

aim—the art of living, the harmonious formation of true human life. He also took up the study of crystallography, which seems to have completed his study of development and gradual formation in all the realms of nature. In 1813 he joined the great patriotic volunteer movement for the protection of Germany against France, and it is noteworthy that he served in the corps under the “Turnewater Jahn,” who so warmly promoted the practice of gymnastics in Germany as a means of securing national strength and independence. During this service he contracted his remarkable friendship with two Berlin students, Middendorf and Langenthal, who were afterwards enthusiastic fellow-workers with him to the end of his life. In 1814 he returned to the University of Berlin; but circumstances soon led to his trying his new system of education, first at Griesheim, and then at Keilhau. His want of worldly prudence and economy prevented the achievement of any great success by these ventures. He wrote a great deal, and produced his great work, the “Education of Mankind,” but without securing that influence upon national education to which he aspired. In 1831 he went to Frankfort, and soon afterwards he removed to Switzerland. The Swiss government was the first to countenance Fröbel’s labours by any support; and it was in Switzerland that he began to train teachers, and to work especially in the cause of *infant* education. The failure of his wife’s health led to his return to Germany in 1836, and from that time to her death in 1839 he could only plead for his views by writing and lecturing. In 1840 he returned to Blankenburg, near Keilhau, to establish the very first Kindergarten, which was the embodiment of his latest impressions and of his most mature convictions as a teacher; and the last twelve years of his life seem to have been devoted to the mission of leading women to a higher and truer view of their responsibilities in regard to infant training. With this I close my attempt to sketch briefly the influences under which Fröbel lived, and to shew the general drift of his lifework. I have made no attempt to give a complete memoir. Miss Shirreff’s little book will supply a much better one.

It is very important to take into full consideration the immense amount of thought, experience, and study that Fröbel went through before producing that system of occupations which is calculated to be the means of a truly philosophical course of infant teaching. I have often been grieved, but I am no longer surprised, that these occupations or gifts are used with very little comprehension of their true use on the part of many teachers. It seems to me that even in Germany, where Kindergarten teachers often commence their training course at fourteen or fifteen years of age, and begin to practise at sixteen or seventeen, the Kindertagens are not always carried on with a full sense of their real office. The late Professor Payne’s book verifies this. He approves the Kindergarten system as “a real and natural education,” but he is quite of opinion that the Kindergarten teachers whom he saw were far from always being persons of sufficient culture to understand the system they practised. He found that the Kindergarten students ranged from fourteen to twenty years of age, and he says, “I am convinced that a year’s training for a girl of fourteen years of age cannot possibly prepare her to carry it out; and I am further of opinion that for fourteen years of age seventeen ought to be substituted. Up to this latter age, the general education of those who are intended for teachers ought to go on without interruption.”

Let us now turn to what is truly the ruling principle in Fröbellian teaching. I adopt quotation again, for I

do not think the facts in question could be more clearly stated, and I am anxious to name the book from which I quote as an American work of moderate size which gives a remarkably simple, and straightforward, and thorough idea of Fröbellian principles. In Hailman’s “Kindergarten Culture in the Family and Kindergarten,” published in New-York, we find the following:—“The general feature that unites all the methods of the new education is development—evolution. They labour to aid and direct the unfolding of the various germs of capacities and faculties of the young human being to ever higher and more complex forms of existence. This development is, in all cases, strictly organic, *i. e.* from within outward: it is growth, subject to the ordinary laws of growth.

“The various powers will grow, like the physical portions of the animal organism, by taking into themselves suitable material from without, by assimilating this material (*i. e.* by rendering it similar to themselves, and by uniting with it), and by judicious, vigorous exercise. Again, if the powers are to reach full vigour, their growth must be *gradual*, and *continuous*. It must be *gradual*—*i. e.*, slow,—moderate enough to give time for thorough, efficient assimilation of the appropriated material. It must be *continuous*—*i. e.*, starting from a given point it must progress steadily, without breaks or leaps. Breaks that reduce a given power to idleness, will cause this power to lose much of the substance and vigour previously acquired—(how I wish some parents knew this when they take their children from school to school!):—leaps that induce a given power to attempt what lies beyond its strength, cause a reaction which is always injurious, and often fatal. Only if the growth is gradual and continuous, only if everything presented and required is within the scope of the pupil’s powers, only if the powers are continuous and fairly exercised, and every new step is taken on the basis of previous attainments, can we expect to develop powers that approach their maximum of susceptibility and vividness and vigour,—powers that will enable the individual to emancipate himself from leading strings, and to do his work independently.

“Education, then, can create nothing. It only can, in the positive phases of its work, place the organism in the most favourable circumstances for growth, for the unfolding of its powers, for increase in substance and vigour; it only can offer appropriate food, watch over its proper assimilation, and guide the exercise of the powers thus strengthened. In its negative phases, education must protect the organism against injurious influences, keep hurtful food away from it, guard against over-feeding, and prevent an undue extension of the powers. It may be added that these phases—the positive and negative phases—do not claim the same relative attention at all times. The work of early education is mostly negative, and positive education, although steadily growing in scope and importance, does not, on an average, gain the ascendancy over her sister until the third or fourth year of school life.

“The negative phases of education require, in addition to an intimate knowledge of childish nature, and a clear enthusiastic appreciation of the proximate ends and the ultimate aim to be attained, a great amount of tact and patience; the positive phase, a certain amount of positive knowledge and skill, whose character and extent depend on the stage which the pupil has reached. These considerations are of paramount importance in the selection of teachers; to regard them is to succeed, to disregard them is to fail.

“The methods of the new education place almost exclusive reliance upon self-activity on the part of