

**FROEBEL'S CHIEF
WRITINGS
ON EDUCATION**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649149360

Froebel's chief writings on education by S. S. F. Fletcher & J. Welton

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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EDUCATION

EDUCATIONAL CLASSICS

General Editor: Prof. J. W. ADAMSON

FROEBEL'S CHIEF WRITINGS
ON EDUCATION

RENDERED INTO ENGLISH

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FOURTH IMPRESSION

LONDON

EDWARD ARNOLD & CO.

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MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
BILLING AND SONS, LTD., GUILDFORD AND ESHER

GENERAL PREFACE

THE belief which inspires the editors of the volumes included in this series is one which should find a ready adherence from all who accept the doctrine of development. That belief may be summed up in the assertion that the present is both the child of the past and the parent of the future. Hence the high value of all forms of historical study. The educational theory and practice of a community are not things which arise *e nihilo*; they are the result of the thoughts, activities, conditions, and circumstances which constituted the community's past life, especially as these were more directly related to the upbringing of the young. This is so far true, that an intelligent and effective comprehension of any existing educational system can only be attained when its antecedent conditions are known and appreciated.

Educational history furnishes a key to the understanding of many of the problems of aim, administration, organization and method, which confront the student to-day. It will also help him to assume a just attitude towards the future, dispose him to avoid routine, to beware of prejudice, and to keep an open mind with reference to suggested change. History is the true prophylactic against the fageydom which besets the schoolmaster, the committee-man and the official.

The influence exerted by the lives or writings of

individual thinkers is one of many factors of the protracted development of education. But many have written, and written well, on education, whose effect upon practice has been negligible. The aim of the present series is to present only such authors as have shaped subsequent educational history, or who at least have depicted with authority the educational ideas and practice of their own time.

There was in Friedrich Froebel a large measure of that mysticism which has been so frequently manifested in the men of his race; but he lacked the direct utterance of a Martin Luther. His thought is frequently hard to follow, and his expression is seldom marked by clarity. The editors of this volume have set themselves the task of presenting, in a form which will not repel the English reader, the principal writings of one whose deeds and whose words still greatly influence the practice of education in this country and in America.

J. W. A.

TRANSLATORS' PREFACE

WE have attempted to present Froebel's chief works on education in as intelligible a form as possible. Our rendering seeks to give his exact meaning, but not his own phraseology, which is often confused and unnecessarily prolix. We believe that the true art of translation is to express the author's thought as precisely as possible in the idiom of the new language. This we hope we have succeeded in doing.

We have made some re-arrangement, especially in *The Education of Human Nature*, so as to bring together all the author had to say on the same subject. Thus, the earlier and later portions of that work have been amalgamated, and in places summarized, according to the topics treated. We have preferred to translate *Menschen-Erziehung* as *Education of Human Nature* rather than as *Education of Man*, because that seems to us more consonant with the spirit and meaning of the book. Although we have condensed this greatest of Froebel's works we have omitted little, and, we believe, nothing of permanent value. The chief omission is of much of the treatment of crystallography, which is now recognized as of little practical worth.

The second part of our book consists of extracts from Froebel's writings on the Kindergarten, so chosen as to show their spirit and general method. But the detailed

working out of the plays and occupations has only been briefly indicated. We have adopted this plan both because it is impossible to give such details except at very great length, and because modern kindergarten practice has departed somewhat widely from Froebel's own scheme.

We have not translated the *Mutter- und Kose-Lieder*, because it seemed impossible to make a useful and representative selection. The principles which underlie the songs are contained in what we have given, and English practice needs an analogous set of verses related to English life rather than a rendering of the original German songs.

The text used is that edited by Friedrich Seidel, published in 1883, except in the Introduction, where the extracts from the *Autobiographie* are translated from the edition of Dr. Wichard Lange, published in 1862.

In the Introduction we have attempted to show the relation of Froebel to the general stream of educational thought, and to discriminate between the vital truth in his doctrines and the excrescences due to his time and personality. The value of Froebel to the educators of to-day lies in his spirit and in his general conception of the educative process, and that we believe we have presented fully and fairly. That our efforts may assist our fellow-workers is our earnest hope.

S. S. F. F.
J. W.

CAMBRIDGE,
October, 1912.