

imposing edifice, exhibiting every detail essential to external beauty and symmetry, yet so planned and constructed as most effectively to serve the more practical purposes for which it was designed.

So lucid and forcible is his expression, that not only is the idea exhaustively and accurately stated, but we can readily infer the condition of the writer's temper, and the greater or less intensity of feeling brought to bear upon the matter before him. In short his books form a portrait exact, and finished of their author's mind. Clear, candid and elegant in wording, in substance learned, yet vivacious and irresistibly fascinating, they remain, the giant impress of a giant's hand.

THE KINDERGARTEN.

THIS, latest departure in the system of education, is, perhaps the most truly scientific method of instruction yet established. Frederick Froebel conceived the idea, that education should not be a process of intellectual cramming, but that it should be a process of development, in harmony with the child's mental and physical nature. With this exception he took up the study of child-nature, observing carefully the natural activities and inclinations that influences children in their play.

Froebel no doubt utilized the theories of Pestalozzi, which aimed at the developments of physical nature and industrial education, but he realized the necessity of beginning to work in harmony with nature at the very earliest age. He saw in his imagination the ideal teacher, discharging the duties of his office in much the same way as the systematic gardener cultivates his plants. Hence the name of the system which he developed,—Kindergarten or *children's garden*.

The kindergarten principles are based upon the following laws:—(a.) That education means a harmonious development of all the bodily and mental powers. (b.) That the spontaneous is the raw material, and the only element that is valuable in education, and that the teacher must graft his instruction on to the spontaneous in the child. (c.) And so the work of the teacher is not to give knowledge, but to furnish materials, means, and opportunities for the child's mind spontaneously to work upon. (d.) And that the materials and occupations pre-

sented to the child, as a means of training, should be systematically developed from each other.

Owing to the stern opposition which his principles met, Froebel lived to see only this foundation work of his new educational system, fairly laid in his native Germany, but so thorough was the foundation work, that no amount of resistance could destroy the great purpose of that noble life. At his death in 1852, which is said to have been hastened by the enactment of a law excluding the kindergarten method of teaching from the public schools of Prussia, there existed a training school at Dresden, where Froebel had expended most of his personal labor, and a few flourishing infant schools. To-day the kindergarten method is favourably known and quite extensively applied in all the countries of Europe, and also in the American Republic.

The system is designed for the training of children between the ages of three and seven; and as that is the most important period in all the child's life, the advantages or disadvantages arising from its application, are of the greatest importance. The fact that children under a certain age are not admitted to the public schools, is no proof that they are not capable of education at an earlier period. Indeed, as Herbert Spencer has wisely observed, the child begins to learn, and its character begins to take shape almost as soon as it comes into being. It is doubtful whether in any of the subsequent years of its life, the child acquires as much knowledge as during the first two or three years. It may be questioned also whether the training of any other period of its life, makes so lasting an impression upon the character as what it learns during those early years. By the time the child has reached the age of seven, its temper, and many of the most important features of its disposition have become established. If this early formation of character, has been a perfect development of all the child's natural powers and a drawing out and building up of all that is noble and good in the child, its prospects for further development will be hopeful; but, if on the contrary, the unamiable qualities of its disposition has been allowed to hold sway, the future training must either take on the character of reform and transformation of all that nature and domestic influences have done for the child, or else become auxiliary in building up a deformed character.