

A DAY IN KINDERGARTEN.

Now that I have come to the end of my kindergarten training, I realise as never before what an interesting and happy period the last two years have been.

Nothing could be more interesting or more satisfying than watching the gradual development of little children when brought into an environment of love, sympathy, and understanding.

I will outline a day at kindergarten to give you an idea of the work.

The children begin to arrive at 8.30 a.m. and by 9 a.m. there is a merry crowd to greet the teachers and carry their belongings upstairs.

From 9 to 9.30 the housekeepers are busy dusting, watering and arranging the flowers, and setting the tables for lunch. It is his or her privilege to wear an apron for this duty and also to pass round the rusks and apples at lunch time.

When all is ready the children gather in the circle room and we have our good-morning circle. This consists chiefly of blowing our noses very hard, breathing in fresh air with enormous gulps, and singing our good-morning song. After this, it is a signal for everybody to tell their news which is anything from the fact that father has had his hair cut, to the wonderful experience of having had a bath.

After circle comes stories or picture talks which are looked forward to with enthusiasm, especially if the story is "The Three Bears," or "Peter Rabbit."

Lunch follows and gives ample opportunity for general conversation and expression of ideas. This is a period in which good habits are formed through constant repetition of the same rules every day. For example, girls must be served before boys, nobody begins his rusk until the housekeeper has sat down, and everybody is encouraged to come to the table with clean hands.

Next comes rhythm for the bigger children, while the tinies have games outside. This period consists of rhythmical games such as "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush," or "Pop Goes the Weasel"; songs, the main ones being nursery rhymes, sense games and any other activity which interests the children at the time are included.

After rhythm the children have a few minutes outside to let out some of their over-supply of energy. In the playground they invent all manner of games. One day I asked a child how his baby sister was.

"Better, Miss Hamilton," he replied.

"Is she out of hospital yet?"

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"Miss Hamilton, I am the dustman," was his reply, and he walked away and emptied a bucket full of leaves he was carrying.

Handwork follows and in this the children are given plenty of variety. They are free to do whatever they wish. There is the doll's house, full of fascinating dolls and furniture, paper-work and crayoning, beads to thread, pictures to look at, blocks to build with, and woodwork at which they hammer to their heart's content. Then there is clay and scrubbing. This last occupation is a great favourite and always a most interesting period to watch. With their sack aprons on, and their sleeves rolled up, the children set to work with a will on the tables, and scrub with their little orange and blue brushes until they are nearly covered in sandsoap. This develops the muscle and gives the child control.

After this period of concentration the children have a rest before going home, and often we find children fast asleep on their mats, and do not arouse them until their mothers or fathers come for them.

The end of the morning is a busy time—coats and hats have to be found for those children who have lost them, precious toys have to be looked for, children have to be put across the road, and last, but not least, the clearing-up has to be done.

The teachers and students find encouragement every day in their patient study of the children, and are always discovering fresh developments which spur them on to a further investigation of child life.

E. Stewart Hamilton.

LETTER TO OLD GIRLS.

Dear "Old Girls,"

I am glad of the opportunity of addressing you all collectively, through the medium of the Magazine. I can thus address myself to more of you than can ever be present at any one gathering. But as I write the collective title, I think of some of the places to which this Magazine will travel, of some of the Old Girls who (I hope) will read it; and I should like all those who do—and especially each one known to me—to substitute her own name for the general title at the head of this letter, and to read it as a direct message to herself.

There are several lesser matters that I should like to discuss with Old Girls, but one of great importance and urgency. Only that urgency makes me feel justified in introducing it just now.