

**SYMBOLIC EDUCATION, A
COMMENTARY ON
FROEBEL'S "MOTHER
PLAY"**

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Symbolic education, a commentary on Froebel's "Mother play" by Susan E. Blow

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SUSAN E. BLOW

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FROEBEL'S
"MOTHER PLAY"**

International Education Series

EDITED BY

WILLIAM T. HARRIS, A. M., LL. D.

VOLUME XXVI.

Educator

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SERIES

SYMBOLIC EDUCATION

A COMMENTARY ON
FROEBEL'S "MOTHER PLAY"

BY
SUSAN E. BLOW

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TO

THE SISTER

WHO HAS TAUGHT ME TO UNDERSTAND A MOTHER'S LOVE

AND BLESSED ME WITH A DAUGHTER'S CONFIDENCE

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

Dasz sie die Kinder erziehen Könnten
Müszten die Mütter seyn wie Enten:
Sie schwämmen mit ihrer Brut in Ruh;
Da gehört aber freilich Wasser dazu.

GOETHE.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE kindergarten constantly gains ground in the United States as well as in Europe. In 1892 an inquiry sent out from the Bureau of Education obtained information of the existence of 2,000 private kindergartens and 459 public kindergartens. Of the former, 1,148 failed to respond to the inquiry sent them. The 852 private kindergartens that reported had 1,602 teachers and 33,637 pupils. The 459 public kindergartens reported 933 teachers and 31,659 pupils enrolled during the year. The returns showed a total of nearly 2,500 kindergartens, with an enrollment of 65,296 pupils in the 1,311 that reported.

According to the reports from year to year there were in 1873, so far as could be learned, 42 kindergartens, 73 teachers, 1,252 pupils.

Five years later (1878) these had increased to 159 kindergartens, 376 teachers, 4,797 pupils.

In 1882 there were reported 348 kindergartens, 814 teachers, 16,916 pupils.

In 1888, 521 kindergartens, 1,202 teachers, 31,227 pupils.

In 1892, as above stated, reports were received from 1,311 kindergartens having 2,535 teachers and 65,296 pupils, and the addresses of nearly as many more were obtained which failed to make reports when asked.* It may be safe to estimate the number of kindergartens at 3,000, the teachers at 5,000, the pupils at 100,000.

The advent of the kindergarten in the educational system of this country has more significance than the above statistics would indicate; for the kindergarten brings with it a new leaven, so to speak, that is destined to leaven the whole lump. It inspires its teachers with the true missionary spirit, to devote themselves to the work of unfolding the self-activity of humanity in its feeblest and most rudimentary stage of growth. In proportion to the maturity of the human being, he manifests the power of self-help. The teacher of advanced pupils does not stand in need of such refinements of method to secure profitable industry in his classes; it is the teacher of feeble-minded adults or of very young children that must have what the Germans call a "developing method" (*entwickelnde Methode*).

* See Annual Report of Bureau of Education for 1890-'91, pp. 676-783.