

disposal, improve and look forward, than be perpetually returning to those ages when even art was in its crudest state, and the variety of materials as limited as the appliances for utilising them?

In the mania to be picturesque (which afflicts those of artistic proclivities) it is certainly advisable that there should be some lines laid down on which people may safely travel in matters of dress, and from which it is unwise to diverge, or we should be more often startled by those who, with a glorious independence of good taste, take art's magic name to

cover the multitude of errors they commit when following their own sweet wills.

That fashion should have vagaries, so much the better, anything for greater originality, carefully avoiding all approach to crystallised conventionalities; but—and this is a long “but”—if a costume of a past century is to be worn (and if too remarkable for outdoor wear, it is a pretty custom to have fancy dress for evening wear) in the name of art do let it be done correctly, and not as a mass of incongruities.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF “HOW WOMEN MAY EARN A LIVING,” ETC.



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PECULIAR interest is attached to Kindergarten Training Colleges, from the fact that they prepare women for almost the only remunerative employment open to them which is not already overstocked. The demand for trained Kindergarten teachers is large and increasing, and very much exceeds the supply; the

authorities at the various Colleges agree in saying that they receive daily applications for teachers, which they much regret that they are unable to satisfy.

Most of our readers are aware that the Kindergarten system of education was devised by Fröebel, a German, who died some thirty years ago; and subsequent experience has proved it to be the best known method of instructing young children between the ages of three and seven. It aims at cultivating their reasoning powers, teaches them to think and observe, and converts their lessons into an amusing and fascinating game.

About six years ago a Fröebel Society was formed in London, with the objects of promoting co-operation among those engaged in Kindergarten work, of spreading the knowledge and practice of the system, and of maintaining a high standard of efficiency amongst Kindergarten teachers. The following are the practical aims of the Society:—

1. Lectures, discussions, and public meetings.
2. Publications, including translations.
3. The examination of students, and the granting of certificates of their qualification to become Kindergarten teachers.
4. The inspection and registration of Kindergartens.
5. The formation of classes for nurses.

6. The establishment of a central Kindergarten and Training College in London.

7. Assistance in the establishment of local Kindergartens.

The active Honorary Secretary and Treasurer, Mrs. E. Herry, 27, Upper Bedford Place, London, will gladly give further particulars respecting the Society to anybody interested in it.

The examinations are regularly held, and are open to all candidates over the age of eighteen who can produce a certificate of having passed some recognised public examination in English subjects, or satisfy the Committee that they have received a good general education.

The subjects of examination are the theory and history of education, organisation and methods of the Kindergarten, and the school occupations, games, and stories, geometry, music and singing, physics, botany, zoology, hygiene, and the practical knowledge of the special Kindergarten occupations: such as paper-folding, stick-laying, Fröebel's drawing, paper-plaiting, laths, rings, sewing, punching, modelling, geometrical paper-folding, paper-cutting, paper-twisting, pea work, and colouring.

The whole examination need not be passed in one year; a candidate may present herself for any number of subjects or for all. The examination fee is two shillings for each subject.

To prepare for this examination, two years' training is considered absolutely indispensable, and this can be obtained at the various Kindergarten Training Colleges throughout the country.

At the one at 31, Tavistock Place, London, which was founded by the Fröebel Society, the fees for tuition are £20, or £7 a term, payable in advance; the hours of attendance are from half-past nine until half-past four, and the pupils are given work to do at home in the evenings.

The only limit of age for the students is that they must be over seventeen. During the second year of the course they are allowed to take morning engagements for three days a week; these are easily procured, and the remuneration is generally about £20 a year, just sufficient to pay the College fees.

There is one scholarship attached to the College, and the Council are very anxious to found some more, only unfortunately at present the means are wanting.

There is also an excellent Training College at 21, Stockwell Road, London, S.W., under the auspices of the British and Foreign School Society. This is superintended by Fräulein Heerwait, a most experienced teacher, who was one of the founders of the Froebel Society, but has since withdrawn from it, and grants certificates herself to all her pupils who have gone satisfactorily through the course of training she prescribes for them. The fees are £3 15s. per term, to be paid in advance. The students practise in the Kindergarten from 9 a.m. until 12, and receive lectures and lessons on the principles of education, the Kindergarten system, &c., all the afternoon, excepting Saturday, which is a holiday; but I understand the students are given sufficient work to take home to occupy almost all their leisure hours.

Fräulein Heerwait holds a special class one evening in the week for mothers and persons engaged in teaching in the rudiments of the Kindergarten system; she charges £1 for twelve lessons.

There are families in the immediate neighbourhood of the College where students whose homes are distant are expected to live; the charge for board and lodging is twenty-five shillings a week.

A Kindergarten Fund has lately been formed to assist girls who are desirous to be trained, and whose friends are unable to meet the necessary expenses. This fund is only available for students at the Stockwell College; its assistance is always afforded in the form of a gift, and it is distinctly not a loan society, as they wish the teachers they prepare to start in life unhampered by debt.

For the aid of students at other colleges there is a most excellent society, not at all generally known: this is called the Teachers' Education Loan Society. It advances school fees upon certain conditions to persons over sixteen years of age desirous of improving their education for purposes of self-maintenance as teachers. Application for the regulations should be made by letter to the Hon. Sec., Miss Ewart, 3, Morpeth Terrace, Victoria Street, London, S.W., before February, May, and November in each year, for the three terms of Easter, Michaelmas, and Lent following.

This Society is in connection with the Women's Education Union, which has been so successful in promoting the higher education of women. Probably many girls' feelings of independence would make them more willing to avail themselves of assistance taking the form of a loan, to be repaid out of their salaries after they have obtained situations, than of a gift from strangers, more or less resembling charity.

Kindergarten teachers receive very good salaries,

usually eighty pounds a year: sometimes more, but seldom less; and, greatest charm of all, are sought after, instead of being obliged to join the forlorn army of governesses that support the agency offices all over the kingdom; but they cannot expect to keep their situations as long as ordinary governesses, for when the last child is seven years old their occupation is gone, and they must be prepared to seek "fresh fields and pastures new," with, however, the comfortable certainty of easily finding them.

During the six years the Stockwell College alone has been open the authorities have received at least 300 applications for teachers, and have only been able to supply about 50; and herein lies the great danger to the Kindergarten system: that as properly qualified teachers are not forthcoming, the impostors, who are always ready to take advantage of any opportunity, may so disgust the public with the whole affair, that the taste for this method of instruction may die out, or a prejudice be created against it which may be very hard to overcome.

The aim of the writer of this paper will be attained if it induces any girls to adopt Kindergarten teaching as their profession. No doubt, the two years' necessary preparation is a serious obstacle, especially to those who have already commenced to earn their own living, but girls who are thinking about what they shall do will do well to turn their attention to it. Many of their parents would far rather support them for the extra two years, with the prospect of their easily obtaining situations with good salaries at the end of that time, than allow them to start at once on the precarious life of ordinary, rather inefficient governesses.

But let no girl adopt this career under the mistaken impression that it is an easy one. The truth that nothing really worth doing is easy to do can never be too strongly impressed upon them. The task of educating young children is always an arduous, though an interesting one, and requires the most untiring patience, tact, and industry. The training also is difficult, and to obtain a first-class certificate students must throw their whole hearts into their work; but the variety of subjects prevents its ever becoming monotonous.

A correct musical ear is an immense advantage, but not absolutely indispensable, as certificates are granted to candidates who pass in everything excepting music. Though they would probably find it rather difficult to obtain private situations, they might do well as assistants in schools; and as a matter of fact, very few people are so hopelessly unmusical as to be unable to learn the simple tunes required.

The necessary knowledge of drawing can also be acquired by almost any one, so the only essential qualifications are good health, an average intellect, and a determination to succeed.

