

children are familiarly acquainted with the meaning of every song and game. Few things are more indicative of a spurious Kindergarten than a variety of games and songs where hardly any child knows the meaning of what she sings or acts.

5. The teacher's skill in cultivating the children's powers of speech. No child who has been from three to eight years of age in a good Kindergarten, with a proper complement of teachers, ought to have any defect of utterance which can be cured in a natural way. One of the most striking characteristics of a good teacher anywhere is the readiness with which she detects badly worded answers, and enables the child to correct them.

The strictest of Fröbel's followers do not allow any reading, writing, or slate arithmetic during the Kindergarten age; but my own experience leads me to join in the late Professor Payne's approval of what he saw at Hamburg. He says:—"In this school I noticed that reading, writing, and elementary arithmetic were taught to the children over six years of age. This, which the rigid purists of the Kindergarten system generally regard as an innovation, is, in my opinion, a very desirable innovation, forms the proper transition and introduction to the work of the ordinary schools, and constitutes a fitting application of the principles already carried out. It is desirable for this reason, if for no other, that the children thus prepared can take their place in the ordinary school without experiencing the sudden shock which those children experience who are at once transferred from the play-work of the Kindergarten to the routine work of schools in which as yet Fröbel's works are unknown." I may farther add, that Mr. Payne thought that the Kindergarten age might, under these circumstances, extend *even* to eight years of age. This class at seven or eight years old is the *germ* or *bud* from which we derive the connecting class or primary stage of the school proper.

THIRD PERIOD.—For want of a better name, we may call the age from seven to fifteen years the school period. Of this the time from the seventh to the eighth year must be occupied in learning to learn. Just as children begin to learn to play between three and four years of age, so in the seventh year they should be able to learn to work in the serious sense of the word. The self-activity, which in the Kindergarten took the form of play, must now be frankly declared work. Of course, this change must be gradual; hence the names "transitional," "intermediate," and "connecting" have been applied to the class where it goes on. Here the powers of abstraction and generalization begin to occupy more of the teacher's care. By degrees the child learns to think, to draw conclusions from facts himself, though the power to do this is feebler than many persons suppose, because it is so common to mistake a ready apprehension and a good memory for powers of thought. Object teaching, drawing, singing, recitations, and drill should still make an important figure in the class work. The teacher has now to grapple with the great difficulty of enabling the children by degrees to give up the use of concrete numbers and work quite as intelligently with figures. The whole time from seven to ten should certainly not be spent in a Kindergarten. At the very least, two years of this is due to that teacher who will be responsible for the child's proper advancement at thirteen or fifteen years of age. Decidedly before the tenth year the pupil should be well started in those special methods of study which run through his school, and no school-master or mistress who deserves the name is fairly treated who is not allowed to lay the founda-

tion of actual school work. My own experience in past years makes me very earnest on this point, and I was much interested during my work in Liverpool at finding how unanimous the best and most successful teachers in the Elementary Juvenile Schools were in desiring the control of the entire *school* age.

The lady who succeeded me in most of my duties there, writes thus to me:—"I am decidedly of opinion that children do better if they pass through all the standards in one school. Children who begin early in the Infant School would do well to pass from the infant room to the care of the teacher who is to guide them for the rest of their school course. I also feel strongly that purely Kindergarten teaching should not extend beyond the age of six years, if the children are to begin their standard work well at seven years." The most experienced government inspectors attach special importance to the care bestowed upon the lowest standard in the juvenile school, because the condition of that standard almost invariably indicates the degree of excellence throughout the school.

From ten to fifteen, oral instruction should still play a very prominent part in education, and the use of text books should follow and not precede each lesson. No attempt should be made to train a child for any special calling before thirteen years of age, and the general results in public schools seem to decide that science teaching is of little practical use before that age.

The last, the Student Period of Education, begins about the fifteenth year. Education may now take the form of self-culture under judicious direction. The pupil may study books for himself, and lectures begin to be of service, while oral lessons may be less frequent though not entirely set aside.

Through all the stages, moral and religious training should be most carefully provided for, and at their close we should hope to find the pupils fitted with the needful principles of self-guidance. From all this you will see that the Kindergarten should provide the school with intelligent, apt, little pupils at seven or eight years of age. At present, the amount of cramming entailed upon a teacher who receives a boy at nine years of age, and who is expected to fit that boy for a tolerably good place in a public school by eleven or twelve years of age, is something distressing. Until some great change is made in the character of the studies in public schools, boys who are intended to prepare for them can only do so without undue strain by beginning at seven years of age. At seven or eight, they may be expected to have some knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic, but it would be plainly wrong to expect any very valuable class work in grammar or foreign languages before that time. Indeed, earnest and intelligent teachers of juvenile schools would generally claim the right to start as many of the actual school studies as they can themselves.

The points of discussion, therefore, which I would most earnestly commend to you are:—

1. The value of the Kindergarten as a preparation for actual school life.
2. The danger incurred by schoolmasters and school-mistresses who resign their rightful share of the transition period between seven and ten years of age.

The Chairman, in inviting discussion on the paper, remarked that the great obstacle to the general adoption of the Kindergarten system was the transition period between the Kindergarten and the School. The fact was that the method of the Higher School was as yet unequal to the task of working out what the Kindergarten had begun. Higher-school masters and mistresses were heard complaining of the result of the system as exhibited in the children they had to take over: