

**THE FIRST SCHOOL  
YEAR. FOR  
PRIMARY WORKERS**

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The First School Year. For Primary Workers by Katherine Beebe

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**KATHERINE BEEBE**

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# The First School Year

FOR PRIMARY WORKERS

BY

KATHERINE BEEBE



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The First Sch. Year

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### **Foreword.**

The several chapters of "The First School Year" appeared as a series of articles in "The Kindergarten Magazine" for 1894-5. They were designed to meet an often expressed wish on the part of primary teachers for a definite presentation and practical application of Froebel's principles to every-day school work. They have been carefully revised for publication and are now submitted in book form to primary teachers in the hope and belief that the valuable hints and suggestions which they contain will be found both practical and helpful.

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## Chapter I.

### PLAYS, GAMES AND SONGS.

**S**CHOOL, has begun.

You, a conscientious teacher, fresh from a summer school, perhaps, at least rested and refreshed by your vacation and full of new enthusiasms, are once more in possession of a roomful of restless bodies, growing minds, and unfolding souls. You believe with all your heart and mind that the kindergarten spirit and principle ought to pervade the schoolroom, and you know that these are the vital somethings that lie back of folded papers, clay birds' nests, and building blocks, and you mean to apply kindergarten principles, as far as you know them, to all your first-grade work.

Here is your problem: Given fifty children, more or less, and one teacher eager to apply the newest and best educational

thought in teaching them the three R's; how shall it be done?

One thing is certain; you must have the whole child with you if any kind of good work is to be accomplished. This means that not only the child's body must be present in the schoolroom, that his mind must in some degree be responsive to yours, but that the soul of the child, the feeling, willing, motive-making part of him, must be with you also. For his own good you want him to do certain things. You have the power to make him do them; that is, you can control his body and, in a degree, his mind, by virtue of the authority vested in you as teacher; but the soul of the child, the part that makes him want to do the thing that should be done, must be won. It cannot be driven or coerced in any way. Authority cannot reach it, but it comes forth gladly, more than half way, in response to the teacher who has the heaven-given power of drawing it to herself.

It is so common a thing to see a child in school in the body only that we have ceased

to notice it, the rest of him roaming far afield, God knows where, creating a world of his own more in accord with child-nature than the every-day schoolroom. "Johnny is a good boy," the teacher says, "but very dreamy. He does not learn very quickly. I think I will have to put him back with the C class."

When a teacher, by reason of inspiration or good training, brings to her children the right thing, they respond so freely and fully that half in ecstasy, half in despair, she exclaims, "Why cannot they always be like this?" If they could, the millennium would indeed be here, ushered in by an army of perfect teachers. Our present work is to find out what this "right thing" is in song, in story, in play and in working methods, that we may give it to our children and keep them "with us" for periods of longer and longer duration.

If you have ever taught little children you know what I mean when I say that often we have only the body of the child with us; you know what I mean when I say we hold the