

The penetrating eye of one thoroughly acquainted with human nature plainly discerns in the spontaneously chosen play of the child his future inner history. The plays of this period are the germs of the entire future life, for in them the whole nature of the child is expanding and showing his finest traits, his inmost soul. In this period lie the springs of the entire course of human life, and upon the proper conduct of life now will it depend whether the future is to be clear or clouded, gentle or boisterous, calm or agitated, industrious or idle, gloomy and morbid or bright and productive, obtuse or keenly receptive, creative or destructive—whether it is to bring concord and peace or discord and war. On play, too, depend likewise, in keeping with the peculiar natural constitution of the child, his relations to father and mother, brothers and sisters, to the community and the race, to Nature and to God. For as yet the life of the child in its various aspects, individual and social, natural and religious, is a life of undivided unity and simplicity; he scarcely knows which is dearest to him, the flowers themselves, his own joy in them, the joy his mother feels when he brings them to show her, or the dim sense of the kind Giver. Who would analyze the joys in which childhood is so rich? If the child is injured during these tender years, if the germs of his future life are enfeebled, then he can grow to the strength of manhood only with the greatest toil and exertions, and only with the greatest difficulty can he save himself, during the intervening development and education, from becoming crippled or at least one-sided."

Fröbel was the first to organize and utilize play as a factor in education, thus guiding and directing the surplus energy of the child until it merges into the work of the school and of life. In play it is the exercising of the child's activity that gives pleasure. In work the pleasure follows from the result or end attained by activity. Fröbel believed that the child's play can be utilized to awaken his perceptions, and that in imitating the life about him he is developing the possibilities of a complete human being. This is Fröbel's idea of the directed Kindergarten game.

PHYSICAL AND ETHICAL

The games gather the experiences derived from the gifts and occupations and give an opportunity to live out what has been previously observed. Thus the games form another factor in educating the whole child. First the physical being is brought into active exercise, but not in the sense of gymnastics as such. The child stands straight, keeping in position on the circle because that is one requirement of the play. (See illustration No. 402 in *THE DELINEATOR* for September.) Being actively interested in the singing, the deep, full breath and proper expansion of the chest naturally follow. Then if the boy is a blacksmith hammering new horse-shoes, a carpenter sawing or lifting boards, or joins with others to represent a little stream flowing between stones and under bridges, or is one of a flock of birds flying over the fields or hopping in the dewy grass, he is constantly exercising different sets of muscles until all parts of the body have been brought into active play. The physical training, while most important, is thus incidental and holds the interest of the child as no set of exercises could do. In this connection it may be well to say that in games requiring violent movements the accompanying song is best given by those not taking an active part, the children being told that some may be a chorus and sing the song for those who show the play. All are then engaged and the action does not interfere with the natural breathing required for the song.

The mind of the child is also employed, his creative powers being awakened. His imagination is likewise exercised by entering into and acting out the life he wishes to represent, and each new experience brings him into a higher plane of being. If he represents a bird, a fish or a frolicsome colt, his intellect is trained, helping him to understand and enter into the life of what he is representing and, for the time being, to really be that thing.

Ethical teaching is also included in the Kindergarten game. Through this life and movement in which the child rejoices and his delight in representing Nature, there comes to him a spiritual truth which leads him to trace all life back to its source, making true religion possible. The game is the child's introduction to the necessary adjustments of the larger social life of the world. "Two cannot play together except they be agreed." Thus the community spirit is fostered, and the child finds himself one of many, each exercised in self-control and self-sacrifice and doing his part to make himself and others happy. It is also an aid

in self-government, the child's will being strengthened and guided, for he finds that obedience to law gives the truest freedom, both on the material and spiritual plane. He discovers this when he is excluded from the games because he disturbs the unity. He learns to submit his will to the general good, not from the oppression of the law or fear of punishment, but from love of right. The family life is emphasized, the shelter and peace of the home, the care of the stronger for the weaker, the celebration of family festivals, departure and separation and the joy of reunion and home-coming.

The child plays the part of the baker, the joiner, the grass-mower, the sailor, and thus learns respect for bodily labor and notes the patience, perseverance and skill required on the part of these workers. He observes the interdependence of all people and through this study of how individuals and nations help each other, he gains his first idea of the universal brotherhood of man. In such games as the "Weather-vane" and the "Trees swaying in the wind," are pictured the unseen forces of Nature.

Generally speaking, physical training and ethical teaching are the predominating objects of the Kindergarten games. There are other important lessons to each of which an entire paper might be devoted, but these will be merely mentioned in the summary of a good Kindergarten game. No one will gain say the value of the physical training, and as to the ethical teaching, Dr. Parkhurst in a recent article "On the Training of a Child," says: "A child's training should be ethical rather than intellectual. It is easier to make a person bright than sound. Intellectual training may be gained from books, but morality cannot be printed."

MANAGEMENT OF THE GAMES.

As to the general management of the Kindergarten game when the period for this exercise arrives, usually about the middle of the forenoon, the children form in marching line singing some such simple melody as this:

"We'll march and march and march around,
And marching, gaily sing,
Then hand in hand so quietly,
We'll quickly form a ring.
Tra, la, la, la, tra, la, la, la,
Tra, la, la, la, la, la, tra, la, la, la,
Tra, la, la, la, la, la!"

All joining hands, sing:

"Merrily, merrily, let us form a ring,
Joyfully, joyfully, let us dance and sing.
Tra, la, la, la, la, la, la, tra, la, la, la, la, la, la,
Merrily, merrily let us form a ring!"

Then follows another short song:

"Now the time has come for play,
Tra, la, la, la, la, la, (clapping hands)
Let our leader show the way,
Tra, la, la, tra, la, la!
Heads erect and join your hands,
Each beside the other stands,
Tra, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la, la!"

The Kindergarten, who supervises the games, advances to the center of the ring, when all sing,

"Let us look at Miss _____,
So happy and gay;
Let us look at Miss _____,
What does she now play?"

Now the Kindergarten either gives some gesture to indicate a game, or chooses a child to select one who declares preference in a similar manner. After the game is played, first child chooses another person to come to the center of the ring as leader, shaking hands with him as he advances, and himself retires to his place in the circle. As each new leader takes his place in the center, the last named song is sung in salutation as he makes known his game.

This illustrates one way of opening the games. This should be exactly like the above is neither necessary nor desirable, for the stereotyped game is contrary to Fröbel's