

## **A plan for the study of man / by Arthur MacDonald.**

### **Contributors**

MacDonald, Arthur, 1856-1936.  
Royal College of Surgeons of England

### **Publication/Creation**

[Washington, D.C.?] : [publisher not identified], [1901?]

### **Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/wffwu6sb>

### **Provider**

Royal College of Surgeons

### **License and attribution**

This material has been provided by This material has been provided by The Royal College of Surgeons of England. The original may be consulted at The Royal College of Surgeons of England. where the originals may be consulted. Conditions of use: it is possible this item is protected by copyright and/or related rights. You are free to use this item in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s).



Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

P.C. 1 A PLAN FOR THE STUDY OF MAN.

BY ARTHUR MACDONALD, WASHINGTON, D. C.,

12.

Honorary President of the "3d International Congress of Criminal Anthropology," of Europe.

The greatest of all studies is that of man himself as he is today. A scientific investigation of man must be based primarily upon the individual, who is the unit of the social organism.

If we are ever to have sufficient definite knowledge of living human beings that may become a *science*, it can only be done by the careful study of large numbers of individuals. The more thorough the study and the larger the number, the more useful such investigation can be made to society.

As in machinery we must first repair the little wheels out of gear, so in society we must first study the criminal, crank, insane, inebriate or pauper who can seriously injure both individual and community. Thus a worthless crank, by killing a prominent citizen, can paralyze the community. The injury from such action is often beyond calculation. Our Government pays out millions to catch, try, and care for criminals, but gives very little to study the causes that lead to crime.

The study of man, to be of most utility, must be directed *first* to the *causes* of crime, pauperism, alcoholism and other forms of abnormality. To do this the individuals themselves must be studied. As the seeds of evil are usually sown in childhood and youth, it is here that all investigation should commence, for there is little hope of making the world better if we do not seek the causes of social evils at their beginnings.

The most rigid and best method of study of both children and adults is that of the laboratory, with instruments of precision in connection with sociological data. Such inquiry consists in gathering sociological, pathological, and abnormal data as found in children, in criminal, pauper, and defective classes, and in hospitals. Such experiments or measurements should be made as are of interest not only to sociologists, psycho-physicists, and anthropologists, but also to physiologists and pathologists.

It has been proposed to conduct such investigations under our Government by the establishment of a Psycho-Physical Laboratory; for to gather a large number of such data concerning a large number of individuals, and to compute, tabulate and publish the results could not easily be undertaken by an individual or by a university because of the expense involved.

Such work can be done best either under Federal and State control or under private endowment, or under both. The main object of a university is to teach and prepare the student for his life work rather than to carry on that work.

But, it may be asked, what as to the utility of studying such questions? We think it is not only useful, but there is great need of such investigation. We should like to inquire, for instance, as to the utility of studying rocks and plants, arranging them, making chemical analyses of them, etc., if it is not to give a deeper knowledge of them and thereby learn more about our planet? So the patient and extended study of man, especially children, is to gain more definite knowledge about him and a deeper insight into his nature. The time has certainly come when man, as he *is*, should be studied as much as nature.

Much money has been given and great interest manifested for the discovery of new chemical elements or the search for unknown planets. We erect statues and found art galleries at great expense. These things may not all be *immediately* useful. Indeed, the highest art spurns even the idea of utility; and yet when it is proposed to study a child thoroughly to gain an insight into its nature, to find the causes of its defects, so that we may protect it and help it to become a good citizen, the utilitarian cry is heard. The time has come when it is important to study a child with as much exactness as we investigate the chemical elements of a stone or measure the mountains on the moon.

If facts about children, whether immediately useful or not, are not important, we desire to ask what is important in life?

---

#### SOME CONCLUSIONS AS TO CRIMINAL MAN.<sup>1</sup>

The following statements as to the criminal are not based upon experimental research so much as upon the experience of those who have studied criminals directly or who have had practical control of large numbers in prisons or reformatories:

1. The prison should be a reformatory and the reformatory a school. The principal object of both should be to teach good mental, moral, and physical habits. Both should be distinctly *educational*.

2. It is detrimental financially, as well as socially and morally, to release prisoners when there is probability of their returning to crime; for in this case the convict is much less expensive than the ex-convict.

3. The determinate sentence permits many prisoners to be released who are morally certain to return to crime. The indeterminate sentence is the best method of affording the prisoner an opportunity to reform without exposing society to unnecessary dangers.

4. The ground for the imprisonment of the criminal is, first of all, *because he is dangerous to society*. This principle avoids the uncertainty that may rest upon the decision as to the degree of freedom of will; for upon this last principle some of the most brutal crimes would receive a light punishment. If a tiger is in the street, the main question is not the degree of his freedom of will or guilt. Every man who is dangerous to property or life, whether insane, criminal, or feeble-minded, should be confined, but not necessarily punished.

5. The publication in the newspapers of criminal details and photographs is a positive evil to society, on account of the law of imitation; and, in addition, it makes the criminal proud of his record, and develops the morbid curiosity of the people; and it is especially the mentally and morally weak who are affected.

6. It is admitted by some of the most intelligent criminals, and by prison officers in general, that the criminal is a fool; for he is opposing himself to the best, the largest, and the strongest portion of society, and is almost sure to fail.

<sup>1</sup> From "Criminology" (by writer).

\* See article (by writer) entitled "A Laboratory for Sociological, Medical, and Jurisprudential Purposes," in Amer. Law Review for Nov.-Dec., 1901, St. Louis, Mo.

## MEASUREMENTS OF PAIN.

We give some of our results of pain measurements on different classes of individuals, in all, 2311 :

1. In general the sensibility to pain decreases as age increases. The left temple is more sensitive than the right. This accords with former experiments that the left hand is more sensitive to pain than the right hand.

2. Girls in private schools, who are generally of wealthy parents, are much more sensitive to pain than girls in the public schools. It would appear that refinements and luxuries tend to increase sensitiveness to pain. The hardihood which the great majority must experience seems advantageous. This also accords with our previous measurements, that the non-laboring (professional and mercantile) classes are more sensitive to pain than the laboring classes.

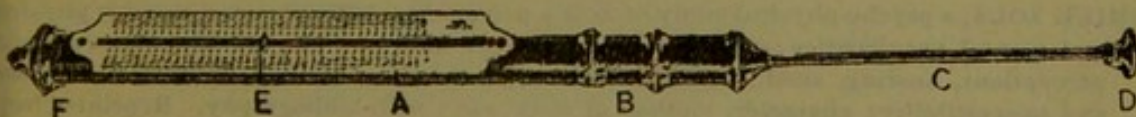
3. University women are more sensitive than washerwomen, but less sensitive than business women. There seems, however, to be no necessary relation between intellectual development and pain sensitiveness. Obtuseness to pain appears to be due more to hardihood in early life.

4. Self-educated women, who are not trained in universities, are more sensitive than business women. The greater sensitiveness of self-educated women as compared with university women may be due to the overtaking of the nervous system of the former in their unequal struggle after knowledge.

5. Girls in the public schools are more sensitive at all ages than boys. This agrees with the results of our previous measurements that women are more sensitive to pain than men. But this does not necessarily refer to endurance of pain.

These measurements of least disagreeableness, or of threshold of pain, are approximate measurements of the combination of nerve, feeling, and idea. Which one of these elements influences the combined result most would be difficult to say.

Below is a description of the temporal algometer<sup>1</sup> (designed by the writer) used in the experiments :



TEMPORAL ALGOMETER.

It consists of a brass cylinder B F, with a steel rod C running through one of the ends of the cylinder. This rod is attached to a spring, with a marker E on the scale A ; this scale is graded from 0 to 4,000 grammes. The brass disc D is 15 millimeters in diameter ; a piece of flannel is glued to its surface, so as to exclude the feeling of the metal when pressed against the skin, thus giving a pure pressure sensation. The whole instrument is 30 centimeters in length.

In using this algometer it is held in the right hand at B, by the experimenter, who stands back of the subject and presses the disc D against the right temporal muscle, and then he moves in front of the subject, where he can conveniently press the disc against the left temporal muscle. These muscles are preferred because no trade or profession materially affects them. They are also conveniently situated.

As soon as the subject feels the pressure to be in the *least disagreeable* the amount of pressure is read by observing the marker E on the scale A. The subject sometimes hesitates to say just when the pressure becomes in the least disagreeable, but this is part of the experiment. The purpose is to approximate as near as possible to the threshold of pain.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Made by the Chicago Laboratory Supply and Scale Co.

<sup>2</sup> Further details will be found in "Experimental Study of Children," etc., published by U. S. Bureau of Education, Washington, D. C.

The object here is not to see how much pain can be endured, as some have supposed, but the very opposite—that is, when the pressure becomes the least bit disagreeable the subject is to say so at once. The pressure is increased very gradually, so that the subject can decide more exactly when the first unpleasant pressure sensation arises. In all the experiments made, no one ever complained of being hurt in the least.

Instead of the temporal algometer being an instrument to make pain, as some have imagined, it may assist in telling us more about the nature and causes of pain, and thereby furnish a way of prevention or amelioration of pain.

## PATHO-SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND PSYCHO-PHYSICAL WORKS,

BY ARTHUR MACDONALD,

ABNORMAL MAN, being essays on Education and Crime, Criminal Sociology, Criminal Hypnotism, Alcoholism, Insanity, and Genius, with digests of literature and a bibliography. 1893. Published by U. S. Bureau of Education. Washington, D. C. 445 pages, 8°. 2d edition, 1895.

CRIMINOLOGY, a psychological and scientific study of criminals, criminal contagion, criminal hypnotism, and recidivation, with introduction by Lombroso. Bibliography. Second edition. New York, 1894. Funk & Wagnalls, publishers. 416 pages, 12°. Price, \$2.00.

LE CRIMINEL-TYPE dans quelques formes graves de la criminalité; Jesse Pomeroy, "the Boy torturer"; Piper, "the brainer" (Belfry case, Boston); "Jack, the Ripper" (de Londres). Bibliographie de sexualité pathologique. Troisième édition. Un volume en 8°, illustré de portraits. Publié par A. Storck, Lyon, et G. Masson, Paris, 1895. 300 pages. Prix, 5 francs. *This work is not published in English.*

EDUCATION AND PATHO-SOCIAL STUDIES, including an investigation of the murderer "H." (Holmes); reports on psychological, criminological, and demographical congresses in Europe; London slums and Gen. Booth's Salvation Army movement. Reprint (from Annual Report of U. S. Commissioner of Education for 1893-'94), 57 pages, 8°. Washington, D. C., 1896.

EMILE ZOLA, a psycho-physical study of Zola's personality, with illustrations; his physical and mental peculiarities: nervous system, finger imprints, morbid ideas, etc.; visual perceptions, hearing, smell, tactile sensations, perception of time, association of ideas, and suggestibility; character, method of work, etc.; with bibliography. Reprints (from Open Court, August, 1898, with appendix (34 pages), and "Practical Psychology," August, 1901), 1901. Gratis on application to author.

EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF CHILDREN, including Anthropometrical and Psycho-physical measurements of Washington school children; measurements of school children in United States and Europe; description of instruments of precision in the laboratory of the Bureau of Education; child study in the United States; and a bibliography. Reprint (from Annual Report of U. S. Commissioner of Education for 1897-'98), 325 pages, 8°. Washington, D. C., 1899.

HEARING ON THE BILL (H. R. 14,798) to establish a laboratory for the study of the criminal, pauper, and defective classes, treating especially of Criminology with a bibliography of genius, insanity, idiocy, alcoholism, pauperism, and crime, had before the Committee on the Judiciary of the U. S. House of Representatives. 309 pages, 8°. Government Printing Office. Washington, D. C., 1902.

SENATE DOCUMENT No. 400 (57th Congress, 1st Session): A plan for the study of man, with reference to bills to establish a laboratory for the study of the criminal, pauper, and defective classes, treating especially of Hypnotism, with a bibliography of child study, 166 pages, 8°. Government Printing Office. Washington, D. C., 1902. (166 pages.)

This and the following documents might be obtained gratis on application to any United States Senator or Representative.

STATISTICS OF CRIME, SUICIDE AND INSANITY and other forms of abnormality in different countries of the world, in connection with bills to establish a laboratory, etc. Senate Document No. 12, 58th Congress, Special Session, 8°. Government Printing Office. Washington, D. C., 1903. (195 pages.)

MAN AND ABNORMAL MAN, including a study of children, in connection with bills to establish laboratories under state and federal governments in the study of the criminal, pauper, and defective classes, with bibliographies. Senate Document No. 187, 58th Congress, 3d Session. 780 pages, 8°. Washington, D. C., 1905.

This last document ("Man and Abnormal Man") includes in substance the matter contained in the six Government publications enumerated above.