

MISSOULA, MONTANA, SUNDAY MORNING, AUGUST 3, 1913.

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN BEFORE THE AGE OF SIX WELL ILLUSTRATED AT UNIVERSITY SUMMER SCHOOL

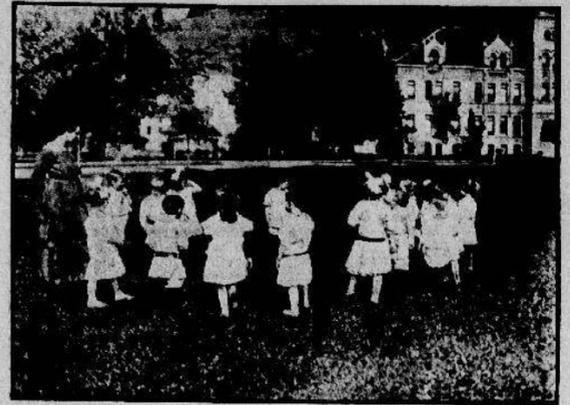


THE EXCURSION.

The parent birds made many trips in order to feed the hungry trio that only the day before had left the nest to perch upon the wires.



ONE VIEW OF CAMPERS SHOWING LIBRARY.



LOOBY-LOO.

A simple game which organizes the random movements of the child's body and its parts.



HANDWORK MATERIALS.

The gifts of the kindergarten and the didactic materials of the House of Childhood were in use daily by the children.

The following story of the results of the children's class, organized and maintained during a portion of the last session of the university summer school, was prepared in the form of a lecture by Miss Alma L. Binzel, lecturer on kindergarten and primary methods, and who assisted in the supervision of this class. Since the summer school closed Miss Binzel has been elected to the position of primary supervisor of the Missoula public schools, and in addition to her regular work expects to devote some time to the development of the kindergarten in the city outside the school.

with them the products of their own work and play. It was therefore an easy matter to secure pictures of the children, which would show them free from the self-consciousness that is paralyzing but possessed of that which is energizing.

The pictures reproduced on this page tell their own story to those who have studied the educability of children before the age of 6, and who have given attention to the kindergarten as one effective agency which utilizes the capacity for education between the fourth and sixth birthdays. Any one who has had to do with children of this age knows that they ask many questions about the things they see, the people they meet; knows that they are constantly wanting to handle, to take apart and to put together again various materials; knows they are continually moving about, jumping, running, throwing, etc.; knows that they try to set up friendly relations with other children, sometimes "running away" from home to find them; knows that they pick up and treasure objects that seem to them pretty; knows, in fact, that children are physically, intellectually and emotionally alert pretty much all the time that they are not sound asleep.

The children's class at the university summer session attracted its share of attention from the student body interested in the problems of education and from the parents whose children were enrolled. Not a single day passed without visitors from both groups; frequently there were as many visitors as there were children. Many questions were asked and answered; many parents have expressed the hope that the class might be resumed at the opening of the school year in September.

The children, too, as the session drew to a close expressed voluntarily their desire for continuance by such questions as, "Why isn't there going to be any more kindergarten?" "Who's going to teach us after you are gone, Miss B—?" "Miss H—, can't you stay and teach us?" Another indication of the children's interest is found in their good attendance. Ignoring the enforced absences due to a few cases of mumps, the record shows 512 days of attendance out of a possible 567 days; an average daily attendance of 29 out of an enrollment of 21.

A child or a group of children have been, times without number, the center of attraction for grownups. Fortunately are the children whose appearance, whose ideas and feelings, as expressed in the talk and play, are as respectfully and intelligently treated by adults, as adults desire their own treated. Many a child has been made vain or smart, or awkward, or morbid because older people have made unwise comments upon his appearance, conduct, or thoughts in his presence. Many a child has suffered keenly because some people have laughed at instead of with him; have laughed when he was intent upon some, to him, serious business or delightful play, perfectly unconscious of anything but his activity or the object of it. To guard against any painful experience for the members of the children's class this summer some suggestions were posted, and visitors were invited to read them. Whether they were needed or not the writer of the suggestions does not know, but the teachers realize that their own efforts to make the atmosphere conducive to naturalness on the part of the children would have been unsuccessful but for the cooperation of the on-lookers. On the whole, the children were as unconscious of the visitors as they could be; this, in the eyes of the teachers, indicates that self control was exercised by the audiences, for there were many times when there was occasion for smiles and laughter, or "Isn't it pretty?" "What lovely eyes you have?" "Isn't he cunning?" "Did you ever see any one more serious about his plans for a profession than W— about his for becoming a cowboy?" The children accepted visitors as they did the furniture, the playthings and the teachers, and appeared to them only as they wished to have some one share

It was left for educational reformers and later for psychologists to make clear to parents and teachers that these tendencies to be active were not deliberately obstinate efforts on the part of child to be a nuisance to grownups. Froebel, the founder of the kindergarten, studied children from babyhood on. He found that at different stages in their development they showed several fundamental kinds of hungers besides the food hunger. He studied the careless, the intuitively careful, the intelligently careful father's and mother's responses to these "hungers." He came to the conclusion that the best homes alone could not satisfy them as they should be satisfied. The outcome of his thought and experimentation was the kindergarten: a place where human beings between the ages of 4 and 6, through material things, conversation, physical activity, social intercourse and wise direction have their instinctive desires to make, to know, to cooperate, to love the beautiful, to believe in others, fulfilled. This fulfillment, supplementing that given by the good home, constitutes both the essential educative experience for the years before 6, and the most vital preparation for the work of the first grade.

The means for this educating process are an environment having in it worthwhile playthings, gymnastic exercises, games, music, stories, conversations, pictures, etc.; space that is large enough and furniture that is suitable to the carrying out of individual or group activities indoors and other space that affords the carrying out projects out of doors, and one or more teachers, who know child-life, who know the possibilities of materials, who know what society accepts for today and strives to better for tomorrow, and who know the best method of helping the child through these materials to find his place gradually in the worlds of nature and of man.

The pictures of the children in the garden and on their excursion to see a bird family are typical of the ways in which the kindergarten satisfies the child's curiosity about the world of nature and of man's relationships to that world through his own doing and seeing. The children laid out their own gardens this summer; on the closing day each child carried home a bunch of radishes which he had helped to raise; had the session been longer they might each have carried lettuce also. On that day the story

of "My Garden Bed" was repeated; the blue-print pictures of the radish seeds; young to half grown and the full-grown plant were looked at again in order to review the facts of the radish growth. A poem, "Bird Thoughts," had been read a number of times in connection with the visit to the bird family; an empty bird's egg shell had been shown; each child had made and mounted in his book a blue-print picture of a mother bird about to feed some hungry birds in a nest to make clear his ideas about and to further his interest in bird life.

An open space out of doors provides the opportunity for unorganized activities, in which children (and all young animals) indulge in obedience to nature's law of exercise. This individual running, jumping, skipping, tumbling, rolling, somersaulting, precedes the organization of games, having definite forms. "Looby-loo" is one of the early game forms into which the ran-

dom activities of moving and shaking the foot, hand, head, and the simplest side dance step are incorporated. Firmer muscles, flexible joints, controlled and graceful movements are some of the goals toward which such organized games aim.

The sand-pit, if properly used, makes possible both strength-producing and thought-clearing activity. Children need to lift, to carry, to pound things that offer decided resistance; play with light weight blocks and the still lighter paper materials makes for co-ordination of the smaller muscles; it does not call for that straining and stretching of the larger muscles that transform baby, muscular tissue. Filling and carrying buckets of sand, lifting sand with good-sized shovels is one aspect of sand-pit work. Another aspect is that of the gradual development of power to express ideas through this medium. Since the summer session was too short to permit the use of all mate-

rials the illustration for this point will be drawn from a group of children, not yet 5, in another kindergarten. These children had taken a walk to the Mississippi river. They had noticed the bluffs on the Wisconsin side, the bridges, boathouses, boats, the railroad tracks, etc., of the Minnesota shore. A few days later it was their turn to play in the sand, and at the close of the 20-minute period practically every feature had been reproduced with the sand in the sand-box. These children, starting out with the mere activity of carrying, piling and sifting the sand, had risen to the stage of consciously expressing the definite memories of their trip.

The picture of the children upon the rug shows them at work upon individual problems with kindergarten and House-of-Childhood materials. In the actual procedure with the former the activities are frequently carried on in the group form, each child is provided with the same kind of ma-

GIRL SCOUT MOVEMENT BIDS FAIR TO SWEEP THE NATION JUST LIKE SIMILAR MOVEMENT FOR TRAINING OF BOYS



Around the Camp Fire, a Typical Scout and Wigwagging.

Savannah, Ga., Aug. 2.—With the establishment of a national headquarters in Washington for the introduction of the propaganda of the organization into all the states of the union the Girl Scouts, a movement that had its inception in Savannah a little more than a year ago when Mrs. William Low, the originator of the movement, established here the first organized

patrol, and which is designed to be for the girls of the land what the Boy Scout movement is to the lads of the country and Europe, is about to be launched upon a career that bids fair to be as successful with the feminine half of the younger generation as its counterpart is among their brothers.

Mrs. Low, who is a native of Savannah, and a resident of England, into which country she married, received the suggestion for the Girl

Scouts from Miss Agnes Baden-Powell, who, knowing her enthusiasm for all things looking to race betterment, begged her to organize in this country among the girls an auxiliary to the Boy Scouts along lines similar to an organization of the same kind which she had perfected among the girls of England at the instigation of her brother, Sir Robert Baden-Powell, the originator of the Boy Scout movement.

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terial, but uniformity of result is striven for only on very rare occasions. The individual play with either the Froebelian or Montessori materials resembles the play of the child in his own home; it has its specific purposes and values. The group work with the former supplements this kind of work in such a way as to make each child the contributor to and the receiver of suggestions from his classmates. This interchange results in a defining, enriching, enlarging and organizing of experience that is not possible when the child is alone either under the tuition of parents or tutors or governesses. Give a lump of clay to each of 10 children and their responses to the material and the teacher's suggestion "do something" will result in pitting, pounding, rolling round and round, rolling lengthwise, punching holes and shaping objects. At the invitation of the teacher this manipulation and experimentation ceases long enough for the teacher to show and to tell what has happened. With the resumption of work each child tries some one else's way of using clay; finally some child discovers that what he has made is a snow-ball, and forthwith snow-balls, then snow-men, then snow-forts are forthcoming. Or he discovers that he has made a cookie, and cookies and more cookies of different shapes are made; then articles like pans and rolling-pins, etc., appear, and eventually the whole process of baking has been recalled and expressed. Both conscious and unconscious imitation lie at the basis of the contagion of the idea until all the class is at work upon it, and the lesson or lessons close with another human activity made clear and orderly. That uniformity of result is not expected nor imposed, the following will illustrate. The first use of the clay this summer brought from the oldest boy in attendance the "Ginger Bread Boy" with head, face, body, arms and legs complete and in good proportion. Since all the children had heard the story this clay picture was shown to them. In a few moments two other children had taken up the idea of telling something from the same story; the one placed lumps of clay of various sizes and slightly different shapes in a procession to represent the pursuit of the "Gingerbread Boy" by "the old woman, the old man, the barnful of threshers, etc." The other, realizing the meaning of "barnful of threshers" and "field full of mowers" had many more creatures in pursuit of the "boy," though the pieces were not any more suggestive of the actual forms of people and animals than the one cited before. Now it is out of such variety of response that the teacher selects for emphasis the worth-while element; the children listening to her and looking at each other's work, profit by each other's ideas and incorporate them into their next efforts. Thus

more rapid progress is made by the individual and by the group. It is needless to say that the race has progressed not by the effort of individual after individual to discover and solve anew all the problems of science, or government of industry, etc., but by their utilization of the work of their predecessors and of their contemporaries. Some psychologist has said that invention and imitation are the two legs upon which the race has walked and will walk in its movement to higher and higher levels; the method of the kindergarten encourages children to both the imitative and the inventive tendencies in the treatment of all its materials.

Important as is this mutual contribution to every child's education there is another which equals it. It is said of the Boris Sidis son and the Stoner girl (two of the prodigies now being written up by those who are interested in home education or children up to high school or college work) that they are self-centered, and selfish; that the four Berle children are not so because the presence of the others of somewhat similar ages required frequent consideration of the rights of others and frequent opportunity for cooperative action. Normal children begin to show an interest in companions of their own age near the fourth birthday; adjustment of "turn-about is fair play," of sharing toys, of leading and following, of co-operation, etc., must be gradually acquired if the children are to become socialized—as child nature is more variable than material in books, the number of adjustments to different personalities at different times results in a flexible, adjustable, broad personality.

The 27 days have shown some developments along this line in a number of cases. Were this article not in danger of becoming too long accounts would be given of the gradual changes in specific children that constitute definite growth. The boy who would put his kerchief up in his eyes at the mere suggestion of separation from his sister is independent enough now to go about his work and play without her nearby presence; the boy whose ideas and energy made him wish to lead and act all the time has come to recognize that there are others who desire equal opportunities, and hence he restrains himself sometimes; the girl whose executive or nurturing ability, or both, tended to make her do everything for a playmate is coming to realize that doing constantly for another weakens that other. These are a few instances out of many that might be cited, which indicate that helpful and desirable growth took place for the individuals within the group. Of course, they are beginnings; to make them permanent the group experience should be continued under the direction of one who understands what children may

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