

appreciated the value of Froebel's ideas, and had heart enough and head enough not only to instruct but to train.

In conclusion, one other aspect of kindergarten work must be referred to, namely, the place of the kindergarten as a philanthropic agency. Remembering what has been said in previous chapters as to the influence of nurture in drawing out the possibilities latent in the child's nature, we may regard the kindergarten as an artificial environment specially designed to furnish the child with liberty and opportunity for the exercise by means of which alone his faculties can develop. Whatever the kindergarten is capable of doing for the child who comes from a refined home where all other influences co-operate in furnishing opportunity for healthy bodily and mental exercise, it is obvious that it is most needed for those whose opportunities are least, and whose early education is left to ignorance and chance. Considering the vacuity of mind and the lack of interest with which such children often enter upon school work, it is somewhat surprising that a system which, in good hands, is capable of so much as the kindergarten should have come to be regarded in this country as little more than a luxury for the rich. Few things shew more plainly than this how completely we are still dominated by the old conception of education as a process of pouring knowledge into the mind.

In many countries there are free kindergartens, especially in America where many towns of moderate size have more of them than the whole of England, and where their educational value has come to be so fully recognised that their final adoption into the public school system is regarded by many as only a matter of time. The free kindergartens were started in the first instance for the sake of the children of the streets, that the years of their life before the public school is open to them might not be utterly wasted or worse than wasted, and year by year it appears that the value of their work as a social mission is being increasingly recognised in many ways. They serve, for example, as schools for training teachers and others in kindergarten work. To many a girl leaving school or college