

The subject of free Kindergarten is now being agitated in several cities in the United States, and is acquiring greater importance with its discussion. Hitherto these institutions have only been accessible to people of means, but it is coming to be felt that they are as much a necessity for the poor. By law, children under five years cannot be admitted into the public schools. Meanwhile, they either wander in the streets, or in vicious homes, neglected and uncared for, lay the foundation of an evil youth and criminal maturity. A few hours in a Kindergarten would go far toward giving them a desire for the further instruction which they would receive when they could enter the public schools. Then there are those who, through the graded system, are thrown out of one class into a lower, which pride will keep them from entering. These become truants, and unless some means are taken to gather them up and employ their time, will grow into pests of society. The youngest of these could easily be cared for in the Kindergarten until such time as they could go back into school. The welfare of the poorer classes demands that these institutions should be incorporated into the public school system. As yet they are established by charitable individuals, but not in sufficient numbers to accomplish all that is desirable. The experience of the charity Kindergarten is, that children from the most wretched homes are the most easily attracted, and "are made enthusiastically happy by the wise and gentle Kindergarten, who begins with taking it for granted that they would like to be helpful of others' enjoyments, if they only knew how. There is also an immediate reaction of the most satisfactory character upon the poor parents, whose self-respect is often revived."

The Kindergartens which have thus far been in operation are of so ex-

pensive a character as to be beyond the reach of the great majority. The time has not yet come when the Kindergartens will be supported at public expense, but people are growing more and more interested in the subject, and the feeling is growing that something of this character is desirable.

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The present scholastic year consists of ten months and is usually divided into two sessions; the first session extending to the 1st of July, when the entrance and Intermediate examinations are held; the second session beginning on the 1st of September, and extending to the 22nd of December. The first session contains six months and the second three and a half months. This is a very unsatisfactory division of the year, especially for the Public Schools. The last week in May, or the first week in June—the interval between seeding and haying—would be the most favourable time for holding terminal examinations in rural Public Schools, and it would be the best time also for holding the promotion examinations in the graded schools of villages, towns and cities; but while the examinations for admission to High School and Collegiate Institute are held in July, the present unequal division of the school year will have to remain. Under existing arrangements the amount of work that can easily be compassed during the first session cannot be done with any degree of thoroughness in the second session, and the result is, that the pupils that come up for admission to the High School in December are not so well prepared to do High School work as those that present themselves for the entrance examination in July. If it is desirable to hold two entrance examinations during the year, there should also be two Intermediates. The December Intermediate was dropped in the hope of relieving the pressure which some schools ex-