

around them, but the tinies are not so powerfully influenced for evil as for good; they always seem fresher from the hands of their Maker, and the inherent goodness of human nature has better opportunities of development if taken when the subject is in its most receptive and plastic stage. Parents are, as a rule, very careful and loving to the helpless infant, but as soon as it begins to assert its capacity for enjoying a measure of self-government, then it is that through their ignorance in thwarting it in every direction, because its efforts to

"Find Out Things"

sometimes bring about unpleasant results, that so much mischief to the nascent will is done. Just here should step in the Kindergarten, and by its scientific means of directing, controlling, yet developing the child's energies and giving it scope to practise its strength, ingenuity, and resourcefulness, make its life a joy, saving it from that starvation of mind and heart, more cruel and far-reaching than starvation of the body, and sparing the community and nation the shame, sorrow, and expense of trying to cure that which might have been prevented altogether. The Kindergarten, in all advanced communities, is sought to be made a continuously progressive and all-round method of education. In the desire for technical instruction, we have a proof that mere book-learning is now considered an incomplete and inadequate education unless supplemented by scientific training of eye and hand, which begins in the Kindergarten. I plead for the Kindergartens for another, and perhaps the most important reason that can be given, viz., that they shall give to the child that

Opportunity of Development

which, in many cases, has been refused through ignorant pre-natal conditions, and continuance of the same when ushered into the world, where its environment too often is such as to foster depravity.

It is very difficult to say which is the all-potent factor in the various stages of human life and growth, but it seems to be summed up in the word "education." Step by step we are guided by that unseen power which leads all to the issue of truth, beauty, and happiness; yet on our way to the goal we hate to pass through such agonies of misery and degradation in the unfolding or educative process that it would seem

a due penalty for some unrecognised crime that life has to be lived at all.

The absolute necessity, then, for a purer, wiser motherhood is the first step to be considered, for according to the aspirations of the mother during pregnancy, depend an incalculable amount of happiness or wretchedness for the child, and what mother is sufficient, alone and unaided, for such a stupendously important duty as that of introducing into the world a being possessing in embryo all the promise and potency of perfection? Yet I would not limit the conditions of the babe's life solely to the mother's influence, so much depends on her choice of the one who shall be the father of her child, that the education of both sexes is imperatively necessary if the future generation is to be in advance of the present. Out of the ignorance prevailing of the true sex duties, rights and responsibilities arise most of the hardships, miseries and crimes which we to-day so deeply deplore, yet see no way to remedy but by punishing innocent and guilty alike, and in most cases the sin is only ignorance.

I have suggested in the beginning of my paper that there are difficulties of applying Froebel's methods under the present system obtaining in our Government schools. It is generally believed that our infants get their schooling in kindergarten fashion, at least in the larger towns, but there are three great hindrances which render the true method of kindergarten well nigh impossible of application, and because under present conditions it is impracticable, the system is, to a large extent, ignored or so partially applied that it amounts to a failure. Take, first, the fact, that on account of the

Excessive Numbers in the Classes,

it is utterly unreasonable to expect any teacher to attempt training or educating the children by the slow, sure, but wise means which alone will serve her purpose. It is no marvel she sees nothing in the "gifts, games, and occupations" but a pleasant (to the children) and tiresome (to herself) way of getting through the day's work, and knows so little how to make these means serve her purpose that it is no wonder she only gives something called "kindergarten work" as a relief to the wearied little ones, rather than using them as an educative medium, the whole nature of a child, body, mind, and heart, being elevated and ennobled by the well-

directed and much-enjoyed efforts to acquire knowledge in the pleasantest and most enduring manner. Secondly, the youngest and most difficult classes are given to the

Youngest and least Experienced

pupil teachers to practise on. The "attractive power of love," such an omnipotent factor in all progress, is conspicuous by its absence; no blame to the teacher, because she has to "hurry up" to get the children ready for the Inspector, whose visits might be hailed with pleasure if only she and he knew what could reasonably be required of a class educated on natural, scientific and philosophic lines. Thirdly, where is the space in the school premises for the variety of physical exercises (which include the mental and moral) such as calisthenics, ball games, action-songs, and games?—all such a necessary and inevitable part of the training of the individual taken in its entirety of body, soul and spirit. Every activity of the child must be guided, helped, controlled, and trained. This can only be done by allowing those faculties (innate in all) full development; at the same time taking into consideration its birth, character, and environment. These seeming difficulties or obstacles are all met and surmounted by the all-roundness of Froebel's method. It is generally acknowledged, where tried with an unprejudiced desire to tests its highest capabilities, that the kindergarten gives the child a far greater advantage in after-school life when it has been so trained from the age of 3 to 7 than the old, worn-out, and cruelly inadequate methods which still obtain, and are yet held with a grip of iron and a despairing clutch, for it is dimly seen that "old things must pass away, all things must become new."

The beautiful underlying spiritual meaning of all the various methods Froebel has invented to draw out the latent faculties of the child and teacher are well worthy of study by all those who believe that education for life's duties, responsibilities, and pleasures

Cannot Begin too Early

for the child, nor be too earnestly considered by the teacher. This system aims at building character, which can only be secured by presenting to the child such objects for play and work as will draw out its powers of observation, attention, obedience, neatness, accuracy, patience, perseverance, and order; while the teacher is so trained that she can perceive the beauty and harmony