

Special Articles.

EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT GERMS.—Continued.

EDUCATION IN JAPAN.

The Hon. Ichizo Hattori, Commissioner of Japan, who was accompanied by the Hon. Tokichi Takamine, Japanese Commissioner to the World's Exposition, gave a description of the wonderful progress education has made lately in Japan. He stated that Japan is divided into forty-four *kahns*, or as we call them states, each of which has its own governor. At the last census the population was 37,041,368. The government takes great interest in the subject of education, as do also the people. There is a Department of Education, with a Minister of Education, who is a cabinet officer. Under him is a vice commissioner and several secretaries. In each of these *kahns* or states there is a superintendent.

At first they tried the plan of having school districts composed of 600 people, but found it would not work; but now small districts are arranged according to the necessities and location of the population. Owing to the fact that the families of Japan occupy the same place for many centuries, the school district is fixed. The plan of selecting school committees is peculiar. Each commonwealth elects many more Committeemen than are required. From these the governor selects such as he deems the best for the office. Mr. Hattori said that they had tried electing only the number of committee men needed, but they found politics interfered with good men for managing educational affairs; so the above plan was adopted by the government, which argued that out of so many elected there might be found some good men.

The school age is from six to fourteen years, and education is compulsory for at least three sessions of sixteen weeks. Private tuition is permitted, but such pupils are examined with the children of the public schools, and if they fail to pass after three trials they are forced to attend the public schools.

The eight years of school-life is divided thus:—Three years in the lower grade, three years in the intermediate, and two years in the higher course. Chinese, Japanese, and English, together with a full course of studies such as are taught in the best schools of this country, are embraced in their curriculum. There are in Japan he said, 78 normal schools, 29,254 grammar, intermediate, and high schools, with an attendance of 3,017,088 pupils. The teachers are compelled to hold certificates of competency from the normal schools or the governor. They are examined every five or seven years to see if they keep pace with the progress of the age. Hon. Hattori remarked that he did not know how it was in this country, but in Japan some people did not like the teachers and looked down upon them. In order to prevent this the government gave teachers titles and official position. A teacher is not subject to military conscription, nor are certain students of the university, by special legislation.

The schools are regularly inspected by an officer of the education department, which is productive of good results. The annual session of the schools lasts thirty-two weeks, and children attend from twenty-two to thirty hours per week. Within the last two years the number of pupils has increased greatly.

A paper was given by Mrs. Anna B. Ogden, of Washington, D. C., who has charge of the kindergarten exhibit and school in the Government Building of the Exposition.

Mrs. Ogden gave a very interesting, practical chapter from her own motherhood life, which must have convinced every mother present that kindergarten work must not be delayed until the child is sent to school, for at the age of three months the baby be-

gins to observe, and its mental faculty is capable of being trained. Mrs. Ogden said, from observation she considered from about three to eight years the proper age for the child to attend the kindergarten school. After eight years the child is ready for more serious, though equally pleasant work; this should be found in a higher graded school, but one permeated by the kindergarten principle, where are,—

Little hands made busy,
Little feet made useful,
Little lips made truthful.

The test of kindergarten is not what the child has done, but what it is. The training of a child in the kindergarten should be seen, not only in its mental, but in its moral and physical nature. The three-fold nature of the child is to be developed equally in all directions; otherwise this system is a failure.

The paper of Mrs. Ogden was most warmly received by the audience. It was beautifully expressed, admirable in spirit, and contained much of personal experience in the use of the kindergarten gifts in the training of her own children.

KINDERGARTEN SCHOOLS IN CANADA.

Mr. James L. Hughes, P. S. I., of Toronto, Ont., gave a very interesting account of the kindergarten schools of his city. The problem of the proper relation of the kindergarten to the primary work has been close and hearty, and a permanency of the work has been secured. The work has been in operation for two years, and the results are a success. The principles of the kindergarten are taught in the Provincial Normal School of Canada at Toronto. A building is being prepared for a free kindergarten. The kindergarten of Berlin, in Ontario, is the only other place in Canada where the kindergarten is as yet introduced. The organic union of the public school and kindergarten should be secured by the modification of the public school and its adaptation to the kindergarten.

DISCUSSION.

A pleasant discussion followed Mr. Hughes' report, in which Mr. Sheldon of Boston congratulated the kindergartners upon having drifted into a much more appreciative recognition of the genuine workers in the elementary public schools than they had ten years ago.

Mr. Hailmann responded happily, and said the study and comprehension of the child had united our interests. Mr. Sheldon said both sides had modified in some degree their arbitrary methods, and work in a more enlightened, Froebelian spirit.

THE SCHOOLMASTER'S GUESTS.

BY WILL CARLETON.

The District Schoolmaster was sitting,
Behind his high book-laden desk,
Close watching the motions of scholars,
Pathetic and gay and grotesque.

As whisper some half leafless branches,
When Autumn's brisk breezes have come,
His little scrub thicket of pupils
Sent upward a half smothered hum.

Like the frequent sharp bang of a wagon
When treading a forest path o'er,
Resounded the heels of the pupils,
Whenever their feet struck the floor.

There was little Tom Tims on the front seat,
Whose face was withstanding a drouth,
And jolly Jack Gibbs just behind him,
With a rainy new moon for a mouth.