

the average child gets much education if only let alone and allowed to follow his instincts.

I confess that for many years after I had heard of the kindergarten and even had read treatises urging its adoption, I supposed that the design of Froebel was to furnish a substitute for the free wild play of the child followed by him from instinct; and I was quite opposed to its introduction into a city school system. But I found upon a systematic examination of Froebel's devices and methods that he had something quite different in view, and something quite valuable too.

Froebel was not seeking to invent a substitute for the spontaneous play of the child, but, on the contrary, to invent a transition from the home to the school. This connecting link should have a play element in it carefully preserved; it should likewise have in it a school element,—namely, a regular programme of exercises giving unity to all the work and all the play. The school is a social whole and there must be some degree of subordination of caprice to a general purpose.

It is evident, when one considers the too abrupt transition from the home to the old-fashioned school, that such a transition or connecting link was very much needed. An immense waste of what is best in infancy was caused by a sudden entrance upon a rigid and even harsh system of school work without any preparation for it. In place of spontaneous self-help and natural development, the child came under a training that suppressed or effaced his childish impulses and compelled him to a blind obedience to an external authority—compelled him to learn abstract and remotely interesting matter from books.

Froebel's kindergarten has done much to change the primary instruction above it—the work of amelioration is still going on. But after the primary school has been made all that it should be, there will still remain a place for the kindergarten, for the age from four to six years needs a combination of play and work, such as the kindergarten has provided.

Froebel's system must be understood and valued as a means of conducting the child from mere play towards work, from mere symbolic activity (that is to say from "make believe") to the serious grasp of reality. Hence it has both of these elements in it.

Therefore, to take for granted that the kindergarten is