

**THE PARADISE OF CHILDHOOD: A
MANUAL FOR SELF-INSTRUCTION IN
FRIEDRICH FROEBEL'S EDUCATIONAL
PRINCIPLES, AND A PRACTICAL
GUIDE TO KINDER-GARTNERS**

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The paradise of childhood: a manual for self-instruction in Friedrich Froebel's educational principles, and a practical guide to kinder-gartners by Edward Wiebe

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BY

EDWARD WIEBÉ.

WITH SEVENTY-FOUR PLATES OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

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INTRODUCTION.

UNTIL a recent period, but little interest has been felt by people in this country, with regard to the Kinder-Garten method of instruction, for the simple reason that a correct knowledge of the system has never been fully promulgated here. However the lectures of Miss E. P. Peabody of Cambridge, Mass., have awakened some degree of enthusiasm upon the subject in different localities, and the establishment of a few Kinder-Garten schools has served to call forth a more general inquiry concerning its merits.

We claim that every one who believes in rational education, will become deeply interested in the peculiar features of the work, after having become acquainted with Froebel's principles and plan; and that all that is needed to enlist the popular sentiment in its favor is the establishment of institutions of this kind, in this country, upon the right basis.

With such an object in view, we propose to present an outline of the Kinder-Garten plan as developed by its originator in Germany, and to a considerable extent by his followers in France and England.

But as Froebel's is a system which must be carried out faithfully in all its important features, to insure success, we must adopt his plan as a whole and carry it out with such modifications of secondary minutiae only, as the individual case may acquire without violating its fundamental principles. If this cannot be accomplished, it were better not to attempt the task at all.

The present work is entitled *a Manual for Self-Instruction and a Practical Guide for Kinder-Gartners*. Those who design to use it for either of these purposes, must not expect to find in it all that they ought to

know in order to instruct the young successfully according to Froebel's principles. No book can ever be written which is able to make a perfect Kinder-Gartner; this requires the training of an able teacher actively engaged in the work at the moment. "Kinder-Garten Culture," says Miss Peabody, in the preface to her "Moral Culture of Infancy," "is the adult mind entering into the child's world and appreciating nature's intention as displayed in every impulse of spontaneous life, so directing it that the joy of success may be ensured at every step, and artistic things be actually produced, which gives the self-reliance and conscious intelligence that ought to discriminate human power from *omni* force."

With this thought constantly present in his mind, the reader will find, in this book, all that is indispensably necessary for him to know, from the first establishment of the Kinder-Garten through all its various degrees of development, including the use of the materials and the engagement in such occupations as are peculiar to the system. There is much more, however, that can be learned only by individual observation. The fact, that here and there, persons, presuming upon the slight knowledge which they may have gained of Froebel and his educational principles, from books, have established schools called Kinder-Gartens, which in reality had nothing in common with the legitimate Kinder-Garten but the name, has caused distrust and even opposition, in many minds towards everything that pertains to this method of instruction. In discriminating between the spurious and the real, as is the design of this work, the author would mention with special commendation, the Educational

Institute conducted by Mrs. and Miss Kriege in Boston. It connects with the Kinder-Garten proper, a Training School for ladies, and any one who wishes to be instructed in the correct method, will there be able to acquire the desired knowledge.

Besides the Institute just mentioned, there is one in Springfield, Mass., under the supervision of the writer, designed not only for the instruction of classes of children in accordance with these principles, but also for imparting information to those who are desirous to become Kinder-Gartners. From this source, the method has already been acquired in several instances, and as one result, it has been introduced into two of the schools connected with the State Institution at Monson, Mass.

The writer was in early life acquainted with Froebel; and his subsequent experience as a teacher has only served to confirm the favorable opinion of the system, which he then derived from a personal knowledge of

its inventor. A desire to promote the interests of true education, has led him to undertake this work of interpretation and explanation.

Without claiming for it perfection, he believes that, as a guide, it will stand favorably in comparison with any publication upon the subject in the English or the French language.

The German of Marenholtz, Goldammer, Morgenstern and Froebel have been made use of in its preparation, and though new features have, in rare cases only, been added to the original plan, several changes have been made in minor details, so as to adapt this mode of instruction more readily to the American mind. This has been done, however, without omitting aught of that German thoroughness, which characterizes so strongly every feature of Froebel's system.

The plates accompanying this work are reprints from "Goldammer's Kinder-Garten," a book recently published in Germany.

The Paradise of Childhood : A GUIDE TO KINDER-GARTNERS.

ESTABLISHMENT OF A KINDER-GARTEN.

THE requisites for the establishment of a "Kinder Garten" are the following :

1. A house, containing at least one large room, spacious enough to allow the children, not only to engage in all their occupations, both sitting and standing, but also to practice their movement plays, which, during inclement seasons, must be done in-doors.

2. Adjoining the large room, one or two smaller rooms for sundry purposes.

3. A number of tables, according to the size of the school, each table affording a smooth surface ten feet long and four feet wide, resting on movable frames from eighteen to twenty-four inches high. The table should be divided into ten equal squares, to accommodate as many pupils ; and each square subdivided into smaller squares of one inch, to guide the children in many of their occupations. On either side of the tables should be settees with folding seats, or small chairs ten to fifteen inches high. The tables and settees should not be fastened to the floor, as they will need to be removed at times to make room for occupations in which they are not used.

4. A piano-forte for gymnastic and musical exercises—the latter being an important feature of the plan, since all the occupations are interspersed with, and many of them accompanied by, singing.

5. Various closets for keeping the apparatus and work of the children—a wardrobe, washstand, chairs, teacher's table, &c.

The house should be pleasantly located, removed from the bustle of a thoroughfare, and its rooms arranged with strict regard to hygienic principles. A garden should surround or, at least, adjoin the building, for frequent out door exercises, and for gardening purposes. A small plot is assigned to each child, in which he sows the seeds and cultivates the plants, receiving, in due time, the flowers or fruits, as the result of his industry and care.

When a Training School is connected with the Kinder-Garten the children of the "Garten" are divided into groups of five or ten—each group being assisted in its occupations by one of the lady pupils attending the Training School.

Should there be a greater number of such assistants than can be conveniently occupied in the Kinder-Garten, they may take turns with each other. In a Training School of this kind, under the charge of a competent director, ladies are enabled to acquire a thorough and practical knowledge of the system. They should bind themselves, however, to remain connected with the institution a specified time, and to follow out the details of the method patiently, if they aim to fit themselves to conduct a Kinder-Garten with success.

In any establishment of more than twenty children, a nurse should be in constant attendance. It should be her duty also to preserve order and cleanliness in the rooms, and to act as janitrix to the institution.

MEANS AND WAYS OF OCCUPATION

IN THE KINDER-GARTEN.

BEFORE entering into a description of the various means of occupation in the Kinder-Garten, it will be proper to state that Friedrich Froebel, the inventor of this system of education, calls *all occupations* in the Kinder-Garten "*plays*," and the materials for occupation "*gifts*." In these systematically-arranged plays, Froebel starts from the fundamental idea that all education should begin with a development of the *desire for activity innate in the child*; and he has been, as is universally acknowledged, eminently successful in this part of his important work. Each step in the course of training is a logical sequence of the preceding one; and the various means of occupation are developed, one from another, in a perfectly natural order, beginning with the simplest and concluding with the most difficult features in all the varieties of occupation. Together, they satisfy *all the demands* of the child's nature in respect both to mental and physical culture, and lay the surest foundation for all subsequent education in school and in life.

The *time of occupation* in the Kinder-Garten is three or four hours on each week day, usually from 9 to 12 or 1 o'clock; and the time allotted to each separate occupation, including the changes from one to another, is from twenty to thirty minutes. *Movement* plays, so called, in which the children imitate the flying of birds, swimming of fish, the motions of sowing, mowing, threshing, &c., in connection with light gymnastics and vocal exercises, alternate with the plays performed in a sitting posture. All occupations that can be engaged in out of doors, are carried on in the garden whenever the season and weather permit.

For the reason that the various occupations, as previously stated, are so intimately connected, growing, as it were, out of each other, they are introduced very gradually, so as to afford each child ample time to become sufficiently prepared for the next step, without interfering, however, with the rapid progress of such as are of a more advanced age, or endowed with stronger or better developed faculties.

The following is a list of the *gifts* or material and means of occupation in the Kinder-Garten, each of which will be specified and described separately hereafter.

There are altogether twenty *gifts*, according to Froebel's general definition of the term, although the first six only are usually designated by this name. We choose to follow the classification and nomenclature of the great inventor of the system.

LIST OF FROEBEL'S GIFTS.

1. Six rubber balls, covered with a net-work of twine or worsted of various colors.
 2. Sphere, cube, and cylinder, made of wood.
 3. Large cube, consisting of eight small cubes.
 4. Large cube, consisting of eight oblong parts.
 5. Large cube, consisting of whole, half, and quarter tubes.
 6. Large cube, consisting of doubly divided oblongs.
- [The third, fourth, fifth and sixth gifts serve for building purposes.]
7. Square and triangular tablets for laying of figures.

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| <p>8. Staffs for laying of figures.</p> <p>9. Whole and half rings for laying of figures.</p> <p>10. Material for drawing.</p> <p>11. Material for perforating.</p> <p>12. Material for embroidering.</p> <p>13. Material for cutting of paper and combining pieces.</p> | <p>14. Material for braiding.</p> <p>15. Slats for interlacing.</p> <p>16. The slat with many links.</p> <p>17. Material for intertwining.</p> <p>18. Material for paper folding.</p> <p>19. Material for peas-work.</p> <p>20. Material for modeling.</p> |
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THE FIRST GIFT.

THE First Gift, which consists of six rubber balls, over-wrought with worsted, for the purpose of representing the three fundamental and three mixed colors, is introduced in this manner:

The children are made to stand in one or two rows, with heads erect, and feet upon a given line, or spots marked on the floor. The teacher then gives directions like the following:

"Lift up your *right* hands as high as you can raise them."

"Take them down."

"Lift up your *left* hands." "Down."

"Lift up both your hands." "Down."

"Stretch forward your *right* hands, that I may give each of you something that I have in my box."

The teacher then places a ball in the hand of each child, and asks—

"Who can tell me the name of what you have received?" Questions may follow about the *color, material, shape*, and other qualities of the ball, which will call forth the replies, *blue, yellow, rubber, round, light, soft, &c.*

The children are then required to repeat sentences pronounced by the teacher, as—
 "The ball is *round*;" "My ball is *green*;"
 "All these balls are made of *rubber*." &c.
 They are then required to return all, except the *blue* balls, those who give up theirs being allowed to select from the box a *blue* ball in

exchange; so that in the end each child has a ball of that color. The teacher then says: "Each of you has now a *blue, rubber ball*, which is *round, soft, and light*; and these balls will be your balls to play with. I will give you another ball to-morrow, and the next day another, and so on, until you have quite a number of balls, all of which will be of *rubber*, but no two of the same color."

The six differently colored balls are to be used, one on each day of the week, which assists the children in recollecting the days of the week, and the colors. After distributing the balls, the same questions may be asked as at the beginning, and the children taught to raise and drop their hands with the balls in them; and if there is time, they may make a few attempts to throw and catch the balls. This is enough for the first lesson; and it will be sure to awaken enthusiasm and delight in the children.

The object of the first occupation is to teach the children to distinguish between the *right* and the *left* hand, and to name the various colors. It may serve also to develop their vocal organs, and instruct them in the rules of politeness. How the latter may be accomplished, even with such simple occupation as playing with balls, may be seen from the following:

In presenting the balls, pains should be taken to make each child extend the right