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REPORT FOR COMMITTEE OF NINETEEN OF THE INTERNATIONAL KINDERGARTEN UNION

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Chairman

History repeats itself. This old saying was never more fully exemplified than in the present kindergarten situation. The various protesting movements in the church resulted in the division into sects and the formation of many creeds expressing all shades of belief. Today the liberal of even twenty years ago is a conservative, and there is a larger spirit of Christian unity than the world has ever known.

A Congress of Religions is possible, and an Educational Religious Association, which gives a platform to members of any denomination with a true and sincere message. There is a fraternity between orthodox and liberal, and "the brotherhood of man" is no mere phrase.

In the same way the kindergartners are approaching a larger spirit of unity through a process of reconciliation of differences. We are illustrating the Froebelian law of mediation in our recognition of the harmony possible, even where widest differences of opinion exist and are tolerated.

It is necessary for the encouragement and strengthening of the younger workers, who are disquieted "by wars and rumors of wars," to declare that the differences between us are the inevitable results of growth and freedom of thought; that they must express themselves in matters of technique and in our preferences for one school of philosophy and psychology or another; but they are not separating, and do not generally affect the aims and underlying principles controlling kindergarten practice.

Some of the apparent differences are mere variations of phraseology; some of them are indisputably different interpretations of theory and different illustrations of the same principles.

There has been a frank and friendly statement of our diver-

gences and much discussion of the same. May there not now be a reconciling view, which shall help to bind us together in a united body, standing for one aim and one unified effort for the preservation in its integrity of the kindergarten as the finest type of early educational procedure?

The reactionary movement has been no doubt necessary and helpful as a protest against any chance of arrested development through a crystallization of practice and the ever-present danger of a perfection of system. It has had its effect in making us all give heed to our ways and reasons for the faith that is in us.

In order to come to a better understanding of the situation, each member of the Committee of Nineteen has been asked to prepare a statement of what seemed to her the points of issue between the two schools of kindergartners. To this request twelve members have responded. At first reading it seemed impossible to collate these statements and make any report from them. They are so varied in treatment and in the points of view that no composite can be made. I have not attempted to bring together the papers, nor to quote from them, but rather to present a report of the total impression conveyed, supplemented by my recollection of the fuller expansion of the topics in our previous discussions.

I have endeavored not to give a personal coloring to the matter except in a few instances where I have yielded to the temptation to declare my own belief and have so stated.

From the many points made by the writers of the statements I have selected those most frequently mentioned. A few declare differences between kindergartners to be essential and others superficial. Those who deem differences fundamental consider interpretation rather than the truth itself. The difference is one of emphasis or degree or of attitude, not of fundamental doctrine.

The topics most frequently mentioned as causing variation of practice are as follows: (1) Adherence to Froebel and Froebelian philosophy; (2) Theory of play, relation of play to work; (3) Place of instinct in early education; (4) The sense image versus the idea; (5) The doctrine of interest as applied to the programme; (6) Symbolism and the *Mother-Play*.

FROEBEL AND FROEBELIAN LITERATURE

There is undoubtedly a difference in the attitude of the kindergartners toward Froebel and Froebelian literature and the use of the established Froebel material in the kindergarten. No one for a moment holds that Froebel or any other man has said or ever will say a final word on education. A few believe that we have not yet understood Froebel and the fulness of his gospel, nor given sufficient study to his *Mother-Play* and other books. Others would give larger place to the study of other educational writers of the past and present and especial value to the contributions of modern genetic psychology and child-study. The latter group believes that in recent psychological studies we may find a more present help than in the philosophy of Froebel's time. All would agree in giving Froebel the first place as a pioneer in child-study and as a man rarely gifted with sympathy and insight.

In the use of the special Froebel material in the kindergarten and training-school there is evidently wide latitude. All kindergartners admit some outside material, although many would limit it to what is definitely in line with the established system. Some insist upon the importance of preserving the integrity of the gifts, of presenting them in logical sequence, of keeping unbroken the chain of connection from solid to point. No one discards the gifts altogether, but in many instances selections are made of building and other material for illustrative and group work. Some advocate reconstruction of the kindergarten hand-work from the standpoint of hygiene and of art. The original classification of the various forms made under the heads, Life, Knowledge, and Beauty, is considered of importance by many of the committee. Some members would not admit that arrangements of symmetry alone express children's aesthetic ideas and feelings. They depreciate the imposition of abstractions of knowledge in the mathematical and analytic lessons sometimes given with the gifts.

THEORIES OF PLAY AND WORK

There are, as among other observers of child-life, varying theories of play, and of the relation of play to work. Those who believe the child to be filled with reverberations from the

past and impelled to physical movements and play activities practiced by a remote ancestry, select folk-plays and those imitating the movements of animals and gymnastic games which exercise the larger muscles. Those who prefer to consider the child as "father to the man," anticipating in play the practice of later life, will choose the plays illustrating human life and relationships—those which present in dramatic form great institutional ideals, which prefigure the child's place in a social whole.

From one view point the boy's impulse to climb a tree is due to the fact of his arboreal ancestry. To the other, it is his desire to transcend limitations, to find a new world, "to look abroad on foreign lands."

Is there after all any contradiction in these two views; is not the child both a rehearsal and the prophecy, a link between the past and the future? Do we not find Janus everywhere with faces looking both ways?

There is also a difference among kindergartners in the degree of freedom or organization of play. The advocacy of free play which was in reality free disorder has passed, and all agree with Plato, Froebel, and other observers of children as to the need of harmony, rhythm, law, and guidance in play. One of the special functions of the kindergarten is the educational guidance of the play activities of children toward desired ends.

The relation of play to work is another mooted question. One school would protect the child at the kindergarten stage from premature initiation into activities which take on an industrial form. The other school holds that play is the child's serious business; that it becomes more rational and interesting when a goal is set, which may be recognized and reached through the energizing impulses of play. It believes that the natural preparation for work is through a gradual transformation of the play instinct into productive activity.

THE RECOGNITION OF INSTINCTS IN EDUCATION

A matter closely related to the foregoing is the place of instinct in the early education. We divide here in reference to the recognition to be granted certain instincts during the kinder-

garten period. How far shall we yield to the taste for the crude and the barbaric in music, in art, and in story? How shall the child's instinct to represent be guided? How shall he use color? Can he appreciate the refinements of a landscape? Does he really feel the effects he seems to produce in making color sketches of sunsets, clouds, and mountains? Is his art sense best trained by formal arrangements of squares, triangles, and other geometric forms? Shall the stories told be so revised as to eliminate all reference to evil, cruelty, and wrong? Are they sometimes robbed of vigor in the process of refining? What is the place of imitation in art, in construction, in conduct? What is its relation to originality? Which instincts shall be strengthened and guided to full fruition, which shall be suppressed and cast off as soon as possible? These are some of the topics which have been touched upon in the discussions of the committee.

Another matter mentioned in several papers is the *sense image* versus the *idea*. Does the kindergarten child work from a clear and definite mental picture, which he tries to realize in outward form, or does he work from a general notion? Is it a concrete or an abstract table he represents? Does he work from the particular to the general, or vice versa, or is it a double process? Can he comprehend the generalized type forms, and do they aid him in his process of world discovery; or must he grasp many individual objects and build up his idea of the type through successive sense impressions? Is dictation to suggest the *image* or the *ideal* of the object to be made? These questions have been considered at our committee sessions, and there is a variation of belief and practice. Certain of our members believe that children work more intelligently when a clear mental picture precedes the act of making. Others emphasize the value of the creative process as a means of self-discovery. This question, as affecting methods of gift work, is most practical, and demands careful consideration. The teachers of psychology and kindergarten methods in the training-schools should give especial attention to this matter that the young kindergartner may have some guidance before her own experience entitles her to draw conclusions.

THEORY OF INTEREST

The theory of interest is another subject of practical import, as our programmes are the outgrowth of our special views thereon. The issue is not *interest* versus *will*, for we should all agree that the nature of mind hath joined these together, and only a very blundering teacher can put them asunder. To *will* and to *do* are two steps in any working process, and interest supplies the causal energy. The real question at stake is, Which interests are most beneficial in child development, and which should be appealed to in our choice of subject-matter? Children are interested in what is going on about them at home and in the community, in special days and occasions. The immediate environment is rich in its attractive suggestions. In the recurrence of the seasons, the varied aspects of old Mother Earth, the teeming life of the streets and the shop, and in the home and family circle we have subject matter of real and permanent value for reproduction in dramatic and constructive forms. Is this the whole environment of the child, or is there an intellectual as well as an accidental and immediate environment? Are there spiritual mansions as well as local habitations? One school of kindergartners assert that the mind is self-envirning, that through imagination it may lay hold upon a larger world than that which the eyes behold. They would transcend the limits of the actual and often sordid environment. Those holding this faith would not give much time to the illustration of phases of experience, which are temporary and limited; but to those larger aspects which connect present and future by bonds of true and enduring worth. They demand continuity and logical sequence in the programme; stories modeled after certain universal types, plays which reveal the great institutional life of man in dramatic form, and present ideals of conduct which appeal to the imagination.

On the other hand, those who believe in the social training of children through their present recognition of social situations calling for an immediate response, believe that the natural subject-matter of a programme is found in the every-day experiences of children, which are largely bound up with the domestic and

home occupations, and the fundamental industrial work of the community. These differences of belief plainly appear in the choice of giftwork and handwork. We have

The constructive	versus	The creative school
Use or Utility	versus	Beauty
The emphasis on constructive work in wood and paper, and sometimes in domestic processes	versus	Emphasis on distinction, classification and unification of elementary qualities.
Emphasis on the product	versus	Emphasis on the creative process
Emphasis on the craftsman or artisan	versus	Emphasis on the artist
Emphasis upon doing the <i>real</i> thing	versus	Emphasis upon <i>make-believe</i> play

There seems to be unanimity of opinion as to the desirability of some connected plan of work, which shall prevent a teacher from laying undue stress upon the temporary and accidental. There is a general assent to the position that no plan of work, however excellent, can be rigidly applied everywhere, and under all conditions. Whether the programme be made by a collective body or evolved by an individual to meet her own needs, the critical question is what are the true interests of childhood, which should grow into permanent tastes and tendencies? The choice of subject-matter is determined by our answers to this question.

SYMBOLISM

Here we find ourselves confronted with the matter of symbolism, which has not yet been taken up as a topic of discussion by the committee, although referred to in a few of the papers. As far as I can discover, differences here are more verbal than actual. We all hold that the child's realm by right of eminent domain is the realm of fancy. We believe in the fairy tale, the Mother Goose rhyme, and the dramatic play, which lead beyond the boundaries of the actual to

Where the roads on every hand
Lead onward into Fairyland.

“The child like the poet puts eyes and a tongue into all he sees.” Things speak to him with a voice and a message, which he hears, although he cannot tell what they say. We all agree that any

wise man may pluck a leaf and read a sermon on it. We know that there is an inner eye which is the bliss of solitude, that there are treasures which moth and rust cannot corrupt.

We do not need to agree in our opinions as to the symbolism of the gifts. That is a matter which concerns only the adult student, and has never colored our practice. We may believe in unity, and fail to see its embodiment in the ball. We may believe in evolution, and be unable to see it illustrated in the gift series; but the ball will be prized as a good plaything for children nevertheless, and the gifts furnish admirable building material.

We also must continue to differ in our estimate of the symbolic value of the *Mother-Play*. We differ in our use of it in our kindergarten programme, and in our choice of its plays; but we are of one mind as to the great service the book renders in classifying and arranging in practical form the most typical and important experiences of a normal child-life, and in illuminating the deep meaning "which oft lies hid in childish play." As we take individual instances of Froebel's symbolism divested of the artificiality often thrown around them by too much explanation, I think we should mostly agree as to their validity. That much of sentimentality and many mystifying interpretations have been connected with the use of this book we deplore; but is not this true of any great book, which attempts to set forth in poetic form the great relationships of a life? One may not agree with Froebel in his explanation of the fascination of a timepiece for a child. He frankly states that he does not force his conviction upon anyone, and adds that such a conviction harms no one, and, if generally shared, might result in great good to the rising generation. One is reminded of the answer of Turner to the woman, who complained that she could not see the colors he painted in the sky. "Don't you wish you could, Madam," was his pitying rejoinder. We are also reminded of the lines of an English poet of some eminence never accused of excessive sentiment, who apparently cherished Froebel's feeling of the significance of a clock.

We take no note of time, save from its flight;
To give it then a tongue were wise in man.

A clock means something to all of us. It is more than a mere

combination of wood, metal, and glass, impressing a certain sound upon the auditory nerve. To the most careless in moments of pause it may say, "Forever, never; never, forever." In such moments it bids us value time as we value life, "for time is the stuff life is made of."

Our acceptance of symbolism is a matter of degree, and of individual capacity for seeing. We are not all of "the city," which Benson so eloquently describes in his *From a College Window*, but we may all at times dream of its lofty spires and walls of gold and pearl and amethyst. I believe, and this is my individual creed, that the highest service Froebel has rendered to those who study his educational theories is that of interpreter of the realities that surround us, and live within us; for "we live by admiration, faith, and love."

This very inadequate summary of the topics, which have forced themselves upon our consideration from the present kindergarten situation, is offered not for the purpose of more sharply defining differences; but as an effort to find the reconciling view, which shall enable us to strengthen our work and our influence as a body of educators through that union and co-operation necessary to the advance of any movement. Discussions are profitable; but dissension is not so. It is always right to dissent and to divide on matters of principle; but never on matters of opinion or individual interpretation. We may be of one faith although not of one practice; we may be members of one body, and recognize that each member has a different office. Is it not well now that we emphasize those things which we hold in common, and which are, after all, the essentials? May we not rally for the preservation of the kindergarten as a distinctive type of educational practice under the common standard of the master, who has given us our educational name and significance, and whose final charge to his friends was to strive for unity of life? May I be permitted also to remind you of the Great Teacher, who committed his gospel to a band of men ordained to carry it to the world, with this last prayer: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they may all be one, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."