

### Mission of the Kindergarten.

No one can live in a large city without having thoughts severely exercised by the condition of the poor. What can be done to alleviate their condition? What especially can be done for the little child who is early sent out to beg or to earn a pittance—the street waif? During the last century there arose one who was able to offer a solution to this problem. His keen insight discovered the secret that the elevation of humanity is dependent on education. That this education must begin with the first dawns of life. He devoted long years to the study of child-life, and finally came to the conclusion that the most important period in human education is before the child attains his seventh year. He realized the influence, on the whole of the after life, of the tone and bent given to these early years. Having himself experienced the weary longing of an unsatisfied, neglected childhood, he was not content to let the pain of this experience vanish without at least trying in some way a means to satisfy and develop the craving and instincts of child nature.

It was no easy task to which he devoted himself, but with this object in view, he was not content to pass through life, quietly, safely and creditably, as might have been consistent with mere reputation, but he sought to prove himself a good man and true; to acquit himself like a hero. The children of all future generations will rejoice that *Froebel* ever lived.

In establishing the Kindergarten he provided a place where the little human plant may be cultured, where all the needs of child-nature can be supplied. With every healthy child the brain is busy, the body active, and if proper work is not given for both to do, it will seize upon whatever comes near. In the Gifts and Occupations of the Kindergarten, Froebel provided for this phase of child-nature, giving it work it can do and enjoy. When it sees the result of its work in the structure of blocks it has erected, or in the mat it has woven, it learns by experience that labor and self-exertion alone give happiness. The social element in the child's nature is satisfied by meeting with children of its own age and attainments, and in the games and songs it finds an outlet for the exuberance of young life which will manifest itself in play.

While with the object lessons and the various devices for drawing out the child's powers of observation, these powers are quickened to such an extent, that the world ever after is richer and brighter.

We suffer, all of us, from the limitation of the insight which would open our blind souls to myriads

of happy impressions. One of these forlorn, neglected little beings comes into the Kindergarten. He has been accustomed through the years of its baby-life to disorder and dirt, to the jarring sounds of harsh voices, to unkind words and rude acts. He has begun to feel somehow there is no place for him in the world, that he is always in the way in the poor room he calls his home. His overworked or dissipated parents think they have fulfilled their duty if they give him sufficient food to keep him from starving, and he is sent into the streets to find what employment these haunts afford for the busy little fingers and the growing brain.

The Kindergarten is to him a new world. Here he feels that interest is taken in him personally. He feels instinctively the elevating effect of order and cleanliness, he comes under the influence of that powerful agency, which perhaps he has never felt before, the influence of love. We have seen the lip quiver and the eye fill with tears, when instead of the harsh reproof and the sharp cuff to which he has been accustomed, a hand has been softly laid on the shoulder, and kind words have fallen on his ear. His rough exterior and ragged garments cannot conceal the fact that under it all there is what the highest and the lowest alike possess, the yearning, struggling, rejoicing, sorrowing, human heart.

In the Kindergarten his busy brain is supplied with food for thought, in the pretty stories and object lessons given by the teacher, his ear is pleased with the bright and cheery songs, and his hands are employed with work, which he soon learns to love and take an interest in.

In the plays of the kindergarten, while they please and delight, he is brought into such relations with other children that all the principles which govern society are brought into action.

He learns to respect the rights of others, and to respect himself; and through it all, through the work and the play and the lessons, he feels the influence of the law, he learns that by following a principle he will surely come to a certain result, and that law, not accident, rules in everything.

So we hope by the daily work of the Kindergarten to counteract the evil influence and the disadvantage under which these city waifs have been born, and to give them at least a fair chance of developing into useful and respectable citizens.—*E. J. Jameson, New York.*

Manual work, whether in paper, in clay or in wood, if duly accompanied with measurement training to a sense of proportion and beauty, would become a most valuable educational instrument.—*Dr. J. G. Fitch.*