

**THE CHILD MIND: A  
STUDY IN ELEMENTARY  
ETHOLOGY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649316137

The Child Mind: A Study in Elementary Ethology by Henrietta Home

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**HENRIETTA HOME**

**THE CHILD MIND: A  
STUDY IN ELEMENTARY  
ETHOLOGY**



0 THE  
CHILD MIND  
*A STUDY IN ELEMENTARY  
ETHOLOGY*

BY  
HENRIETTA HOME

ELKIN MATHEWS  
VIGO STREET LONDON  
MCMVI

My fairest child ! I have no song to give you.  
No lark could pipe to skies so dull and grey ;  
Yet ere we part, one lesson I will leave you  
    For every day.

Be good, sweet maid ; and let who will be clever.  
Do noble deeds, not dream them all day long.  
And so make Life, Death, and that vast forever,  
    One grand, sweet song.

CHARLES KINGSLEY.

1

2

3

4

## INTRODUCTION

IN setting out to write a book of ethics in relation to the upbringing of children, anyone may conscientiously and fearlessly confess to a sense of overpowering guilt, for the act in itself is, in a small measure, one of accusation and condemnation towards the rest of the world, which is occupied, to a large extent, in marrying, giving in marriage, and assuming parental responsibility. But to carry through a labour of this kind, consequences, critics, and censures must all be eliminated for the nonce from a prospect of the future, the author eschewing tirade and, at the same time, writing, if possible, under the hallucination that no infuriated mothers exist, nor that such an anomaly as an argumentative and aggravated maiden-aunt could put a spoke in the wheel which revolves on the axis of conscientiousness.

The book, let it be said at once, is primarily intended for all who love children : those misguided individuals whose affection is only too often composed partly of selfishness and partly of ignorance, whose appreciation of children's company and conversation prevents their recognition of the fact that the company and conversation were not necessarily sent into the world for the benefit of the parent or guardian, and who invariably "miss the children so



much" during an absence that a reunion has to be effected regardless of the child's wishes.

Then, the book is intended for those who confess to total ignorance of the juvenile mind, who say they are "afraid of children, because in these days they are so grown-up, you know," and who think that a child only cares for people who play, excluding from its affections those who merely speak. And the object of such miniature philosophy is this: that in consideration of the fact that there must be in England so many others better fitted than the present author to propound views which in themselves are valuable, it is hoped that some one, whose mental and sentimental equipment is of the strongest, will enlarge upon the subject, draw attention to the starvation which is now possessing the souls of so many boys and girls, and, by this means, feed natures which, if warped and dwarfed, will turn into future atheists, pessimists, and dyspeptics of bitter tongue and sarcastic speech.

"Degeneracy" and "Efficiency" are the two sociologic war-cries of the present day, and Mr. H. G. Wells in his *Mankind in the Making* (that admirable book which should be read and re-read by every sensible citizen and country man and woman) was among the pioneers in suggesting that *in the homes* lay the solution of so many social problems. He should have gone even further; he should have written a chapter on the importance of behaviour to a child by its mother anterior to

birth, on the responsibilities of the parents who thoughtlessly carve out a rut in the road of destiny for yet one more human being, and who lamentably fail, oh! how often, not only to do their duty towards the child, but to recognize the fact that there is any duty to be performed other than that prescribed by law dealing with maintenance, housing, and education. People may say that the whole matter is one of lack of conscience; they may aver that affection is a ruling power, and if absent cannot be substituted; they may go yet further, and blame civilization for the acknowledged decline of virtue in the maternal instinct; still, they will be all wrong. Children often remain very badly off in other directions than that along which the necessaries of life travel.

At this point it may be said that in the present volume there will have to remain much to be taken for granted. The subject being so enormous, with innumerable octopeian branches, it were impossible to begin from the correct beginning. Grappling with an adequate introduction in such a case would mean the passing of a lifetime before the pith of the subject could be reached, and therefore it is necessary to point out that this work is not intended for the edification of people in circumstances of dire poverty or want. It is written for those who, whatever their position in life, are able to bring up their children in comparative comfort, and who are neither unfortunate invalids nor the victims of any untoward stroke

from the wand of Fate incapacitating them to a greater extent than their fellows.

"What," may be asked, "is the reason of this strange misunderstanding and mismanagement of children at the hands of their parents, guardians, or governors?" (Tutors and teachers, it may be observed, are omitted from the list of evil-doers, because, at the time when their authority comes into force, the mischief has invariably been done in the home circle.) The solution of the problem is no easy matter, for infelicitous circumstances are not modern growths; their roots penetrate far back into history, to still remoter times, where our eyesight is powerless to trace any line of conduct when children, in those early centuries, must have been regarded as more or less rational mortals; for on the whole, the better-class children seemed to be more popular than at present, and to-day we are experiencing the direct outcome of the bringing-up vouchsafed to our grandmothers, great-uncles, and great-aunts. They never saw their parents except for a specified half-hour or so every day (during which pocket edition of purgatory they had to endure best clothes, uncomfortable attitudes, and either enforced silence or else unnatural conversation.) The female portion of the family was never permitted to know anything, see anything, hear anything derogatory to the dignity of "a little lady," with the result that English ladies became narrow-minded pigs, fenced in with barbed-wire conventionalities,