

life they afford a needed outlet for the sympathy and energy which can only find expression in consecration to some human interest. They serve as object-lessons in education to parents, to teachers, and to school boards, and this is an important aspect of their work, for the full value of Froebel's ideas will only be understood when they are carried forward into the education of the older pupils. For the children themselves they mean a step towards that at present far-off educational ideal, equality of opportunity for every child; they mean, if it be for only a few hours a day, an environment into which enters the beauty of form, of colour, of music, of story, and the personal influence of love, and patience, and justice, and truth; they mean, if only for a few hours a day, an atmosphere of joyousness, of interest, of that productive self-activity, whose influence on future development is greatest in the early years of life.

Does there seem to be some exaggeration in claiming a real educational value for such an influence brought to bear day by day on children so young? It will not seem so, I think, to any who knows how true is Froebel's teaching that every stage of human development is conditioned by what went before, or who understands how the child's whole future life may be influenced by the outlets which his various instinctive impulses find as they arise. Does it seem a vain dream that the kindergarten may have a mission among the degraded classes of our large towns, where it so often seems

"As if some lesser god had made the world
But had not force to shape it as he would?"

Is it not here especially that we need Froebel's teaching that the best in life cannot be given but must be won, and that it never can be won if the early years of life are starved? Even in the lowest strata of society the child, however handicapped by heredity, is yet human not only in shape but in promise; human, also, in that educability which shews itself in adaptation to whatever environment may press upon him. It does require faith, no doubt, to see that every child inherits