

day, a member of society, in which he is no longer a prominent person, but one among many having common interests and pleasures. He receives no attention except as a part of the whole, and yet feels no unhappiness from lack of the accustomed attention, being fully occupied with the pleasure derived from the companionship of those around him.

A timid child has a sense of shelter surrounded by others of his own age, and gradually forgets *himself* in the enjoyment of the play. His motions become free and unstudied, and accordingly graceful and easy. Being no longer awkward, he is no longer pained by his own efforts.

A close observation of the results of proper Kindergarten training will show all this and much more.

The advantages of the Kindergarten training as a preparation for the work of the school, are still more marked, and will be evident to the mind of any *thinking* person who has any true conception of the nature and necessities of a child's mind. No one is competent to pass judgment on the merits of the system until they have carefully studied the aim and methods of it, and have also seen the practical working for an extended length of time.

Froebel reasoned that the education of the child should begin with the first sign of awakening intelligence, and that it should go on without interruption, or other than gradual change of method, through childhood, youth, and maturer years.

If the mothers of this generation would partake more largely of the unselfish spirit of this wise and tender-hearted man, they would realize more thoroughly their privileges and responsibilities in the early training of their little ones. The moral and intellectual, as well as physical, well-being of the child, during his whole life, depends much upon the faithfulness of the mother during the early years of childhood.

Play is a necessity to every healthy nature. It is the prominent want of childhood everywhere; even in mature years the same want is apparent, only varied in form of expression.

Froebel reasoned that the expanding mind of the child had been endowed by the Creator with this desire for activity, for some wise purpose. His clear sight and large affections saw in this necessity the indication of the proper form by which to present the simple elementary principle of education. The faults too often found in childish character, he reasoned, were only perversions of natural desires which might with proper care have been developed so as to prove valuable helps instead of hindrances in the formation of mind and character.

Beginning with *simple* things already familiar to the child, he encouraged it to make a free investigation to discover and determine *all* the properties and uses to which each object could be applied. The same object is presented in various aspects, as a whole, in parts made by simple division, etc., etc. *Different* materials are given with which the child *works* out, by simple processes, like results. His inventive powers become strengthened by exercise. He grows self-reliant and eager to carry on his investigations, using for that purpose the simple material within his reach.

This process begins in the play of every child, but being left without direction, his inventive talent soon reaches its limit, and one line of investigation after another is dropped without his having gained a clear understanding of anything. The tendency of such bewilderment is to make him fickle, restless, and mischievous. Much of this is corrected by the regularity and precision of school life, but it is never done without loss of valuable time, besides being wearing to the temper of both teacher and pupil.

The Kindergarten is *not* a mild school of correction for the taming of rude boys and the improvement of illy trained girls, but aims rather to prevent the *formation* of such characters.

There is no hurry, and no cramming done. The Kindergarten,

if she has the true spirit, gives no assistance until the little one has reached the extent of its own ability, and when suggesting or assisting, allows the child to proceed alone as soon as a fresh idea has been presented, or a new line of thought has opened the way for independent action. A quick child often says, when receiving assistance, "Oh, I can do it now," before having fully grasped the directions given, and should be allowed to make the attempt, thus by its own efforts proving the necessity for careful and patient attention.

The work or plays of the Kindergarten advance step by step toward a higher plane of knowledge, and require more and more skill in the execution, but the advance is so gradual that the child finds it possible always to accomplish the work of the fresh step, with some satisfactory degree of perfection.

The connections between the various forms of work readily suggest themselves to the child's mind; the idea gained in one way is immediately applied in work with other material. Numerous examples of this will readily come to the mind of any one at all familiar with the material used in the Kindergarten. One example will be sufficient here. The work of the stick laying is *represented* on the slates in drawing; and again similar forms appear in the sewing, perforating and paper interlacing.

The training of the hand forms an important part of the work of the Kindergarten. A neglect of such training in the ordinary methods of education is a great oversight on the part of teachers. The hand is the natural servant of the mind, and only by proper cultivation can it be made to execute the directions of the will with quickness and precision. However beautiful the conception of the artist, in the execution alone does he make that beauty apparent to others. The mechanic may form in his mind the plan of a perfect design, but if his hand is unskilled in carrying out that plan his work is worthless.

There have been many little games arranged for the exercise of this much-neglected member appropriate to the nursery, Kindergarten, and primary school. Infinitely more can be accomplished in this during the early years of childhood, when the muscles are supple and easily brought under control, than at any other time of life.

Many mothers have been and still are puzzled, and too often vexed, by the oft-repeated question, "What shall I do?" This problem finds a solution in the play of the Kindergarten. The little one constantly seeks for new material with which to test the ideas gained in his work, and never tires of repeating it with the simple means he finds in his home or about the field or garden.

There are some persons who cannot appreciate the value of the general culture, and even development of the mental, moral, and physical nature of their children. These people consider themselves *infallible*, and, accordingly, persons of great authority in matters of opinion, though entire strangers to any careful and continued thought on any subject. Accordingly they smile patronizingly and say "It's a very pleasant way of amusing children, no doubt, but we see the necessity for *our* children being *taught* to read and spell," &c., &c. They look upon the minds of their children in the same way that they would upon an empty, new mill, where the grain must be poured in and the machinery set to work to grind it up. If their idea was the true one, the running of the mill without first filling in with grain would be folly indeed.

The Kindergarten does not so understand the formation of the human mind. *Mechanical grinding* has no place in her work. The little mind just opening and reaching out to grasp the realities of life is a thing of life and self-activity. It does not need to be taught before it begins to grow—it has within itself the means of development, and needs only to be watched and sheltered now; when it needs food from without it will make known its wants. The choice