slave. He destroys and defaces all things; he loves all that is deformed and monstrous; he will have nothing as nature made it, not even man himself, who must learn his paces like a saddle-horse, and be shaped to his master's taste like the trees in his garden.

Yet things would be worse without this education, and mankind cannot be made by halves. Under existing conditions a man left to himself from birth would be more of a monster than the rest. Prejudice, authority, necessity, example, all the social conditions into which we are plunged, would stifle nature in him and put nothing in her place. She would be like a sapling chance sown in the midst of the highway, bent hither and thither and soon crushed by the passers-by.

Tender, anxious mother, I appeal to you. You can remove this young tree from the highway and shield it from the crushing force of social conventions. Tend and water it ere it dies. One day its fruit will reward your care. From the outset raise a wall round your child's soul; another may sketch the plan, you alone should carry it into execution.

Plants are fashioned by cultivation, man by education. ...

[The social: local vs. cosmopolitan]



The smaller social group, firmly united in itself and dwelling apart from others, tends to withdraw itself from the larger society. Every patriot hates foreigners; they are only men, and nothing to him. This defect is inevitable, but of little importance. The great thing is to be kind to our neighbours. Among strangers the Spartan was selfish, grasping, and unjust, but unselfishness, justice, and harmony ruled his home life. Distrust those cosmopolitans who search out remote duties in their books and neglect those that lie nearest. Such philosophers will love the Tartars to avoid loving their neighbour.

[Natural man contrasted to citizen. Spartan examples.]

The natural man lives for himself; he is the unit, the whole, dependent only on himself and on his like. The citizen is but the numerator of a fraction, whose value depends on its denominator; his value depends upon the whole, that is, on the community. Good social institutions are those best fitted to make a man unnatural, to exchange his independence for dependence, to merge the unit in the group, so that he no longer regards himself as one, but as a part of the whole, and is only conscious of the common life. A citizen of Rome was neither Caius nor Lucius, he was a Roman; he ever loved his country better than his life. The captive Regulus professed himself a Carthaginian; as a foreigner he refused to take his seat in the Senate except at his master's bidding. He scorned the attempt to save his life. He had his will, and returned in triumph to a cruel death. There is no great likeness between Regulus and the men of our own day.

The Spartan Pedaretes presented himself for admission to the council of the Three Hundred and was rejected; he went away rejoicing that there were three hundred Spartans better than himself. I suppose he was in earnest; there is no reason to doubt it. That was a citizen.

A Spartan mother had five sons with the army. A Helot arrived; trembling she asked his news. "Your five sons are slain." "Vile slave, was that what I asked thee?" "We have won the victory." She hastened to the temple to render thanks to the gods.

That was a citizen. ...

[Plato, *Lycurgus*.]

If you wish to know what is meant by public education, read Plato's *Republic*. Those who merely judge books by their titles take this for a treatise on politics, but it is the finest treatise on education ever written.

In popular estimation the Platonic Institute stands for all that is fanciful and unreal. For my own part I should have thought the system of Lycurgus far more impracticable had he merely committed it to writing. Plato only sought to purge man's heart; Lycurgus turned it from its natural course.

... true education consists less in precept than in practice. We begin to learn when we begin to live; our education begins with ourselves, our first teacher is our nurse.

... People think only of preserving their child's life; this is not enough, he must be taught to preserve his own life when he is a man, to bear the buffets of fortune, to brave wealth and poverty, to live at need among the snows of Iceland or on the scorching rocks of Malta. In vain you guard against death; he must needs die; and even if you do not kill him with your precautions, they are mistaken. Teach him to live rather than to avoid death: life is not breath, but action, the use of our senses, our mind, our faculties, every part of ourselves which makes us conscious of our being. Life consists less in length of days than in the keen sense of living. A man may

be buried at a hundred and may never have lived at all. He would have fared better had he died young.

[Against swaddling and constraints.]

Our wisdom is slavish prejudice, our customs consist in control, constraint, compulsion.—Civilised man is born and dies a slave. The infant is bound up in swaddling clothes, the corpse is nailed down in his coffin.—All his life long man is imprisoned by our institutions.

I am told that many midwives profess to improve the shape of the infant's head by rubbing, and they are allowed to do it. Our heads are not good enough as God made them, they must be moulded outside by the nurse and inside by the philosopher. ...

The new-born child requires to stir and stretch his limbs to free them from the stiffness resulting from being curled up so long. His limbs are stretched indeed, but he is not allowed to move them. Even the head is confined by a cap. One would think they were afraid the child should look as if it were alive.

Thus the internal impulses which should lead to growth find an insurmountable obstacle in the way of the necessary movements. The child exhausts his strength in vain struggles, or he gains strength very slowly. He was freer and less constrained in the womb; he has gained nothing by birth.

The inaction, the constraint to which the child's limbs are subjected can only check the circulation of the blood and humours; it can only hinder the child's growth in size and strength, and injure its constitution. Where these absurd precautions are absent, all the men are tall, strong, and well-made. Where children are swaddled, the country swarms with the hump-backed, the lame, the bow-legged, the rickety, and every kind of deformity. In our fear lest the body should become deformed by free movement, we hasten to deform it by putting it in a press. We make our children helpless lest they should hurt themselves.

["Comprachicos"? "Free-range kids."] ...

[Hardiness.]

Fix your eyes on nature, follow the path traced by her. She keeps children at work, she hardens them by all kinds of difficulties, she soon teaches them the meaning of pain and grief. They cut their teeth and are feverish, sharp colics bring on convulsions, they are choked by fits of coughing and tormented by worms, evil humours corrupt the blood, germs of various kinds ferment in it, causing dangerous eruptions. Sickness and danger play the chief part in infancy. One half of the children who are born die before their eighth year. The child who has overcome hardships has gained strength, and as soon as he can use his life he holds it more securely.

This is nature's law; why contradict it? ...

Man is born to suffer; pain is the means of his preservation. His childhood is happy, knowing only pain of body. ...

[The tutor's calling.]

... There is much discussion as to the characteristics of a good tutor. My first requirement, and it implies a good many more, is that he should not take up his task for reward. There are callings so great that they cannot be undertaken for money without showing our unfitness for them; such callings are those of the soldier and the teacher.

[Method of this book.]

... I have therefore decided to take an imaginary pupil, to assume on my own part the age, health, knowledge, and talents required for the work of his education, to guide him from birth to manhood, when he needs no guide but himself. ... I have been content to state those principles the truth of which is self-evident. ...

[On doctors and medicine.]

This lying art, invented rather for the ills of the mind than of the body, is useless to both alike; it does less to cure us of our diseases than to fill us with alarm. It does less to ward off death than to make us dread its approach. It exhausts life rather than prolongs it; should it even prolong life it would only be to the prejudice of the race, since it makes us set its precautions before society and our fears before our duties. It is the knowledge of danger that makes us afraid. If we thought ourselves invulnerable we should know no fear. The poet armed Achilles against danger and so robbed him of the merit of courage; on such terms any man would be an Achilles.

Would you find a really brave man? Seek him where there are no doctors, where the results of disease are unknown, and where death is little thought of. By nature a man bears pain bravely and dies in peace. It is the doctors with their rules, the philosophers with their precepts, the priests with their exhortations, who debase the heart and make us afraid to die.

Give me a pupil who has no need of these, or I will have nothing to do with him. No one else shall spoil my work, I will educate him myself or not at all.

... It is one of the misfortunes of the rich to be cheated on all sides; what wonder they think ill of mankind! It is riches that corrupt men, and the rich are rightly the first to feel the defects of the only tool they know. Everything is ill-done for them, except what they do themselves, and they do next to nothing. ...

[Nursing and diet. Country over town.]

Fresh air affects children's constitutions, particularly in early years. It enters every pore of a soft and tender skin, it has a powerful effect on their young bodies. Its effects can never be destroyed. So I should not agree with those who take a country woman from her village and shut her up in one room in a town and her nursling with her. I would rather send him to breathe the fresh air of the country than the foul air of the town. ...

Men are not made to be crowded together in ant-hills, but scattered over the earth to till it. The more they are massed together, the more corrupt they become. Disease and vice are the sure results of over-crowded cities. ...

[Bodily freedom.]

The only habit the child should be allowed to contract is that of having no habits; let him be carried on either arm, let him be accustomed to offer either hand, to use one or other indifferently; let him not want to eat, sleep, or do anything at fixed hours, nor be unable to be left alone by day or night. Prepare the way for his control of his liberty and the use of his strength by leaving his body its natural habit, by making him capable of lasting self-control, of doing all that he wills when his will is formed.

...

[Are children naturally evil?]

... All wickedness comes from weakness. The child is only naughty because he is weak; make him strong and he will be good; if we could do everything we should never do wrong. ...

Reason alone teaches us to know good and evil. Therefore conscience, which makes us love the one and hate the other, though it is independent of reason, cannot develop without it. Before the age of reason we do good or ill without knowing it, and there is no morality in our actions, although there is sometimes in our feeling with regard to other people's actions in relation to ourselves. A child wants to overturn everything he sees. He breaks and smashes everything he can reach; he seizes a bird as he seizes a stone, and strangles it without knowing what he is about.

Why so? In the first place philosophy will account for this by inbred sin, man's pride, love of power, selfishness, spite; perhaps it will say in addition to this that the child's consciousness of his own weakness makes him eager to use his strength, to convince himself of it. ... To make or to destroy, it is all one to him; change is what he seeks, and all change involves action. If he seems to enjoy destructive activity it is only that it takes time to make things and very little time to break them, so that the work of destruction accords better with his eagerness.

First Maxim.—Far from being too strong, children are not strong enough for all the claims of nature. Give them full use of such strength as they have; they will not abuse it.

Second Maxim.—Help them and supply the experience and strength they lack whenever the need is of the body.

Third Maxim.—In the help you give them confine yourself to what is really needful, without granting anything to caprice or unreason; for they will not be tormented by caprice if you do not call it into existence, seeing it is no part of nature.

Fourth Maxim.—Study carefully their speech and gestures, so that at an age when they are incapable of deceit you may discriminate between those desires which come from nature and those which spring from perversity.

The spirit of these rules is to give children more real liberty and less power, to let them do more for themselves and demand less of others; so that by teaching them from the first to confine their wishes within the limits of their powers they will scarcely feel the want of whatever is not in their power. ...

[Language development]

BOOK II

We have now reached the second phase of life; infancy ...

If the child is delicate and sensitive, if by nature he begins to cry for nothing, I let him cry in vain and soon check his tears at their source. So long as he cries I will not go near him; I come at once when he leaves off crying. He will soon be quiet when he wants to call me, or rather he will utter a single cry. Children learn the meaning of signs by their effects; they have no other meaning for them. However much a child hurts himself when he is alone, he rarely cries, unless he expects to be heard.

Should he fall or bump his head, or make his nose bleed, or cut his fingers, I shall show no alarm, nor shall I make any fuss over him; I shall take no notice, at any rate at first. The harm is done; he must bear it; all my zeal could only frighten him more and make him more nervous. Indeed it is not the blow but the fear of it which

distresses us when we are hurt. I shall spare him this suffering at least, for he will certainly regard the injury as he sees me regard it; if he finds that I hasten anxiously to him, if I pity him or comfort him, he will think he is badly hurt. If he finds I take no notice, he will soon recover himself, and will think the wound is healed when it ceases to hurt. This is the time for his first lesson in courage, and by bearing slight ills without fear we gradually learn to bear greater.

I shall not take pains to prevent Emile hurting himself; far from it, I should be vexed if he never hurt himself, if he grew up unacquainted with pain. To bear pain is his first and most useful lesson. It seems as if children were small and weak on purpose to teach them these valuable lessons without danger. ...

With our foolish and pedantic methods we are always preventing children from learning what they could learn much better by themselves, while we neglect what we alone can teach them. ...

Emile shall have no head-pads, no go-carts, no leading-strings; or at least as soon as he can put one foot before another he shall only be supported along pavements, and he shall be taken quickly across them. Instead of keeping him mewed up in a stuffy room, take him out into a meadow every day; let him run about, let him struggle and fall again and again, the oftener the better; he will learn all the sooner to pick himself up. The delights of liberty will make up for many bruises. My pupil will hurt himself oftener than yours, but he will always be merry; your pupils may receive fewer injuries, but they are always thwarted, constrained, and sad. I doubt whether they are any better off.

... It is with this second phase that the real personal life has its beginning; it is then that the child becomes conscious of himself. During every moment of his life memory calls up the feeling of self; he becomes really one person, always the same, and therefore capable of joy or sorrow. Hence we must begin to consider him as a moral being.

Although we know approximately the limits of human life and our chances of attaining those limits, nothing is more uncertain than the length of the life of any one of us. Very few reach old age. The chief risks occur at the beginning of life; the shorter our past life, the less we must hope to live. Of all the children who are born scarcely one half reach adolescence, and it is very likely your pupil will not live to be a man.

What is to be thought, therefore, of that cruel education which sacrifices the present to an uncertain future, that burdens a child with all sorts of restrictions and begins by making him miserable, in order to prepare him for some far-off happiness which he may never enjoy? ...

Men, be kind to your fellow-men; this is your first duty, kind to every age and station, kind to all that is not foreign to humanity. What wisdom can you find that is greater than kindness? Love childhood, indulge its sports, its pleasures, its delightful instincts. ...

Now is the time, you say, to correct his evil tendencies; we must increase suffering in childhood, when it is less keenly felt, to lessen it in manhood. But how do you know that you can carry out all these fine schemes; how do you know that all this fine teaching with which you overwhelm the feeble mind of the child will not do him more harm than good in the future? ... And what proof can you give me that those

evil tendencies you profess to cure are not the result of your foolish precautions rather than of nature? ...

Mankind has its place in the sequence of things; childhood has its place in the sequence of human life; the man must be treated as a man and the child as a child. Give each his place, and keep him there. ...

Absolute good and evil are unknown to us. In this life they are blended together ... The happiest is he who suffers least; the most miserable is he who enjoys least. Ever more sorrow than joy—this is the lot of all of us. Man's happiness in this world is but a negative state; it must be reckoned by the fewness of his ills.

... All desire implies a want, and all wants are painful; hence our wretchedness consists in the disproportion between our desires and our powers. A conscious being whose powers were equal to his desires would be perfectly happy.

What then is human wisdom? Where is the path of true happiness? The mere limitation of our desires is not enough, for if they were less than our powers, part of our faculties would be idle, and we should not enjoy our whole being; neither is the mere extension of our powers enough, for if our desires were also increased we should only be the more miserable. True happiness consists in decreasing the difference between our desires and our powers, in establishing a perfect equilibrium between the power and the will. Then only, when all its forces are employed, will the soul be at rest and man will find himself in his true position. ...

Our moral ills are the result of prejudice, crime alone excepted, and that depends on ourselves; our bodily ills either put an end to themselves or to us. Time or death will cure them, but the less we know how to bear it, the greater is our pain, and we suffer more in our efforts to cure our diseases than if we endured them. Live according to nature; be patient, get rid of the doctors; you will not escape death, but you will only die once, while the doctors make you die daily through your diseased imagination; their lying art, instead of prolonging your days, robs you of all delight in them. I am always asking what real good this art has done to mankind. True, the doctors cure some who would have died, but they kill millions who would have lived. If you are wise you will decline to take part in this lottery when the odds are so great against you. Suffer, die, or get better; but whatever you do, live while you are alive.

Human institutions are one mass of folly and contradiction. As our life loses its value we set a higher price upon it. The old regret life more than the young; they do not want to lose all they have spent in preparing for its enjoyment. At sixty it is cruel to die when one has not begun to live. Man is credited with a strong desire for self-preservation, and this desire exists; but we fail to perceive that this desire, as felt by us, is largely the work of man. In a natural state man is only eager to preserve his life while he has the means for its preservation; when self-preservation is no longer possible, he resigns himself to his fate and dies without vain torments. Nature teaches us the first law of resignation. Savages, like wild beasts, make very little struggle against death, and meet it almost without a murmur. When this natural law is overthrown reason establishes another, but few discern it, and man's resignation is never so complete as nature's.

Prudence! Prudence which is ever bidding us look forward into the future, a future which in many cases we shall never reach; here is the real source of all our troubles! How mad it is for so short-lived a creature as man to look forward into a future to which he rarely attains, while he neglects the present which is his? ... How many

princes make themselves miserable for the loss of lands they never saw, and how many merchants lament in Paris over some misfortune in the Indies!

... There is a healthy, cheerful, strong, and vigorous man; it does me good to see him; his eyes tell of content and well-being; he is the picture of happiness. A letter comes by post; the happy man glances at it, it is addressed to him, he opens it and reads it. In a moment he is changed, he turns pale and falls into a swoon. When he comes to himself he weeps, laments, and groans, he tears his hair, and his shrieks re-echo through the air. You would say he was in convulsions. Fool, what harm has this bit of paper done you? ...

There is only one man who gets his own way—he who can get it single-handed; therefore freedom, not power, is the greatest good. That man is truly free who desires what he is able to perform, and does what he desires. This is my fundamental maxim. Apply it to childhood, and all the rules of education spring from it.

Society has enfeebled man ...

When our natural tendencies have not been interfered with by human prejudice and human institutions, the happiness alike of children and of men consists in the enjoyment of their liberty. ...

[Dependence. The General Will as solution.]

These are weighty considerations, and they provide a solution for all the conflicting problems of our social system. There are two kinds of dependence: dependence on things, which is the work of nature; and dependence on men, which is the work of society. Dependence on things, being non-moral, does no injury to liberty and begets no vices; dependence on men, being out of order, gives rise to every kind of vice, and through this master and slave become mutually depraved. If there is any cure for this social evil, it is to be found in the substitution of law for the individual; in arming the general will with a real strength beyond the power of any individual will. If the laws of nations, like the laws of nature, could never be broken by any human power, dependence on men would become dependence on things; all the advantages of a state of nature would be combined with all the advantages of social life in the commonwealth. The liberty which preserves a man from vice would be united with the morality which raises him to virtue. ...

Nature provides for the child's growth in her own fashion, and this should never be thwarted. Do not make him sit still when he wants to run about, nor run when he wants to be quiet. If we did not spoil our children's wills by our blunders their desires would be free from caprice. Let them run, jump, and shout to their heart's content. All their own activities are instincts of the body for its growth in strength. Above all, beware of teaching the child empty phrases of politeness ...

Not so; for the liberty I give my pupil makes up for the slight hardships to which he is exposed. I see little fellows playing in the snow, stiff and blue with cold, scarcely able to stir a finger. They could go and warm themselves if they chose, but they do not choose; if you forced them to come in they would feel the harshness of constraint a hundredfold more than the sharpness of the cold. ...

Do you know the surest way to make your child miserable? Let him have everything he wants ...

The very words *obey* and *command* will be excluded from his vocabulary, still more those of *duty* and *obligation*; but the words strength, necessity, weakness, and

constraint must have a large place in it. Before the age of reason it is impossible to form any idea of moral beings or social relations; so avoid, as far as may be, the use of words which express these ideas ...

[Reason?]

“Reason with children” was Locke’s chief maxim; it is in the height of fashion at present, and I hardly think it is justified by its results; those children who have been constantly reasoned with strike me as exceedingly silly. Of all man’s faculties, reason, which is, so to speak, compounded of all the rest, is the last and choicest growth, and it is this you would use for the child’s early training. To make a man reasonable is the coping stone of a good education, and yet you profess to train a child through his reason! You begin at the wrong end, you make the end the means. If children understood reason they would not need education, but by talking to them from their earliest age in a language they do not understand you accustom them to be satisfied with words, to question all that is said to them, to think themselves as wise as their teachers; you train them to be argumentative and rebellious ...

[Circular obedience training]

Most of the moral lessons which are and can be given to children may be reduced to this formula:

Master.

You must not do that.

Child.

Why not?

Master.

Because it is wrong.

Child.

Wrong! What is wrong?

Master.

What is forbidden you.

Child.

Why is it wrong to do what is forbidden?

Master.

You will be punished for disobedience.

Child.

I will do it when no one is looking.

Master.

We shall watch you.

Child.

I will hide.

Master.

We shall ask you what you were doing.

Child.

I shall tell a lie.

Master.

You must not tell lies.

Child.

Why must not I tell lies?

Master.

Because it is wrong, etc.

That is the inevitable circle. Go beyond it, and the child will not understand you. What sort of use is there in such teaching? I should greatly like to know what you would substitute for this dialogue. It would have puzzled Locke himself. It is no part of a child's business to know right and wrong, to perceive the reason for a man's duties.

Nature would have them children before they are men. If we try to invert this order we shall produce a forced fruit immature and flavourless, fruit which will be rotten before it is ripe; we shall have young doctors and old children. Childhood has its own ways of seeing, thinking, and feeling; nothing is more foolish than to try and substitute our ways; and I should no more expect judgment in a ten-year-old child than I should expect him to be five feet high. Indeed, what use would reason be to him at that age? It is the curb of strength, and the child does not need the curb. ...

Treat your scholar according to his age. Put him in his place from the first, and keep him in it, so that he no longer tries to leave it. Then before he knows what goodness is, he will be practising its chief lesson. Give him no orders at all, absolutely none. Do not even let him think that you claim any authority over him. Let him only know that he is weak and you are strong, that his condition and yours puts him at your mercy; let this be perceived, learned, and felt. Let him early find upon his proud neck, the heavy yoke which nature has imposed upon us, the heavy yoke of necessity, under which every finite being must bow. Let him find this necessity in things, not in the caprices of man; let the curb be force, not authority. If there is something he should not do, do not forbid him, but prevent him without explanation or reasoning; what you give him, give it at his first word without prayers or entreaties, above all without conditions. Give willingly, refuse unwillingly, but let your refusal be irrevocable; let no entreaties move you; let your "No," once uttered, be a wall of brass, against which the child may exhaust his strength some five or six times, but in the end he will try no more to overthrow it.

Thus you will make him patient, equable, calm, and resigned, even when he does not get all he wants; for it is in man's nature to bear patiently with the nature of things, but not with the ill-will of another. A child never rebels against, "There is none left," unless he thinks the reply is false. Moreover, there is no middle course; you must either make no demands on him at all, or else you must fashion him to perfect obedience. The worst education of all is to leave him hesitating between his own will and yours, constantly disputing whether you or he is master; I would rather a hundred times that he were master. ...

Give your scholar no verbal lessons; he should be taught by experience alone; never punish him, for he does not know what it is to do wrong; never make him say, "Forgive me," for he does not know how to do you wrong. Wholly unmoral in his actions, he can do nothing morally wrong, and he deserves neither punishment nor reproof. ...

Let us lay it down as an incontrovertible rule that the first impulses of nature are always right; there is no original sin in the human heart, the how and why of the entrance of every vice can be traced. The only natural passion is self-love or selfishness taken in a wider sense. This selfishness is good in itself and in relation to ourselves; and as the child has no necessary relations to other people he is naturally indifferent to them; his self-love only becomes good or bad by the use made of it and the relations established by its means. Until the time is ripe for the appearance of reason, that guide of selfishness, the main thing is that the child shall do nothing because you are watching him or listening to him; in a word, nothing because of other people, but only what nature asks of him; then he will never do wrong.

I do not mean to say that he will never do any mischief, never hurt himself, never break a costly ornament if you leave it within his reach. He might do much damage without doing wrong, since wrong-doing depends on the harmful intention which will never be his. ...

If once he meant to do harm, his whole education would be ruined; he would be almost hopelessly bad. ...

May I venture at this point to state the greatest, the most important, the most useful rule of education? It is: Do not save time, but lose it. I hope that every-day readers will excuse my paradoxes; you cannot avoid paradox if you think for yourself, and whatever you may say I would rather fall into paradox than into prejudice. The most dangerous period in human life lies between birth and the age of twelve. It is the time when errors and vices spring up, while as yet there is no means to destroy them; when the means of destruction are ready, the roots have gone too deep to be pulled up. ...

Therefore the education of the earliest years should be merely negative. It consists, not in teaching virtue or truth, but in preserving the heart from vice and from the spirit of error. ...

Reverse the usual practice and you will almost always do right. Fathers and teachers who want to make the child, not a child but a man of learning, think it never too soon to scold, correct, reprove, threaten, bribe, teach, and reason. Do better than they; be reasonable, and do not reason with your pupil Exercise his body, his limbs, his senses, his strength, but keep his mind idle as long as you can. ... Leave childhood to ripen in your children. In a word, beware of giving anything they need to-day if it can be deferred without danger to to-morrow.

There is another point to be considered which confirms the suitability of this method: it is the child's individual bent, which must be thoroughly known before we can choose the fittest moral training. Every mind has its own form, in accordance with which it must be controlled ...

Remember you must be a man yourself before you try to train a man; you yourself must set the pattern he shall copy. ...

This is one reason why I want to bring up Emile in the country, far from those miserable lacqueys, the most degraded of men except their masters; far from the vile morals of the town, whose gilded surface makes them seductive and contagious to children; while the vices of peasants, unadorned and in their naked grossness, are more fitted to repel than to seduce, when there is no motive for imitating them. ...

Our first duties are to ourselves; our first feelings are centred on self; all our instincts are at first directed to our own preservation and our own welfare. Thus the first notion of justice springs not from what we owe to others, but from what is due to us. Here is another error in popular methods of education. If you talk to children of their duties, and not of their rights, you are beginning at the wrong end, and telling them what they cannot understand, what cannot be of any interest to them. ...

[Property. Gardening example.]

We must therefore go back to the origin of property, for that is where the first idea of it must begin. The child, living in the country, will have got some idea of field work; eyes and leisure suffice for that, and he will have both. In every age, and especially in childhood, we want to create, to copy, to produce, to give all the signs of power and activity. He will hardly have seen the gardener at work twice, sowing, planting, and growing vegetables, before he will want to garden himself.

According to the principles I have already laid down, I shall not thwart him; on the contrary, I shall approve of his plan, share his hobby, and work with him, not for his pleasure but my own; at least, so he thinks; I shall be his under-gardener, and dig the ground for him till his arms are strong enough to do it; he will take possession of it by planting a bean, and this is surely a more sacred possession, and one more worthy of respect, than that of Nuñez Balboa, who took possession of South America in the name of the King of Spain, by planting his banner on the coast of the Southern Sea.

We water the beans every day, we watch them coming up with the greatest delight. Day by day I increase this delight by saying, "Those belong to you." To explain what that word "belong" means, I show him how he has given his time, his labour, and his trouble, his very self to it; that in this ground there is a part of himself which he can claim against all the world, as he could withdraw draw his arm from the hand of another man who wanted to keep it against his will.

One fine day he hurries up with his watering-can in his hand. What a scene of woe! Alas! all the beans are pulled up, the soil is dug over, you can scarcely find the place. Oh! what has become of my labour, my work, the beloved fruits of my care and effort? Who has stolen my property? Who has taken my beans? The young heart revolts; the first feeling of injustice brings its sorrow and bitterness; tears come in torrents, the unhappy child fills the air with cries and groans. I share his sorrow and anger; we look around us, we make inquiries. At last we discover that the gardener did it. We send for him.

But we are greatly mistaken. The gardener, hearing our complaint, begins to complain louder than we:—

What, gentlemen, was it you who spoilt my work! I had sown some Maltese melons; the seed was given me as something quite out of the common, and I meant to give you a treat when they were ripe; but you have planted your miserable beans and destroyed my melons, which were coming up so nicely, and I can never get any more. You have behaved very badly to me and you have deprived yourselves of the pleasure of eating most delicious melons.

Jean Jacques.

My poor Robert, you must forgive us. You had given your labour and your pains to it. I see we were wrong to spoil your work, but we will send to Malta for some more seed for you, and we will never dig the ground again without finding out if some one else has been beforehand with us.

Robert.

Well, gentlemen, you need not trouble yourselves, for there is no more waste ground. I dig what my father tilled; every one does the same, and all the land you see has been occupied time out of mind.

Emile.

Mr. Robert, do people often lose the seed of Maltese melons?

Robert.

No indeed, sir; we do not often find such silly little gentlemen as you. No one meddles with his neighbour's garden; every one respects other people's work so that his own may be safe.

Emile.

But I have not got a garden.

Robert.

I don't care; if you spoil mine I won't let you walk in it, for you see I do not mean to lose my labour.

Jean Jacques.

Could not we suggest an arrangement with this kind Robert? Let him give my young friend and myself a corner of his garden to cultivate, on condition that he has half the crop.

Robert.

You may have it free. But remember I shall dig up your beans if you touch my melons.

In this attempt to show how a child may be taught certain primitive ideas we see how the notion of property goes back naturally to the right of the first occupier to the results of his work. That is plain and simple, and quite within the child's grasp. From that to the rights of property and exchange there is but a step, after which you must stop short. ...

[Lessons: deeds, not words]

... Young teacher, pray consider this example, and remember that your lessons should always be in deeds rather than words, for children soon forget what they say or what is said to them, but not what they have done nor what has been done to them.

...

I have already said enough to show that children should never receive punishment merely as such; it should always come as the natural consequence of their fault. Thus you will not exclaim against their falsehood, you will not exactly punish them for lying, but you will arrange that all the ill effects of lying, such as not being believed

when we speak the truth, or being accused of what we have not done in spite of our protests, shall fall on their heads when they have told a lie. ...

I know that all these imitative virtues are only the virtues of a monkey, and that a good action is only morally good when it is done as such and not because of others.

...

There is quite another class of exceptions: those so gifted by nature that they rise above the level of their age. As there are men who never get beyond infancy, so there are others who are never, so to speak, children, they are men almost from birth. The difficulty is that these cases are very rare, very difficult to distinguish; while every mother, who knows that a child may be a prodigy, is convinced that her child is that one ...

Treat him, therefore, according to his age, in spite of appearances, and beware of exhausting his strength by over-much exercise. ... As a child, the young Cato was taken for an idiot by his parents; he was obstinate and silent, and that was all they perceived in him; it was only in Sulla's ante-chamber that his uncle discovered what was in him. Had he never found his way there, he might have passed for a fool till he reached the age of reason. ... I knew a middle-aged man, whose friendship I esteemed an honour, who was reckoned a fool by his family. All at once he made his name as a philosopher, and I have no doubt posterity will give him a high place among the greatest thinkers and the profoundest metaphysicians of his day.

Hold childhood in reverence, and do not be in any hurry to judge it for good or ill. Leave exceptional cases to show themselves, let their qualities be tested and confirmed, before special methods are adopted. Give nature time to work before you take over her business, lest you interfere with her dealings. ...

I maintain, therefore, that as children are incapable of judging, they have no true memory. They retain sounds, form, sensation, but rarely ideas, and still more rarely relations. You tell me they acquire some rudiments of geometry, and you think you prove your case; not so, ... for if you follow the method of these little geometricians you will see they only retain the exact impression of the figure and the terms of the demonstration. They cannot meet the slightest new objection; if the figure is reversed they can do nothing. All their knowledge is on the sensation-level, nothing has penetrated to their understanding. Their memory is little better than their other powers, for they always have to learn over again, when they are grown up, what they learnt as children.

I am far from thinking, however, that children have no sort of reason. On the contrary, I think they reason very well with regard to things that affect their actual and sensible well-being. ...

The pedagogues, who make a great display of the teaching they give their pupils, are paid to say just the opposite; yet their actions show that they think just as I do. For what do they teach? Words! words! words! Among the various sciences they boast of teaching their scholars, they take good care never to choose those which might be really useful to them, for then they would be compelled to deal with things and would fail utterly; the sciences they choose are those we seem to know when we know their technical terms—heraldry, geography, chronology, languages, etc., studies so remote from man, and even more remote from the child, that it is a wonder if he can ever make any use of any part of them.

You will be surprised to find that I reckon the study of languages among the useless lumber of education; but you must remember that I am speaking of the studies of the earliest years, and whatever you may say, I do not believe any child under twelve or fifteen ever really acquired two languages. ...

[Against memorization]

... I remember seeing a geography somewhere which began with: "What is the world?"—"A sphere of cardboard." That is the child's geography. I maintain that after two years' work with the globe and cosmography, there is not a single ten-year-old child who could find his way from Paris to Saint Denis by the help of the rules he has learnt. ...

[Learn from nature, not from books]

No, if nature has given the child this plasticity of brain which fits him to receive every kind of impression, it was not that you should imprint on it the names and dates of kings, the jargon of heraldry, the globe and geography, all those words without present meaning or future use for the child, which flood of words overwhelms his sad and barren childhood. ...

Without the study of books, such a memory as the child may possess is not left idle; everything he sees and hears makes an impression on him, he keeps a record of men's sayings and doings, and his whole environment is the book from which he unconsciously enriches his memory, till his judgment is able to profit by it. ...

Emile will not learn anything by heart, not even fables, not even the fables of La Fontaine, simple and delightful as they are, for the words are no more the fable than the words of history are history. ...

[Learning to read]

Present interest, that is the motive power, the only motive power that takes us far and safely. Sometimes Emile receives notes of invitation from his father or mother, his relations or friends; he is invited to a dinner, a walk, a boating expedition, to see some public entertainment. These notes are short, clear, plain, and well written. Some one must read them to him, and he cannot always find anybody when wanted; no more consideration is shown to him than he himself showed to you yesterday. Time passes, the chance is lost. The note is read to him at last, but it is too late. Oh! if only he had known how to read! He receives other notes, so short, so interesting, he would like to try to read them. Sometimes he gets help, sometimes none. He does his best, and at last he makes out half the note; it is something about going to-morrow to drink cream—Where? With whom? He cannot tell—how hard he tries to make out the rest! I do not think Emile will need a "bureau." Shall I proceed to the teaching of writing? No, I am ashamed to toy with these trifles in a treatise on education.

I will just add a few words which contain a principle of great importance. It is this—What we are in no hurry to get is usually obtained with speed and certainty. I am pretty sure Emile will learn to read and write before he is ten, just because I care very little whether he can do so before he is fifteen; but I would rather he never learnt to read at all, than that this art should be acquired at the price of all that makes reading useful. What is the use of reading to him if he always hates it?

[Vacuum?]

The more I urge my method of letting well alone, the more objections I perceive against it. If your pupil learns nothing from you, he will learn from others. If you do not instill truth he will learn falsehoods; the prejudices you fear to teach him he will acquire from those about him, they will find their way through every one of his senses; they will either corrupt his reason before it is fully developed or his mind will become torpid through inaction, and will become engrossed in material things. If we do not form the habit of thinking as children, we shall lose the power of thinking for the rest of our life. ...

If, in accordance with the plan I have sketched, you follow rules which are just the opposite of the established practice, if instead of taking your scholar far afield, instead of wandering with him in distant places, in far-off lands, in remote centuries, in the ends of the earth, and in the very heavens themselves, you try to keep him to himself, to his own concerns, you will then find him able to perceive, to remember, and even to reason; this is nature's order. ... Give his body constant exercise, make it strong and healthy, in order to make him good and wise; let him work, let him do things, let him run and shout, let him be always on the go; make a man of him in strength, and he will soon be a man in reason.

Of course by this method you will make him stupid if you are always giving him directions, always saying come here, go there, stop, do this, don't do that. If your head always guides his hands, his own mind will become useless. ...

As for my pupil, or rather Nature's pupil, he has been trained from the outset to be as self-reliant as possible, he has not formed the habit of constantly seeking help from others, still less of displaying his stores of learning. On the other hand, he exercises discrimination and forethought, he reasons about everything that concerns himself. He does not chatter, he acts. Not a word does he know of what is going on in the world at large, but he knows very thoroughly what affects himself. As he is always stirring he is compelled to notice many things, to recognise many effects; he soon acquires a good deal of experience. Nature, not man, is his schoolmaster, and he learns all the quicker because he is not aware that he has any lesson to learn. So mind and body work together. He is always carrying out his own ideas, not those of other people, and thus he unites thought and action; as he grows in health and strength he grows in wisdom and discernment. This is the way to attain later on to what is generally considered incompatible, though most great men have achieved it, strength of body and strength of mind, the reason of the philosopher and the vigour of the athlete. ...

Young teacher, I am setting before you a difficult task, the art of controlling without precepts, and doing everything without doing anything at all. ...

When education is most carefully attended to, the teacher issues his orders and thinks himself master, but it is the child who is really master. He uses the tasks you set him to obtain what he wants from you, and he can always make you pay for an hour's industry by a week's complaisance. You must always be making bargains with him. ... And that is as it should be, for all the sagacity which the child would have devoted to self-preservation, had he been left to himself, is now devoted to the rescue of his native freedom from the chains of his tyrant ...

Take the opposite course with your pupil; let him always think he is master while you are really master. There is no subjection so complete as that which preserves the forms of freedom; it is thus that the will itself is taken captive. Is not this poor child, without knowledge, strength, or wisdom, entirely at your mercy? Are you not master

of his whole environment so far as it affects him? Cannot you make of him what you please? His work and play, his pleasure and pain, are they not, unknown to him, under your control? No doubt he ought only to do what he wants, but he ought to want to do nothing but what you want him to do. He should never take a step you have not foreseen, nor utter a word you could not foretell. ...

[Sensory exploration]

Watch a cat when she comes into a room for the first time; she goes from place to place, she sniffs about and examines everything, she is never still for a moment; she is suspicious of everything till she has examined it and found out what it is. It is the same with the child when he begins to walk, and enters, so to speak, the room of the world around him. The only difference is that, while both use sight, the child uses his hands and the cat that subtle sense of smell which nature has bestowed upon it. It is this instinct, rightly or wrongly educated, which makes children skillful or clumsy, quick or slow, wise or foolish.

As a man's first natural impulse is to measure himself with his environment, to discover in every object he sees those sensible qualities which may concern himself, so his first study is a kind of experimental physics for his own preservation. He is turned away from this and sent to speculative studies before he has found his proper place in the world. While his delicate and flexible limbs can adjust themselves to the bodies upon which they are intended to act, while his senses are keen and as yet free from illusions, then is the time to exercise both limbs and senses in their proper business. It is the time to learn to perceive the physical relations between ourselves and things. Since everything that comes into the human mind enters through the gates of sense, man's first reason is a reason of sense-experience. It is this that serves as a foundation for the reason of the intelligence; our first teachers in natural philosophy are our feet, hands, and eyes. To substitute books for them does not teach us to reason, it teaches us to use the reason of others rather than our own; it teaches us to believe much and know little. ...

[Inoculation for smallpox?]

But speaking of death, what steps shall I take with regard to my pupil and the smallpox? Shall he be inoculated in infancy, or shall I wait till he takes it in the natural course of things? The former plan is more in accordance with our practice, for it preserves his life at a time when it is of greater value, at the cost of some danger when his life is of less worth; if indeed we can use the word danger with regard to inoculation when properly performed.

But the other plan is more in accordance with our general principles—to leave nature to take the precautions she delights in, precautions she abandons whenever man interferes. The natural man is always ready; let nature inoculate him herself, she will choose the fitting occasion better than we.

Do not think I am finding fault with inoculation, for my reasons for exempting my pupil from it do not in the least apply to yours. Your training does not prepare them to escape catching smallpox as soon as they are exposed to infection. If you let them take it anyhow, they will probably die. I perceive that in different lands the resistance to inoculation is in proportion to the need for it; and the reason is plain. So I scarcely condescend to discuss this question with regard to Emile. He will be inoculated or not according to time, place, and circumstances; it is almost a matter of indifference, as far as he is concerned. If it gives him smallpox, there will be the advantage of

knowing what to expect, knowing what the disease is; that is a good thing, but if he catches it naturally it will have kept him out of the doctor's hands, which is better. ...

Let Emile run about barefoot all the year round, upstairs, downstairs, and in the garden. Far from scolding him, I shall follow his example; only I shall be careful to remove any broken glass. I shall soon proceed to speak of work and manual occupations. Meanwhile, let him learn to perform every exercise which encourages agility of body; let him learn to hold himself easily and steadily in any position, let him practise jumping and leaping, climbing trees and walls. Let him always find his balance, and let his every movement and gesture be regulated by the laws of weight, long before he learns to explain them by the science of statics. ...

Children will always do anything that keeps them moving freely. There are countless ways of rousing their interest in measuring, perceiving, and estimating distance. There is a very tall cherry tree; how shall we gather the cherries? Will the ladder in the barn be big enough? There is a wide stream; how shall we get to the other side? Would one of the wooden planks in the yard reach from bank to bank? From our windows we want to fish in the moat; how many yards of line are required? I want to make a swing between two trees; will two fathoms of cord be enough? They tell me our room in the new house will be twenty-five feet square; do you think it will be big enough for us? Will it be larger than this? We are very hungry; here are two villages, which can we get to first for our dinner? ...

When the child flies a kite he is training eye and hand to accuracy; when he whips a top, he is increasing his strength by using it, but without learning anything. I have sometimes asked why children are not given the same games of skill as men; tennis, mall, billiards, archery, football, and musical instruments. I was told that some of these are beyond their strength, that the child's senses are not sufficiently developed for others. These do not strike me as valid reasons; a child is not as tall as a man, but he wears the same sort of coat; I do not want him to play with our cues at a billiard-table three feet high; I do not want him knocking about among our games, nor carrying one of our racquets in his little hand; but let him play in a room whose windows have been protected; at first let him only use soft balls, let his first racquets be of wood, then of parchment, and lastly of gut, according to his progress. ...

[The well-raised youth]

Work or play are all one to him, his games are his work; he knows no difference. He brings to everything the cheerfulness of interest, the charm of freedom, and he shows the bent of his own mind and the extent of his knowledge. Is there anything better worth seeing, anything more touching or more delightful, than a pretty child, with merry, cheerful glance, easy contented manner, open smiling countenance, playing at the most important things, or working at the lightest amusements? ...

* * *