THE KINGDOM OF THE CHILD

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The Kingdom of the Child by Alice Minnie Herts Heniger & G. Stanley Hall

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ALICE MINNIE HERTS HENIGER & G. STANLEY HALL

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Trieste

"Six months in America and he is Abraham Lincoln"

THE KINGDOM OF THE CHILD

BY

ALICE MINNIE HERTS HENIGER
AUTHOR OF "THE CHILDREN'S EDUCATIONAL THEATRE"

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
G. STANLEY HALL, PH.D.

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TO MY HUSBAND

Who has worked with me in the development of the Children's Educational Theatre from its inception, and without whom the work could never have been carried on, this book is affectionately dedicated.

PREFACE

ABOUT two years after the publication of the book, "The Children's Educational Theatre" (1911) numerous letters from teachers and parents came to me and still continue to come in large numbers, asking me to write another book which shall give some suggestions concerning the methods employed in my work of developing in children and adolescents the instinct to characterize or to enact parts in games and plays which lie outside of their restricted environment.

Since the inception of The Children's Educational Theatre fifteen years ago, the idea that drama might be used as a potent educational force in connection with school, church and settlement work, has grown by leaps and bounds. There is scarcely a school in this country which does not prepare a play or a pageant for its commencement or a settlement which does not

offer some dramatic entertainment at Christmas tide and other holiday seasons. The churches have been slower than the schools and settlements to re-attach themselves to the educative power of drama, a power they employed with fine and lasting results centuries ago; but the churches now are beginning to regain their temporarily lost inheritance and all educators throughout the United States are keenly alive to the importance of training the dramatic instinct of childhood and youth.

I think we may all agree that the cause of drama as an embroidery on the robe of education has been won. School superintendents, principals, teachers and parents recognize the overwhelming interest which children evince in the plays which they prepare for seasonal periods.

What is not generally recognized is the fact that this tremendous interest on the part of children and young people in this method of learning should be used as the very foundation of the robe and not as its mere external embroidery. This matter of drama in the schools

is not a matter of putting a little embroidery on the garment, it is a fundamental thing, basic and involving the deepest of all the human instincts, the great habitudes of the race.

Through the right use of drama as an integral part of the school system we shall prepare the *soul* of childhood and give to our country the thing that it most urgently needs: proper patrons of the arts of song and of story. Perhaps only through the right use of the dramatic instinct in the everyday life of the school shall we be able to train our future citizens for the arts of leisure. We are all beginning to realize that in the schools and perhaps also in the American homes to-day we are laying too great stress upon the mere vocational aspects of life. For "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

We need to take our cue from the child and make drama a vital part of the life of the school just as every child makes drama the foundation of his self-initiated play.

For this intimate and fructifying use of drama, this contact at every point with all other