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KINDERGARTEN IN A NUTSHELL:
A HANDBOOK FOR THE HOME,
PP. 1-133**

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THE KINDERGARTEN
IN A NUTSHELL

A Handbook for the Home

BY

NORA ARCHIBALD SMITH

AUTHOR OF "UNDER THE SAGUO FLAG" AND "THE CHILDREN OF THE FUTURE," AND JOINT AUTHOR WITH KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN OF "THE REPUBLIC OF CHILDHOOD," "CHILDREN'S RIGHTS," "THE STORY HOUR," AND "KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN."

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PREFACE

Many readers are as impatient as Lord Bacon was of "prefaces, passages, and excusations," and yet a preface may sometimes be as necessary as the preliminary sip the duck takes before slipping into the water, —a procedure apparently not so much an end in itself as a preparation for what is to follow.

To begin the preface, then, the series of papers from which, with considerable addition and alteration, this little volume has been made was originally written for "The Ladies' Home Journal," in response to the requests of many of its subscribers that they might know something of the kindergarten as a means of development for children and of the possible adaptation of its principles to the home.

The requests, from men as well as women, fathers as well as mothers, naturally came for the most part from dwellers in isolated

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places, villages, and the smaller towns of this and other countries; and it is for them that this handbook is intended, rather than for people within easy reach of the advantages of a great city. The number of letters of inquiry which the articles have called forth testifies to a general interest in the subject, while the tone of some of them makes it necessary to say again that the papers were never for a moment supposed to take the place of instruction in a training school, nor to produce a finished kindergartner. No book, be it ever so bulky and comprehensive, could attempt to do that, nor could it give so adequate an idea of the child-garden as a single day spent in one of those ideal communities would impart. But there are many parents, past, present, and future, as well as many persons vicariously interested in the training of children, who lack the time, the opportunity, or the means to gain a thorough knowledge of Froebel's educational philosophy and yet are most anxious to learn as much of it as may lie within their power.

To such persons, and their name is apparently legion in America, this handbook is addressed, and not to those desirous of opening a kindergarten as a means of live-

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lihood, nor to those who aspire to learn by reading or correspondence what can never be thoroughly understood save by viva voce instruction, explanation, and practice.

If its purpose is clearly defined, its brevity will be as clearly comprehended, and also the fact that it aims to create an appetite for the subject, rather than to gratify it. If it serves as an introduction to the study of the kindergarten, if it leads some mothers to go direct to Froebel and learn from him the magic words that will turn their tasks into pleasures, if it persuades a few young women to take the kindergarten training, not alone that they may become independent, but for the sake of a fairer, fuller womanhood, it will have more than fulfilled its reason of being.

The title of the manual, "The Kindergarten in a Nutshell," may seem an arrogant one to those who believe, as indeed the author does, that a lifetime of study is not enough for the understanding of Froebel's philosophy. One would say, on first thought, that to condense such infinite riches in so little room would be a task for him who packed Pandora's box, or compressed the Arabian genie into the bottle; but, on second thought, one would see perhaps that all a

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nut need hold is the life-principle, and the mustard-seed is proof of how tiny that may be. If still you question whether this principle can persist in so confined a space, put it to the test. Plant the nut in favourable soil, and if, indeed, not one green shoot appear, then the author will confess her failure.