



# The Principles of Chess in Theory Practice (Classic Reprint)

*James Mason*

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Excerpt from The Principles of Chess in Theory Practice

Harmoniously uniting in itself the curious, the beautiful, and the true, Chess appears to hold a permanent relation to the innate susceptibilities of intelligence; and there is now little question of its increasing value as a mental recreation, or of its fitness for use by all sorts and conditions of men. As the struggle to be shifts more and more from hand to brain, the need of a rational exhaust - a thinking change in thought - becomes more and more imperative, and will not be denied. In this respect Chess possesses very solid advantages over all branches of solitary study; having many points of contact, through the various faculties of the mind, with much that concerns the daily activities of life. There is here no implication that it can be taken as a module of the intellectual altitude, or that it is sufficient alone for the entire discipline of the mental powers. No single department of thought may reasonably be assigned such distinction. If any could, however, then - in the opinion of every true chessplayer - Chess would be that one!

But there is a pernicious imagination abroad that it is a difficult game. It takes time. Its intricacies and profundities are not rightly within mastery of the average human intellect. This, in a sense, is true enough, else Chess would not be Chess. That it cannot be all known and mastered by anybody is truly its chiefest, crowning merit. It is an instrument all may play, no two precisely alike, and yet everyone his best. Too much time may be devoted to it. But everything under the sun is vanity if pushed to extremes. The argument from abuse, if valid, leaves nothing uncondemned.

Chess is a science as well as an art.

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