

grown, till in the last year the numbers who presented themselves for the college certificates amounted to more than fifteen thousand, representing over four thousand schools. This number considerably exceeds the sum of the Oxford and Cambridge local candidates for 1886. Not only was the college first in the field of examinations, but it also took the lead in admitting girls to equal privileges with boys. Nor, as far as we can judge, is there any ground for the prevailing belief that the standard of the college is lower than that of the universities. Certainly this is not the opinion of the best judges, masters who prepare pupils for both examinations; and there can be no doubt that the examination syllabus of the college is more scientifically constructed, and insures a better curriculum for students, than that of either university. The explanation is obvious: it was originally drawn up, and has since been modified, not by university dons, but by practical school-masters.

A few words may be added as to the future of the college. In the past the main energies of the college have been expended on the examination of pupils; and probably few of its members are aware that there is not one word in their charter referring to such examinations, and that it is only by implication that they are authorized in conducting them and granting certificates. Now that the preceptors have built themselves a house, it is hoped that they will set to work in earnest to carry out the main intention of their founders. To offer examinations in the art of teaching is something; to provide lectures for teachers by such competent professors as Mr. James Sully, Canon Daniel, and Mr. Fitch, is more: but both these provisions combined fall far short of the training of teachers. This hope, we are glad to say, is likely to be fulfilled. At the last general meeting of the college, two resolutions were carried unanimously, — "that for the next three years a sum not exceeding three hundred pounds a year be devoted to scholarships for intending teachers, male and female;" and "that part of the surplus funds be allowed to accumulate for the purpose of establishing a training-college, or for promoting some other scheme for the training of teachers." These proposals appear to us most reasonable and prudent. The experiment of the Finsbury training-college proves that a superior normal school for men must for the present depend mainly on external support, and to launch out on such an undertaking without sufficient funds would be again to invite failure.

There are various other objects included in the charter of the college, to which it will doubtless hereafter apply itself. Such are a benevolent

fund for teachers, a pedagogic library, a bill for the registration of teachers; but, useful as all these objects are, they are subordinate to the primary aim of the college, the promotion of the training of teachers.

INFANT-SCHOOLS AND THE KINDERGARTEN.¹

Now that the universal necessity of education is recognized throughout the civilized world, the contest that remains is that concerning methods; and of this, the most important branch is that which relates to the very earliest period of education, namely, to the choice between the old system of the nursery or the infant schools, and that of Froebel, known as the kindergarten.

It would be obviously impossible to attempt here to give any thing like an exposition of this method, which was elaborated by its author as simply the first step and foundation of a systematically progressive education, extending from the earliest dawn to the ripening of the human faculties. The utmost that can be hoped for, in these brief remarks, is to bring into clear relief some of the most salient points of difference between the old and the new methods of infant-training.

First, then, apart from the inevitable effect of any school discipline upon the habits and conduct of children, the former aims mainly at instruction; the kindergarten, at harmonious development of the child's whole nature, instruction being a portion only of the training required for that purpose.

Next, as to the nature of the instruction given. The infant-school, which is bound to produce at a given time a certain proficiency in reading and writing, laboriously teaches the child to recognize and reproduce certain symbols, the real importance of which he naturally cannot realize. The kindergarten trains the child first to observe form, dimension, and number, in a great variety of amusing ways, with the help of color and of objects he can handle and examine. It teaches him to reproduce the forms observed, whether of natural objects or geometrical figures; to copy or combine out of his own fancy a variety of symmetrical designs, thereby giving a facility of apprehension and execution which makes the subsequent effort to recognize and trace letters and words comparatively easy. Thus the kindergarten system enables the children to attain the same proficiency in reading and writing, while much else has been learned on the way, and while the foundation has been laid for that accuracy and

¹ From the *London Journal of education*.

delicacy of sight and touch which will be of equal importance to the future mechanic, to the artist, or the man of science.

Again, the songs and movements of the infant-school afford a pleasant break in the graver work ; but the songs and games of the kindergarten are themselves an integral portion of the instruction. Through them the ear, the memory, and the intelligence are systematically exercised, while the children feel the charm of rhythmical expression and movement.

Once more. While, in any well-managed school, the children are fairly contented, in the kindergarten they are genuinely happy. Parents of all classes bear witness to this important fact, and it is true throughout the day's exercises, grave as well as gay. For while schools impose dry tasks, hard in proportion as they are uninteresting, because bearing no reference to childish tastes and aptitudes, the kindergarten, proceeding from close study of child-nature, follows and yet guides the child's own wish to learn, by presenting to him the facts or objects that naturally excite his curiosity ; thus, instead of the passive attitude of the mere enforced learner, we find even the youngest active, and happy in their activity. Nor must we forget, that, in fostering natural curiosity, we are fostering the root of the love of knowledge, the growth of which, however humble, is a treasure to any life, and which may become with many the perennial source of the noblest enjoyments.

To sum up, then. The new method is more according to nature, and therefore more successful, and making the children happier.

It is more comprehensive, and therefore not only richer in present gain, but more durable in its effects, since education influences the future just in proportion to the hold it has taken on the whole development of mental and physical faculty, the germs of which lie undeveloped in the child.

It is more religious in its influence, not through dogmatic teaching nor direct religious services, but through the daily rejoicing in God's works ; through the dawning sense of his presence and his ruling will in that wonderful outer world concerning which the child is so curious, and on which kindergarten-teaching is so continually fixing his attention. Thence gradually spring reverence and the sense of duty to that all-ruling power, and the vital roots of all religion are there.

Such being the superior claims of Froebel's method, it is most important to urge those claims upon all educational departments that include infant-schools, to induce them to adopt that method.

The only serious difficulty is that of providing duly trained teachers, since, in the hands of ill-trained mistresses, the surface, play-aspect of the kindergarten becomes the whole ; routine replaces principle ; and a system, every step of which has been philosophically thought out, becomes a mechanism or a toy.

What is required is, that training-colleges should know that their infant-school teachers will be expected to be thoroughly conversant with the kindergarten theory and practice, and that employers should require a certificate from a competent authority, vouching for such training. With these precautions, difficulties will speedily vanish.

EMILY SHIRREFF.

MR. ROMANES ON THE HIGHER EDUCATION OF WOMEN.

AUTHORITIES of all sorts, theological, medical, and pedagogical, have lately been heard from on this subject as to the higher education of women, until it has been thought that nothing is left unsaid. But so eminent a scientist and psychologist as Mr. Romanes can always command a hearing ; and in the course of a recent lecture at the Royal institution, on 'Mental differences between men and women,' he said not a little that directly interests educators. Mr. Romanes did not criticise the old-fashioned view as to the general mental inferiority of women, though he proceeded to uphold the more modern conclusion that women cannot be too highly educated. Ignorance, he said, is no longer one of those feminine qualities universally admired. It was not till the middle of the present century that any attempt was anywhere made to provide for the higher education of women. But now, whether we like it or not, the women's movement is upon us, and we must endeavor to guide the flood into the most beneficial channels. What are those channels ? Assuredly not those that run directly athwart all the mental differences of men and women. No education will ever equalize this natural inequality of sex, and women as a *class* will never aspire to rival men. Yet, though inferior in mere strength, whether of body or of mind, in the truest grandeur of human nature, in the higher moral qualities, women are at least the equals of men, and for the full development of their nature they need education as much as men. More especially do they need an education in science. Thanks to high schools and colleges, he hoped that it would no longer be possible for a presumably educated woman to put to a lecturer such questions as these : "Tell me, is the cerebellum inside or outside the brain ? Is your diagram of a jelly-fish intended