

# **FROEBEL'S GIFTS**

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Froebel's gifts by Kate Douglas Wiggin & Nora Archibald Smith

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**KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN & NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH**

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THE  
REPUBLIC OF CHILDHOOD

BY

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN  
AND  
NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH

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*FROEBEL'S GIFTS*



# The Republic of Childhood

*The Kindergarten is the free republic of childhood. — FROEBEL.*

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## FROEBEL'S GIFTS

BY

KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN

AND

NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH

The true teacher is a student of human nature, and the student of human nature is the pupil of God. — HORATIO STEBBINS



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## PREFACE

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THE three little volumes on that Republic of Childhood, the kindergarten, of which this handbook, dealing with the gifts, forms the initial number, might well be called Chips from a Kindergarten Workshop. They are the outcome of talks and conferences on Froebel's educational principles with successive groups of earnest young women here, there, and everywhere, for fifteen years, and represent as much practical work at the bench as a carpenter could show in a similar length of time. They are the result of mutual give and take, of question and answer, of effort and experience, of the friction of minds against one another, of ideas struck out in the heat of argument, and of varied experience with many hundred little children of all nationalities and conditions. They are not theories, written in the seclusion of the study; and if perchance they have the defects, so should they have the virtues,

too, of work corrected and revised at every step by the "child in the midst." If it is objected that many things in them have been heard before, we can but say with Montaigne: "Truth and reason are common to every one, and are no more his who spake them first than his who spake them after."

The various talks have been cut down here, enlarged there, condensed in one place, amplified in another, from year to year, as knowledge and experience have grown; many of the ideas which they advocated in the beginning have been eliminated, as being completely reversed by the passage of time, and much new matter has been added as the kindergarten principle has developed. They are as much a growth as a coral reef, though the authors have little hope that they will be as enduring.

The kindergarten of 1895 is not the kindergarten of 1880, for the science of education has made great strides in these past fifteen years. Many things which were held to be vital principles when we began our talks with kindergarten students, we now find were but lifeless methods after all. It is not that time has reversed the fundamental principles on which the kindergarten