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## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>Kindergarten, by Miss Bailey<br/>Phonography, by W. H. Taylor ..... 129</p> <p>Methods of Teaching the subject of Reading, by S. P. Rowell ..... 135</p> <p>Female accomplishments, by A. M., Teacher ..... 136</p> <p>EDITORIAL :</p> <p>Obituary ..... 137</p> <p>The Managers of Schools.. 137</p> <p>Price List of Text-Books for the Protestant and English Schools..... 137</p> <p>Observations, &amp;c., reserved for a future number..... 137</p> <p>Provincial Association of Protestant Teachers..... 137</p> <p>OFFICIAL NOTICES :</p> <p>Appointments of School Commissioners &amp; School</p> | <p>Trustees — Erection of School Municipalities..... 138</p> <p>Abstract of Proceedings of the Protestant Committee of the Council of Public Instruction ..... 139</p> <p>Amended regulations relative to Examination of Candidates for Teachers' Diplomas ..... 140</p> <p>Price Lists of English and French Text-Books, &amp;c..... 141</p> <p>List of School Necessaries to be had at the Book Depository, &amp;c..... 142</p> <p>MISCELLANEOUS :</p> <p>Westminster Abbey ..... 143</p> <p>Sun in Flames..... 143</p> <p>Advertisements ..... 144</p> <p>Meteorology..... 144</p> |
|---|---|

### **The Kindergarten, in Relation to the Higher School.**

Paper read by Miss M. E. BAILEY before the College of Preceptors.

Considering the interest excited by Kindergarten teaching during the last few years, and the fact that such teaching is almost exclusively committed to ladies, I shall trust that it will be considered neither presumptuous nor unbecoming that a lady should venture to lay her experience on the subject before such thoughtful and well-read hearers as one may expect to find at a meeting at the College of Preceptors. The condition of the school proper is so directly affected by the Kindergarten ; it is so important that teachers at large should know exactly how far Fröbel, the originator of the Kindergarten, advanced beyond the discoveries of earlier educationalists ; and yet it is so common to find men withdrawing as shyly from the study of the Kindergarten system, as they would from that of domestic management, that I trust to do a real educational service, if I can provoke both ladies and gentlemen to an earnest and intelligent inquiry about Fröbel

and his work, and if I can help them, even in a slight degree, to judge of the merits of the next Kindergarten they visit. Men certainly are more generally versed in mental and natural science, and in mathematics, than women, and all these are necessary qualifications for critics of the Kindergarten system. Generally, too, they have also a wider and sterner experience of the world, to give them a cooler and more dispassionate view of circumstances. Again, they have equal duties to the rising generation ; and though I cannot allow that they have the quick sympathy, delicate tact, and patient affection needed for excellence in actual Kindergarten work, I am quite sure that there is every need of their more accurate knowledge, and keener supervision of principles, to keep what has been enthusiastically termed the "New Education" from deteriorating, and to unmask ridiculous and injurious imitations of it. We look to them to supply the greater part of the funds to support Kindergartens, and we know that they have often a more painful sense of irritation and disappointment at the educational deficiencies of grown-up sons and daughters than women have. Why, then, do they not examine closely into the merits of a system by which impostors can certainly cause them much expense, and by which skilful earnest teachers can promote the intelligence and happiness of their little ones in a most marvellous way ? It is true that a special training is needed for the acquirement of much mechanical skill in the various occupations of the Kindergarten ; but anyone who has had a Pestalozzian training, any well-read and practised teacher, anyone who thoughtfully follows the excellent mental science lectures provided in the present training course for teachers by this College, is prepared for an intelligent view of Fröbel's great discoveries. Like many of the greatest benefits conferred upon us by the labours of other great men, the Fröbellian methods are based upon such obvious and natural truths, that, even if we see their logical relation to each other, the chances are that we may perhaps from our own inexperience fail to see their originality in grappling with certain educational difficulties never thoroughly dealt with before, or perhaps in the course of long conscientious and success-