

## KINDERGARTEN RESULTS

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Among modern "muck-rackers" none is more certain of a hearing than the catchphrase critic of our public schools. In America, education is like government — everybody's business; and the teacher-baiting which is so tiresomely common in our magazines and on our platforms is a natural part of the present discontent with most of our national faiths and works. As such, it may do more good than harm. The good it does is noteworthy whenever it induces a parent to see for himself, in a spirit of fair inquiry, what his children are doing in the school-room.

But too often the rash dogmatism of writers who generalize brilliantly from one or two exceptional instances actually affects the policy of responsible school committees and superintendents. When for example, a single school officer is likely to take seriously the assertion, made by a well-known doctor who writes on education and the hygiene of child life, that it is better to let our children play in a sewer than send them to a kindergarten, those who know what kindergartens actually accomplish, have reason to grow uneasy, if not indignant. Much of the current criticism of schools and colleges is equally perverted and may occasionally prove pernicious.

In the case of the kindergarten we need to remind ourselves that it is easy to pick out one or two items in a day's program at school and condemn them as useless or injurious; easy, too, to prove that certain children do not profit by the program as a whole; but an entirely different thing to prove that the kindergarten is not worth while as part of a school system, for "all the children of all the people."

A few mothers may do at home what a kindergarten can do; others may think that a governess or even a nursemaid may do as much or as well; but most mothers know their own limitations of time, strength, patience and intelligence—and have no governess or nurse-maid. They welcome the aid of a good kindergarten and find the results of the kindergarten course, as a whole, excellent.

Those who write of the technique of kindergarten instruction may speak of the preparation of the children's minds for later scientific thinking, or of their hearts for ethical feeling, or of their imaginations for creative exercise of any sort. These matters we may leave to the expert, together with

questions of sanitation, eye strain, muscle strain and over-stimulation of the infant intellect. Happily, we know that kindergarten leaders and kindergarten teachers are awake to their own problems and steadily progressive in the solution of them. On grounds of public policy kindergarten may be amply defended in a simpler way.

The kindergarten takes children at four. It relieves the home, enlarges the lives of the children, eases the transition from home to school, and lays a foundation for the school to build on.

Most children get from the kindergarten increased resources — they become better able to amuse and instruct themselves; increased readiness and poise in handling their own bodies and the things about them; a perceptibly clearer notion of what the world is like and what people are about; and an appreciable increase in steadiness of judgment between good and bad, fit and unfit.

But even if one or all of these results would seem to be lacking, the child at kindergarten is safe, happy, active and under wise guidance; the mother is relieved; and the school is getting some of its preparatory work accomplished.

Of course there are kindergartens and kindergartens — and if those in a given community are bad or indifferent, it is somebody's business to make them good. The inexpert observer who wants to know how to tell a good kindergarten when he sees it will find help in the pamphlets issued by the National Kindergarten Association, 1 Madison avenue, New York. Meanwhile, the best testimony to take is that of mothers — preferably those of moderate means, without special theories of education to exploit, and with two or more children.—*Boston Globe*.

Oregon tries to put high-school education within reach of the boys and girls of every rural community. A state law provides for a county fund from which any district that, either alone or with a neighboring district, maintains a standard high school, may draw money in proportion to the number of pupils in the school. The plan was first tried in Lane County in 1908. The six high schools of that year, with 523 pupils, have increased to sixteen, with nearly a thousand pupils. Seven other counties have adopted the plan, with the result that now there are said to be more high-school pupils in proportion to the population than in any other state.—*Youth's Companion*.