

DUNEDIN  
FREE KINDERGARTEN  
ASSOCIATION

P. H. Haggitt

SEMI-JUBILEE  
1889-1914

~~P. H. Haggitt~~

R.S. Reynolds

Kindergarten

Dunedin Free Kindergarten Association.

Treasurer and Secretary:  
Miss ALEXANDER, 690 Castle Street

Among other things the Kindergarten seeks:

1. To develop the individuality of each child, and to offer opportunity for the expression of talent.
2. To shape character, train it to perseverance, and to a spirit of helpfulness in the home and in society.
3. To cultivate habits of thrift, cleanliness, order and system.
4. To awaken in each child a love of beauty, and thus reveal to the mind a store of simple educative pleasures.
5. To train the hand with a view to modify and prepare surroundings for use.
6. To teach the holiness of work and its consequent delights.
7. To infuse the spirit of the family into the school, with the recognition of the Father whose will it is that not one of these little ones should perish.

rescued from the fires of lust and sin and self, who may yet do for these Southern lands what Wesley did for the Northern? It is not in the least unlikely. It is not in the least inconceivable that of those who labour to support these Kindergartens it may be said or sung

Children shalt thou get to memory, though from women thou get none :  
 Yea the lordliest that lift souls or songs to greet the sun,  
 Names to fire men's ears with music, till the world's round race be run.

I am proud to have my name associated with such a beneficent organisation, and good as have been the first 25 years of its existence I trust the new cycle will shame the old.



## A Contrast—1889-1914.

By L. J. KELSEY, President

An old hymn writer speaks of Time as "an ever rolling stream." The simile will serve us well in reviewing the work of the Dunedin Free Kindergarten Association for the last 25 years. Beginning in a slight trickle from some deep-hearted spring, it dances along in joyous exuberance, playing with all that comes in its way and making itself noticeable with glint and glitter. Working persistently, it scoops for itself a bed and soon is seen proceeding quietly almost unnoticeably on its way. The chief fact is that it moves and moves onward, irrigating barren soil and causing good things to spring up and grow. Sooner or later eddies are seen in the on current. A stone or a fallen tree has created an obstacle, yet the stream must on. So it splashes and whirls and fights its way, either around or over the stone but on it goes, always on. The eddies once passed, the stream proceeds with an increased, more forceful purpose, getting broader and deeper with its ever-increasing affluents. Such is the history of all fine associations, such has been our history. That history has been so often told that we prefer to make these few words a simple contrast between 1889 and 1914.

A glance at the first report will show you on what purely philanthropic lines we began our work. The Association was started for those children who needed an environment of joy and kindness combined with that education most suited to cultivate such habits as thrift, obedience, cleanliness, self-help. By means of Froebel's gifts and games much was achieved. But in 1914 we find ourselves working on a broader basis. All those parents who choose to take advantage of our Kindergarten schools may do so, and we have realised with others that Froebel's education being ideal, the year of his death, 1852, by no means marked the culmination of Kindergarten improvement. With thoughtful judgment, wise educators have been developing his great text: "Let us live with the children" in such ways and along such psychological lines that Kindergarten of 1914 and Kindergarten of 1889 are very different. In 1889 the teacher by means of gifts impressed lessons on her little

*pupil, in 1914, the child is all and Froebel's great dream that all grown must come from a voluntary action of the child himself is receiving fuller and freer interpretation. Dr. Montessori is the latest and strongest exponent of this and we hope shortly to use some of her apparatus in our schools. Yet in our use of it we intend to remain true to the great ideals of Froebel.*

In 1889 our small Association had to be entirely self supporting. In 1914 we are receiving from the Government a capitation of £2 provided of course that the citizens of Dunedin contribute an equivalent amount. In 1889 we had no property save some furniture and a window, now we own the finest Kindergarten in the Dominion, the Rachel S. Reynolds Kindergarten, a building largely obtained through the self-sacrificing endeavours of Miss Ruby Darling and her band of mothers and of the Building Construction Committee. Our Association owes a very great debt to its head teachers, Miss Wieneke, Miss Gresham, Miss Z. Dale, Miss Wright, Miss Peake, Miss Ensom, Miss Finlay, Miss Goldsmith, Miss Brickell, Miss Waters, Miss R. Darling and Miss Henderson. During the last 25 years these have given to the Association much philanthropic work, and we desire in our jubilee report to thank them.

There is an ever-increasing sympathy between the work of our Association and the work of the public schools, a sympathy shown in our Froebel Club where many head mistresses meet with our Kindergartners during the winter months to discuss different aspects of child study.

In 1889 we had a very simple constitution. It gave the right to all subscribers of one guinea to nominate pupils, a right only once used. Our custom has ever been to take those first who came first, refusing none unless our schools are over full. Until the Government gave us a capitation grant, the age limit of the children was fixed at 6. It is now 5, with the addition of such mentally or physically defective children between 5 and 7 as are deemed unfit for attendance at a public school. We hope in the future to see the Kindergarten age raised again to 6.

Kindergarten without the help of the mothers is not Frøebel's Kindergarten. He wrote his Mother Play for them and emphatically taught that the destiny of nations lay more with them than with the possessors of power. In 1889 we merely visited the mothers, in 1914 we have attached to each Kindergarten a flourishing Mothers' Club. At the monthly meetings of these clubs the mothers are brought into close touch with the teachers and their work, and matters relating to the health and education of the children are discussed, and so the home helps the school, and the school the home.

*that we should continually encounter in training sufficient stimulus to become Kindergartners. This training, begun in 1889 in a very simple way, has recently been brought into touch with the latest educational developments. We wish exceedingly that parents and others would realise what a splendid opportunity for developing a fine womanhood such a training gives. The field of work may not yet be a very lucrative one but there is beautiful work awaiting the earnest student who is willing to give two years of her life to daily training in a Kindergarten school. We have classes for child study, for the study of Kindergarten gifts and occupations, for story telling, game playing, doll dressing, etc., and we hope shortly to induce the Government to recognise this training by placing a more than local value on the certificate.*

The difficulties we are encountering at the present time will, we hope, be dissipated as the outcome of a reciprocal arrangement between the Dunedin Free Kindergarten Association and the local Training College.

Much is being said just now concerning the most reasonable education for women. We strongly believe that Kindergarten training allied with that training given by the school of Domestic Economy and by the Society for the Protection of the Health of Women and Children would give a large uplift to women's influence in our community.

And the future, what of that? What is to be the theme around which the remarks of the President gather in the Golden Jubilee of 1939? Believing as we do in Froebel, we feel sure that his great laws must receive continually a deeper and richer interpretation. Little by little, his great principles will permeate all departments of both the primary and secondary schools of this Dominion; Kindergartens will be attached to all the larger schools and all work as much as possible done in the open air. The children will be brought more and more into touch with Nature, and through Nature to Nature's God.

Thus we see arise a deeper spirit of reverence and of the recognition of that spiritual life which makes our three score years and ten so well worth the living; and in that hope, the devoted committees of our Kindergarten Association will continue their work:

Nor will we cease from mental fight,  
Nor shall our sword sleep in our hand,  
Till we have built Jerusalem  
In God's own green and pleasant land.

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When we started our work in 1889 few of us realised the difficulties that we should continually encounter in training sufficient students to become Kindergarten teachers. This training, begun in 1889 in a very simple way, has recently been brought into touch with the latest educational developments. We wish exceedingly that parents and others would realise what a splendid opportunity for developing a fine womanhood such a training gives. The field of work may not yet be a very lucrative one but there is beautiful work awaiting the earnest student who is willing to give two years of her life to daily training in a Kindergarten school. We have classes for child study, for the study of Kindergarten gifts and occupations, for story telling, game playing, doll dressing, etc., and we hope shortly to induce the Government to recognise this training by placing a more than local value on the certificate.

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## Foreword.

By RUTHERFORD WADDELL, M.A., D.D.

I am asked to write a Foreword to the 25th Annual Report of the Kindergarten Association. I have received various instructions about it. Above and beyond everything it is to be brief. That is dismaying—to me. Any fool can write a long foreword, but to write a short one takes genius that I do not possess. Still I must do what I can and the best can do no more.

I suppose I have been asked to perform this duty because I had something to do with the originating of the Kindergarten Association. I have sometimes wondered which is the more influential—a grave or a cradle. God sometimes claims countries of graves. But He perpetuates them by cradles. Death sanctifies: but birth is a wooing mystery. It is this even though we may not accept Wordsworth's doctrine, that

The soul that rises with us, our life's star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar.

We are beginning to wake to the significance of the child. The 17th century discovered man: the 19th woman: the 20th the child. In this discovery the Kindergarten takes a leading place. It has made great progress. But its work is hardly well begun. The principal object in the foreground of Turner's "Building of Carthage" is a group of children sailing toy boats. Ruskin comments on "the exquisite choice of this incident as expressive of the ruling passion which was to be the source of future greatness, in preference to the tumult of busy stone masons or the arming of soldiers." A nation that does not put its children's needs or joys in the forefront of its thought and work will go to the rear. The Kindergarten stands to prevent this. It exalts the child. It captures it at the most plastic period. It captures it by the force of play and love. The value of this is immense. A child learns more in the first few years of its existence than in all its other years put

together. And what it learns in these early years goes deepest and lasts longest. The great creator of the Kindergarten, Froebel himself, puts it on record that the verse of scripture which he heard the first day at school, and sung there for six other days, "resounded in his ears like the chant of a chorus of nuns," and produced such an impression on him as to make him take it for his life motto. So profoundly influential may these first school days be. I do not know if any record has been kept of the after careers of the children who pass through the Dunedin Free Kindergarten. It would be interesting if it were.

But I have sometimes wondered if the Kindergarten has not as great an influence on the teacher as on the scholars. I have seen teachers transformed by its work. I have seen them enter upon it, dull, lackadaisical almost indolent. And I have seen how after a time a new light came into their faces and a new joy was born in their hearts. They had found a motive in life strong enough to re-create them. Nor need we wonder at that. Stupid indeed would be the person who could resist being captured by the freshness, innocence, straight-forwardness and faith of these little ones. And their humour, how quaint, poetic, spontaneous. And their questions going so directly to the heart of things: "Who made God?" "Where do the figures go when wiped off the slate?" "Why do there be any more days?" "And Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees." "Why then does Satan let the saint sit upon his knees when it makes him tremble?" etc., etc. Questions like these straighten out intellectual kinks, and set the mind to work and the heart also: for the simplicity of the little ones is winsome and irresistible. It winds itself into us like a fragrance. They are not all angels, to be sure. There are imps also. But angels or imps, their teachers are to be envied. Emerson says the world is kept from becoming insane by death and infancy. Infancy and childhood are the perpetual Messiah which comes into the arms of fallen men and pleads with them to return to paradise. And no where is this pleading more effective than in the Kindergarten. Great and blessed is the work these teachers are doing.

Some two centuries ago a fire broke out in an English parsonage. A boy of five years was rescued through an upper window by neighbours who stood on each other's shoulders. Who was that boy? John Wesley. The saving of that boy was the saving of Britain and the blessing of the world. Who knows but there may be some John Wesleys among these children in our Kindergarten schools—some child there

practised by the children in their homes is shown by the anecdotes of the children which their mothers tell.

The prospects for the coming year are most promising. The roll number will be increased, and we hope to make a garden which we have not yet been able to do."



**R. S. Reynolds Kindergarten Interior**

From YARALLA, Miss Brickell reports:—"In all, 112 children attended Yaralla Kindergarten during the year—54 girls and 58 boys, the average daily attendance being 43.

The general programme for the year was based upon a child's interest in the various activities which bear upon his life and livelihood. In order to enhance the interest and to increase the children's power of observation, various excursions were taken—to tradespeople of all kinds, to the fire station, the Taieri and Peninsula Milk Supply factory, and several times to the Botanical Gardens. The last-named place was visited for a double purpose—in order to observe Nature's ways of the four seasons, and for the pure enjoyment the children get in running free over the beautiful grass. The tramways traffic manager was always most kind on these occasions, and the tram ride was not the least happy portion of the outing. The visits to the tradespeople, factories, etc., served to supply material for games, stories, and table plays during the ordinary

Kindergarten days. The interest thus aroused has helped greatly in the general discipline. Punishments, of course, there must occasionally be in any Kindergarten, but these have been given on psychological lines, and the children readily learned to recognise the justice of the punishment and the need there was for it. In this connection the mothers of the children have been a great help.

The Yaralla Mothers' Club began its work early in the year and there were very good attendances on all those days which were fine. By means of this Club, we hope to do much in the future towards the betterment of child training in Dunedin."



**Yaralla Kindergarten.** MISS BRICKELL, Director

Before concluding the Committee wish again to express their grateful thanks to the Albany Street School Committee, the Wesleyan Church, Cargill Road, the Presbyterian Church, Caversham, and the First Church Deacons' Court who most willingly grant the use of their rooms for school and committee meetings, to Miss Dutton for examining the students, to Messrs. Wm. Brown and Co., for auditing the year's accounts, Mr. Tannock who has again provided us with our Christmas trees, the Tramways Committee for free rides for the children, and to all those other friends, both known and unknown, who in so many ways—not only in the past year, but during the twenty-five years of its existence—have helped the work of the Dunedin Free Kindergarten Association.

For the Committee of the D.F.K.A.,

B. R. DAVIDSON, Sec.

## First Annual Report.

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### WANTED

- A new Kindergarten Building for North Dunedin.**
- A Lecturer on Nature Study for our Training Class.**
- Volunteer Helpers in our Kindergarten.**
- Framed Pictures on Child and Animal Life.**
- Visitors to our Kindergartens.**
- Brown Paper.**
- A few Animals suitable for Kindergarten.**

"A kindergartner was wending her way through the alleys of a great city to gather material for her work. Her way was impeded by groups of quarrelsome men and women. "Make way there," shouted a rough but manly voice, "that's our kids' guard." "Eureka!" thought the teacher, with a smile, "There's a bit of sympathetic translation for you. The odd, foreign syllables have been taken to the ignorant mother by the lisping child, and the kindergartners have become the kids' guards. Heaven bless this quaint new christening!"

To guard the children of Dunedin from thriftlessness, disease, pauperism, and crime was the desire of those who first spoke of planting free kindergartens in this city. They wanted to lay hold of little ones, who came into the world burdened with evil tendencies, to educate them in kindergarten principles, supplementing this by an industrial training later in life. It is confidently believed by the highest authorities that the power of such training would greatly lessen the ranks of our criminal and destitute classes.

The impulse needed to forward the interests of this cause was given by Bishop Suter. In an address delivered in the Town Hall, March 4th, 1889, he set forth in a masterly way the advantages of the kindergarten system from an educational standpoint, and the invaluable foundation work which free kindergartens afforded in the training of neglected children. The result was, that on May 2nd sympathisers with this movement met and formed themselves into an association for the purpose of establishing free kindergartens in Dunedin. The St. Andrew's Church Mission Hall, Walker street, was offered to us free of rent. It was the very place.

Here was material for our work. Our next step was to get a kindergartner. We were fortunate in hearing of Miss Wieneke, a lady who had been trained for the work in Froebel's land, and seemed endowed with a special love for the poor and patience with the weak. We asked her to take charge of our work. She consented, and on June 10th, 1889, we planted the first free kindergarten in Dunedin.



We opened with 14 children. Those of us who were present that day, and watched the dullness and apathy of these children, were astonished in visiting the school four months later at the wonderful change. There were the same children, all clad in a uniform "pinny," and yet how different! Their legs, hands, voices, brains, sympathies, all were active in their appointed season. There seemed to be no abnormal growth, but a quiet harmony of development.

During the year the number on the roll has increased from 14 to 60, with an average attendance of 45. As the children leave us for the State schools at the age of 6, our numbers cannot increase to any great extent.



Preparing for Kindergarten.

Miss Wieneke has not worked alone. Miss Cresswell, who studied under Miss Wieneke in Christchurch, became a pupil teacher here for 10 months. Two other young ladies—Miss Anna Gresham and Miss Zeby Dale—are studying kindergarten methods and assisting in our work. These students must remain two years in the service of the association before receiving a fully qualified teacher's certificate. They pay a small sum for the first year, the second year's training being free. Mr. Hutton, of the school of art, kindly gives our students free tuition in drawing and practical geometry.

The kindergarten has been visited weekly by two members of committee, who have invariably reported progress at our monthly meetings. Fully 90 other friends have visited the school, many spending an entire morning with the children. All write warmly in our visitors' book, and interest in our work is spreading through these visits to many parts of New Zealand and Australia.

The work done by the children for the first five months was placed in the exhibition. The exhibit consists of paper plaiting and weaving, and of a large number of pictures and conventional designs worked with coloured wool on cardboard. Simple as these things are, they are some of the means used for putting the child into possession of his powers, "giving him a sense of symmetry and harmony; a quick judgment of number, measure, and size; and stimulating his inventive faculties."

The best report on our work would be a talk with the children. Ask them about "Johnny." They will tell you how they loved the delicate boy who came into their midst for five short months and then went to God's kindergarten, how he lay so patiently in his cot through days and nights of pain, toying with the flowers around him, and talking repeatedly of the happy hours amongst them all. Speak to our little cripple girl; let her tell how days are short and hours happy, because she can sing and weave and draw and love and hope. Follow the children home, and hear them tell their parents of each little fresh endeavour. Listen to them teach their brothers and sisters with all the hopefulness which Miss Wieneke gives to her work. "Oh, mother!" said one of these little trainers, "wouldn't it be a dreadful thing if Danny grew up a bad boy." We are sorry Danny is too old for our kindergarten.

Visitors to the Walker street district find that they must be able to appreciate the work of the kindergarten if they wish to enter into friendly relations with the parents of our children.

During the year the children have had two great treats. On November 18th they were royally entertained by Mrs. Wilkie in her grounds at Roslyn. Our children were also granted a free entry to the exhibition. Visitors that day might have seen a group of small boys standing before the New Zealand woods. These were our young "Adam Bedes," calculating the height and contents of a tree to a nicety. Another object of interest was the different cereals. The shapes, sizes, and possibilities of these seeds were for some time an all-absorbing topic for conversation. Here our young farmers felt at home. The children received much kind

attention as they wandered through the courts; one gentleman sympathetically provided a chair for our little cripple.

On December 20th, our children gave a short but pleasing entertainment to their parents and friends at St. Matthew's schoolroom before breaking up for the Midsummer holidays. Each child was presented by the association with a book. The evident enjoyment of the children in their work and their eager delight at such friendly recognition was gratifying to all present.

Generosity on all sides has made the work of the Committee a pleasant one. At the very beginning of the year Mr. James Gray made us a handsome donation of £20, promising an annual subscription of £10. This was the good wind that filled our sails and set our kindergarten afloat. Other friends followed with liberal aid. Even from Adelaide visitors have kindly subscribed, returning to South Australia with some of our collecting cards.

We have been enabled to improve the look and comfort of our hall. The energies of our president collected funds for an extra window, sadly needed for light and warmth; the generosity of Mr. Tapper made this window a coloured one. The pictures on the walls represent the thoughts of many friends; the coal in our grate is a gift from the Union Steam Ship Company.

Much yet remains to be done; we have but broken the soil. A room in the north of Dunedin has been offered us, free of rent, for our second kindergarten. Will the citizens help us to plant it? We need help in canvassing the districts, so that no child may be "bereft of the pleasant sights his playmates see." We want kind friends to take detachments of our flock among the grasses and the wild flowers, to listen to the notes of the birds and to watch the ways of the insect. We want visitors, many and frequent, to our kindergarten, that they may test the work as an educational system. We want enthusiasm among the few: we want it among the many. The most enthusiastic teacher in the world's history was He who said, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones"; and His method of education was not force, but the natural and harmonious development of a child's mind when placed in a right condition for growth."

L. J. KELSEY, *Hon. Sec.*

## 25th Annual Report

It is once more the privilege of the Committee of the Dunedin Free Kindergarten Association to lay before its members and supporters an account of the work done and progress made during the past year; but this being the silver jubilee year of the Society, the Committee wish first to say how grateful they feel for all the help and encouragement given to them since the Association first came into existence on May 2nd, 1889. Of the original members of the first committee some, viz., Mesdames Reynolds and Joachim, Miss Kelsey and Mr. Mark Cohen and the Hon. James Allen are still holding office. The first school was opened with fourteen children, now, the Association has three schools in different parts of the town, and one of these, the R. S. Reynolds Kindergarten, may truly be claimed to be the most fully equipped and up-to-date



**R. S. Reynolds Kindergarten Exterior**

Kindergarten in this Dominion. This model building is a proof of the great interest taken in the work, for the land has been bought, the school

Miss Henderson, and we feel very grateful to these helpers for their very willing assistance.

The mothers also gave valuable assistance in connection with the Kindergarten bazaar, and they deserve great credit for the enthusiasm which they showed in working so willingly for their stall.



**Caversham Kindergarten.** MISS GOLDSMITH, Director

The Mothers' Library started last year has been much appreciated.

The children entered very enthusiastically into the Christmas programme this year. For the last six weeks we talked of nothing but Christmas.

The making of Christmas presents—the cutting out of bells, stars, stockings, flags, etc., to decorate the Xmas tree, which was to hold mother's and father's presents, all helped to make the spirit of Christmas more real to the children, and this work was a continual joy to them from day to day. They were so busy working for other people that they did not think of themselves. At last break-up day came and each child was able to realise the long wished for joy of carrying their presents to their mothers and fathers. Smiles and kisses were given in return for the little gifts and each child said good-bye to Kindergarten, feeling that Christmas was a very happy time for everyone."

Of R. S. REYNOLDS Kindergarten, Miss Darling writes:—" I have pleasure in reporting as the chief incident in the history of the Cargill Road Kindergarten during the past year its translation into the R. S. Reynolds Kindergarten, Macandrew Road. The building of a new school house, which last year was but a hope, has been successfully carried through.



**R. S. Reynolds Kindergarten.** MISS R. DARLING, Director

The school was informally opened in September, and a sale of work held. I desire in this connection sincerely to thank the mothers and Fathers of the Caversham and Cargill Road Kindergartens as well as numerous other helpers for their ever willing help and self-sacrificing labours.

During the eight weeks the new school has been open to the children, they have shown as far as they possibly can how much they appreciate what is being done for them. Seventy-six children have been in attendance during the year, the number on the roll at the close being fifty-five. A very real interest is displayed by them in the Kindergarten and its work. They take the greatest delight in showing it to visitors, and really the most interesting time to see them is when they are industriously engaged in sweeping, dusting and other light domestic duties. That lessons of conduct and behaviour learned in the Kindergarten are

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