

**THE PRIMITIVE FAMILY
AS AN EDUCATIONAL
AGENCY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649182688

The primitive family as an educational agency by Arthur James Todd

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

ARTHUR JAMES TODD

**THE PRIMITIVE FAMILY
AS AN EDUCATIONAL
AGENCY**

The Primitive Family as an Educational Agency

By

Arthur James Todd, Ph.D.

Of the Department of Sociology, University of Illinois

G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York and London
The Knickerbocker Press

1913

COPYRIGHT, 1913
BY
ARTHUR JAMES TODD

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

To

M. G. T.

WHOSE QUALITIES AS COMRADE AND HOME-MAKER HAVE MADE THIS
STUDY POSSIBLE



PREFACE

IT is a truism that an institution can be understood only through its history. The notion of change and development in ideas and institutions is fundamental to any sound science of society. Yet when we attempt to apply this principle to such concrete institutions as say, property, or the family, we are struck with the rigidity of the ideas and sentiments in which they are conceived. The popular mind accepts to a certain extent the general idea of progress and may not stop to bewail the death of the good old times which alone can usher in the new. But let the sociologist or the philosopher suggest that property and the family as we know them were not always so, but, since they are both largely social products, have varied enormously as social needs varied—and the popular mind becomes eminently reactionary. This cannot be, it says; monogamy and private property in lands and goods and women are innate characters of man, were always so, and always will be so. Unfortunately this attitude of mind is not confined to the obviously untrained but lingers with those who have had opportunities for knowing better.

Growing discontent with such static conceptions of social processes prompted the study which follows. On the one hand, we are confronted by cries of alarm

at the imminent dissolution of society owing to the apparent "break-up of the family." On the other, with the demand for a more efficient type of education. The social aspect of the question may be formulated somewhat thus: Can the family change its form and function without permanent injury to social stability and welfare? The educational question takes this form: If the family has heretofore been the basic educational agency but is losing its educational efficiency, can we devise a more adequate type of education with other social institutions predominant in its foundations?

Whatever the answers to these questions, it is evident that a sound notion of certain typical social institutions is essential to the educator who would make education a vital factor in a conscious program for further social development. It is equally evident that some acquaintance with the history of present institutions—and notably the family and the school—is necessary to illuminate the present crisis in family life. A review of the domestic life of our forbears really yields abundant cause for gratification at the enormous distance we have traveled and at the comparative stability and harmony of modern family life. Such phases of primitive domestic life as promiscuity, group-marriage, trial-marriage, the trifling grounds for divorce, absence of chastity, infanticide, and other forms of parental neglect and cruelty, lack of filial piety, hazy notions of kinship, etc., are milestones worth while recalling if for no other reason than to measure our progress.

Hence in the general conclusion of our study we can face squarely and with the utmost optimism the fact

that the family has changed its form and function many times in the course of its age-long evolution. The indications are that it is changing now and will continue to change in response to changes in general social needs and in the alignment of social institutions. Neither is there anything disconcerting in the fact that the family never has been the type and foundation of all education. If, owing to changes in the industrial and religious world, the family is losing much of its educational significance, this simply means that we must find other sanctions and other bases in its place. From the very fact that the family in times past has shown itself so variable and flexible, are we not warranted in looking for such new adjustments in its form and content as to make it an increasingly valuable social institution?

In the preparation of this work I have had constantly in mind two classes of students: those who were looking for an outline sketch of the early evolution of the family; and those who, with myself, have felt the all too obvious lack of materials illustrating methods and organization of primitive education. Histories of education must fill up the gap now usually left, and pay more respectful attention to primitive education. Because a thing is primitive does not mean that it is to be overlooked or despised. Its sympathetic study may reveal unsuspected treasure. Witness only the revival of dancing in our most modern schools: as I have herein shown, dancing was not only one of the chief subjects in the primitive curriculum, but was one of the most effective agencies for social control; the protagonists of dancing would greatly strengthen their arguments and their methods by a study of their savage predecessors.