

**THE CHILDHOOD OF THE  
WORLD: A  
SIMPLE ACCOUNT OF  
MAN IN EARLY TIMES**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649490103

The Childhood of the World: A Simple Account of Man in Early Times by Edward Clodd

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

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THE  
CHILDHOOD OF THE WORLD;

A Simple Account  
OF  
*MAN IN EARLY TIMES.*

BY  
EDWARD CLODD, F.R.A.S.

*"As a child that cries,  
But, crying, knows his father near."*  
IN MEMORIAM.

*THIRD EDITION.*

HENRY S. KING & Co.,  
CORNHILL, & 13, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.

1875

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THE  
CHILDHOOD OF THE WORLD.



# THE CHILDHOOD OF THE WORLD.

## PART I.

### I. Introductory.

EVERYTHING in this wide world has a history ; that is, it has something to tell or something to be found out about what it was, and how it has come to be what it is.

Even of the small stones lying in the roadway, or about the garden, clever men have, after a great deal of painstaking, found out a history more wonderful than all the fairy stories you have been told ; and if this be true, as true it is, of dead stones and many other things which cannot speak, you may believe that a

history stranger still can be written about some living things.

And it is the history of the most wonderful living thing that this world has ever seen that I want to tell you. You will perhaps think that I am about to describe to you some curly-haired, big-tusked, fierce-looking monster that lived on the earth thousands of years ago, for children (and some grown-up people too) are apt to think that things are wonderful only when they are big, which is not true. To show you what I mean: the beautiful six-sided wax cells which the bee makes are more curious than the rough hut which the chimpanzee—an African monkey—piles together; and the tiny ants that keep plant-lice and milk them just as we keep cows to give us milk, and that catch the young of other ants to make slaves of them, are more wonderful than the huge and dull rhinoceros.

Well, it is about *yourself* that I am going to talk, for I want you to learn, as far as we are able to find out, how it is that you are *what* you are, and *where* you are. Remember, I do not

say *how* you are, or *why* you are, for God alone knows that, and He has told the secret to no one here, although, maybe, He will tell it us one day elsewhere.

Perhaps you have thought that there is nothing very wonderful in being where you are, or in possessing the good things which you enjoy; that people have always had them, or if not, that they had only to buy them at the shops; and that from the first day man lived on the earth he could cook his food, and have ices and dessert after it; could dress himself well, write a good hand, live in a fine house, and build splendid churches with stained-glass windows, just as he does now-a-days.

If you have thought so, you are wrong, and I wish to set you right, and show you that man was once wild and rough and savage, frightened at his own shadow, and still more frightened at the roar of thunder and the quiver of lightning, which he thought were the clapping of the wings and the flashing of the eyes of the angry Spirit, as he came flying from the sun; and that it has taken many thousands of years