

what they see their mother or other members of the household doing. Even imitating the sounds or movements made by the cat or the dog. In all this activity bringing into play powers of both mind and body, unconsciously learning great laws and truths of life, and all this goes on in the form of play. Surely this must be an important, if not the most important epoch in the child's life. For those children who are blest with wise parents, we need not fear, but I ask *you* how many children are properly trained in this, as I look at it, foundation *laying time* in life. I am no pessimist, but I do think it would be a good discipline for all girls, especially those who expect to have the care of a family, if they were forced to take a kindergarten training and to teach either in a kindergarten or in a primary class for at least two years, they would be sure to avoid many of the mistakes made by most young mothers. We who have been kindergartenists or primary teachers know full well that we get children with habits so formed at four years of age that I will not say it is impossible to instil good habits, but, certainly, they can never be what they would have been had such habits never been formed, and how many children in our cities are forming habits of *idleness*, wastefulness vices of all sorts from their very cradles. We are very careful to ward off diseases which affect the physical health of the people. How many ever give a thought to *moral disease*.

2nd. How and by whom is this training given? Froebel says, "The true starting point, the purest source, and surest foundation of all real human education, is the mother." What does any mother know of the future of her child? She cannot see it. His end is a mystery to her. Is it in her power to influence that end. Who can doubt it, and who take her place in the early life. *How influence it* is important, as we have seen, for his entire life. Let her take a lesson from the gardener. See to its environment. Keep down the weeds. Prune off the false shoots and crooked twigs. Give air, sunshine and clean *dirt*. Even then she cannot be sure of a perfect man, so freighted is he by inheritance, by prejudice and by environment; but on her shoulder the mantle must fall. Who can possibly know the disposition of the child so well as the mother, and knowing her own weakness and those of the father; be so careful in guarding, guiding and restraining as mother.

When women fully realize what it is to bring up their children properly—that they are in reality the educators of mankind—that there is some truth in the old saying, "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world"—they will in my opinion find that their rights are fully secured to them. They will not desire to be platform orators, leaders in this society and that social movement. Philanthropists for the whole world, doctors, lawyers, preachers, clerks, everything but *mother*; but with the knowledge that a divine spark slumbers in the little being on her lap, there must kindle in her a *holy* zeal and desire to fan this spark into a flame, to nourish this tender plant for the great garden of *God*.

Next to the influence of the mother comes that of the father, but here again, how many fathers have any real interest in their young