

THE MIND OF A CHILD

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649648955

The Mind of a Child by Ennis Richmond

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

ENNIS RICHMOND

**THE MIND
OF A CHILD**

The Mind of a Child

By

Ennis Richmond

Author of "Boyhood" and "Through Boyhood to
Manhood"



PLEASE RETURN TO
R. H. CRONYN
Vol.....73.....

Longmans, Green, and Co.

39, Paternoster Row, London

New York and Bombay

1901

KE 3040

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
BY EXCHANGE
9 Mar. 31, 1943

Copyright, 1901
BY LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

All rights reserved

UNIVERSITY PRESS · JOHN WILSON
AND SON · CAMBRIDGE, U.S.A.

THE MIND OF A CHILD

FOREWORD

I FEEL as though I were bound to make some apology for adding yet another book to those already written about children. One scarcely passes a day without picking up or seeing advertised a book dealing with this subject. And I am anxious here, at the beginning, to enter, not an apology perhaps, but an explanation of why I have been led to write this book.

I have written books about children before, though not quite on the same lines. I have been struck during the last few years by the way in which we are gradually drifting away from the subject of *children* and concentrating all our attention upon *the child*; this is not peculiar to myself, I know. I read a very charming paper not long ago, though I believe it is some years since it was written, in which some words of this kind occurred: "We are quickly getting to the point at which children will exist for us no longer, and all our attention will be centred on 'the child,'"

L

and the writer pointed out how, in our contemplation of childhood, we were yielding ourselves to the fascination of treating the child as though he were made and put before us for our own edification, as an object on which to expend our powers of analysis and criticism, to experiment upon with the result of our own special scientific knowledge.

My only apology for adding yet another to the many treatises on this subject is that I do not approach it from the point of view that I have indicated. My argument is that while we busy ourselves in the why and wherefore of a child's action, while we classify and dissect children in a fashion which no doubt has its fascination and interest for ourselves, we are losing sight of the most important side of childhood.

I do not want to stray beyond the limits of my present line of argument, but I think without going into the region of very abstruse thought we may see — we have only to look at the scientists around to prove it — that we are terribly apt to lose sight of the spiritual aspect of a thing when we begin to consider its scientific aspect. Do not let us do this with the children. It is bad enough to do it with sticks and stones, but with children — with what is going to be the motive

power of the world, with what is going *to be* the world, — let us pause and think very deeply before we commit ourselves to any line of thought which can put us on the wrong track with them. As I said, I do not want to get abstruse, but it is safe, surely, to say that unless the scientific aspect of anything comes second to, works side by side with, and comes out of its spiritual aspect, we must go wrong. The science of childhood which we need is a science which treats of children, first as a whole, from the point, that is, of childhood, and which treats of "the child" afterwards. And in treating of "the child," there are so many things to be considered, its circumstances, heredity, where childhood ends, what childhood is, and many other things, that I am firmly convinced that we are beginning at quite the wrong end when we attempt to classify, to analyse, before we have settled a hundred other things far more important.

I think that some, on reading the above paragraph, might say, "What childhood is?—just so, that is what we are trying to find out." This is true, but my contention is that we are trying to find out in the wrong way, or rather that we are, in trying to find out, arriving at a wrong conclusion.

4 THE MIND OF A CHILD

This is why I have said what I say here in this book. I have made some little attempt to answer this question, "What is childhood?" But before going on to this I want to go back to what I have said earlier about our regard of children as factors in the world, for I believe that it is very largely owing to a false regard of children as such, that we are getting near a point where we can dare to treat them as though they were put before us mainly as a subject for analysis and classification.

I have said that we are losing sight of the aspects of childhood which matter most; we do not deny importance to children, but we give great value to their least important and neglect their most important aspect. I do not think that we can approach any discussion of children in a useful manner until we have once for all made up our minds that nothing in the world is comparable in importance with children. But it is one thing to say this, and another to subject childhood to a species of analysis and classification which is attractive to ourselves from a scientific point of view. Some analysis, some classification, there must be, but the motive for these should be founded on our love for and interest in children as creatures who are eventu-

ally to have a say in the destiny of the world, not founded upon our love of scientific research.

Child-analysis is a fascinating study, and a great many of us are apt to cover our real reasons for following it by a pretence to ourselves and others that it is from love of children that we take an interest in the why and the wherefore of their thoughts and actions. This may be the case to a more or less extent with many of us ; but the sort of child-analysis which I decry is not due alone to the only right reason for which it should exist for us, but is due largely to giving importance to a side of childhood which should have but little importance given to it, sinking gradually out of sight the real reasons for which we should respect childhood.

I am not asking that less attention should be given to children, I am asking that they should have far more than they have ever had yet, I am pleading for a recognition of their true place in the world.

Living my life, as I do, surrounded by children, I have come gradually to the point of seeing that it is owing to a false idea of children that we have arrived at such a false idea of marriage. It is because we do not realise the importance of children that marriage does not take its true place in the