

**BOYHOOD: A PLEA  
FOR CONTINUITY  
IN EDUCATION**

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Boyhood: a plea for continuity in education by Ennis Richmond

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**ENNIS RICHMOND**

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A PLEA FOR CONTINUITY IN  
EDUCATION

BY

ENNIS RICHMOND

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## INTRODUCTION.

SOME years ago I heard a schoolmaster say that, in his opinion, parents were a clumsy contrivance of Providence for the production of schoolboys. I think that many schoolmasters, especially masters of preparatory schools, are apt to come to the same conclusion. The average parent and the average schoolmaster do not meet on the common ground of sympathy. This is wrong, and the reason of it and why it is wrong I hope to be able to show. In writing as I do, of this want of sympathy which so spoils the joint work of parent and schoolmaster, I should like to say at once that there are hundreds of parents to whom most of what I shall say does not apply. But I am treating, at any rate at first, of the average case. For the average parent to become the ideal parent is by no means

impossible. Parents err in this matter from a misconception of the meaning of love, but the love is there. As to the schoolmaster, I am afraid that he has not always such a fair starting-ground. But even here there is to be found such a thing as the best, something better than the average; and it is our duty as parents not to rest content with anything but the best that can be found; and I hope to show why this is necessary if we are to do what we ought for our boys.

An average parent sends his boy to school to be educated in certain branches of head-learning and to learn "to be a man"; an average schoolmaster takes the boy to help towards making an income. No parent really wants to hand over his boy, body and soul, to an entirely new influence, and yet, as a rule, in sending a young boy to school this is practically what he does. What he *wants* to do is to send his boy where he will learn what it is necessary for him to learn in order that he may pass his examinations, and where he will get his angles, moral and physical, rounded off. What the average parent really

*does* is to send his boy into an atmosphere which gradually envelops him, which becomes his life, while his home becomes only an episode. The parents instinctively feel this, though they would not acknowledge it, and the consequence is that often there grows up in them a sort of jarring jealousy of the school which is apt to find expression in many ways. During the first year or so of a boy's school life the home ties pull hard enough to make him feel all in sympathy with his home belongings, and he is probably home-sick and not always happy ; by degrees, however, this home-sickness wears off because the school influence becomes so strong that the home influence is, to a large extent, submerged. The lad still likes to go home for his holidays, but he comes back to school by no means only because he is obliged to do so ; he still loves his parents, but he does not centre in them as he used to do. As I said, school becomes his life, his world.

This is not right, but this is what happens in nine cases out of ten. Parents cannot take in the whole situation as a schoolmaster can ; they do not know what "might have been,"