

The Washington
Kindergarten Association.

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Among the ladies who are heartily in sympathy with the effort to save the Kindergarten College are :

MRS. JOHN D. WALKER	MRS. A. C. BARNEY
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WASHINGTON, D. C.,

June 7, 1904.

For eight years Mrs. Phebe A. Hearst has generously supported the Kindergarten College and the three free Kindergartens that have borne her name. This work has gone on quietly, unknown to many citizens of Washington, but now that it is in imminent danger of being discontinued, it is time that the community should know what it is likely to lose. Although Mrs. Hearst's interest in the work is as great as ever, she finds it necessary to withdraw almost entirely her financial support. The announcement of this decision was made to the faculty of the College as recently as May 14th, and it seemed at first as if there were no alternative before the institution but extinction. But the students, the alumnæ, and the friends of the College declared with one voice that this must not be its fate.

The accompanying letter from Mr. Herbert Welsh tells of the effort that is being made to continue the work. Under his guidance, we formed ourselves into the Washington Kindergarten Association with an Advisory and an Executive Committee.

Mr. Welsh also states why we believe the institution deserves to live. The reasons are in brief—its importance to educational interests in the South; its importance as the training college of many of the public school Kindergartners of Washington, to which they are constantly returning for new light and inspiration; the high order of its work; and its situation in the National Capital.

During the eight years of its existence, there have been sent out from the college: two training teachers, one at present leading the work in Richmond; two assistant training teachers; one supervisor of public school kindergartens in Washington; and one director of settlement work in California; also teachers for Colorado, Maryland, Virginia, Wisconsin, Rhode Island and South Dakota.

In the eight years, 173 students have been enrolled, many of whom have taken two or three year courses. In 1897, there

were 5 students in the college ; this year there were 40, of whom 18 came from places away from Washington, some of them from as far as North Carolina, Tennessee and Canada. During the eight years, 340 women have been enrolled in the Mothers' Meetings, and 1,120 children in the kindergartens and connecting class.

The postgraduate lectures are attended per year by more than 100 persons not identified with the college. This year under Miss Susan E. Blow's able leadership, a postgraduate course lasting three months was conducted which was attended by 37 training teachers, directors and supervisors coming from New York, Boston, Pittsburg, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Chicago, Worcester, Richmond, Farmville, Va. and Washington, D. C.

If help does not come promptly, the work of eight years in building up one of the best training colleges in the country must come to an end. The College with its three free kindergartens, two of which are in poor districts, its connecting class, its lecture courses, the rent of four houses, and its especial work with reference to kindergartens in the South, cost last year \$16,000.

We therefore ask the public-spirited citizens of the Country to help us raise this sum of \$16,000 necessary to carry on the work next year, and give us a chance to reorganize on a permanent basis. Of this amount we have been promised :

The rent of two houses amounting to-----	\$2,300
Tuition pledged-----	1,500
1 subscription-----	1,000
3 subscriptions of \$100 each-----	300
A conditional subscription-----	100
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	\$5,200

We must be assured very soon of the remaining \$10,800 in order to defray the expenses of the College through the summer, to justify the Director in accepting applicants for admission and to warrant opening classes in the fall with the certainty of seeing the students through the year's work. Surely our fellow-citizens will not fail us. Our need is urgent, for our case is desperate. But our courage is being strengthened daily by

expressions of sympathy and testimonials to the value of this work.

Any contributions from \$10 upward will be gratefully received, and should be sent to the Treasurer of the Washington Kindergarten Association, Hon. Henry B. F. Macfarland, the President of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia.

Respectfully,

GRACE GALLAUDET KENDALL,
Chairman of the Washington Kindergarten Association.
NANNIE V. D. SKILLMAN,
Secretary.

Mr. Herbert Welsh writes :

"My own interest in this institution is an impersonal one, and is based upon the belief that its continued activity is of vital importance to the cause of American education, and especially education in the Southern States. I venture to speak only after a personal examination of the work of this institution and after careful inquiry as to the opinion which is held of it by men of recognized standing in the educational world, and who have had an opportunity for years to study its aims and the details of its operations.

"The management of the institution has, during this entire period, been under the exceedingly able hands of its director, Miss Harriet Niel, who has always had the fullest confidence and esteem of the founder. Mrs. Hearst finds herself obliged to withdraw the large sum of \$16,000 required for the annual support of the college, but she kindly gives the use of the buildings for one more year. Unfortunately circumstances compelled the announcement of this withdrawal to be made almost without warning, so that those on whom the institution immediately depends for its management find themselves confronted with this sharp alternative; they must either close at once this important work, in which they are profoundly interested, or they must, within a few weeks and on the eve of the summer exodus, raise by public appeal the sum which will permit continuance for another year.

"At first this blow which fell upon the college was so staggering that immediate suspension seemed the only course possible. But the students and the alumnæ, young women of enthusiasm and courage, who had themselves reaped the greatest benefit from the institution, and who saw clearly the great work it was destined to do in the future, met together promptly and resolved that this threatened disaster must be averted, pledging themselves to inaugurate a movement that would raise the

funds necessary to meet the emergency. In furtherance of this object I would like first to present the opinions of a few recognized authorities, and then conclude by a brief statement of personal impressions—derived from a recent visit—to the Kindergarten College.

“ Mr. Carroll D. Wright, the distinguished head of the bureau of labor, writes :

“ ‘ I have been greatly pained to learn that the Phoebe A. Hearst College for Kindergartners, established some eight years ago, is likely to be suspended on account of lack of support, which lack comes through legitimate causes and not through any adverse disposition on the part of the generous founder. For this institution to suspend now would be most disastrous, in my opinion, especially when its location in the South is considered. It is one of the best training schools in the country, is well established and with a corps of teachers that cannot be surpassed—as related to the whole movement of Southern education this institution should be supported. The encouragement of all the movements for the development of educational work in the South would receive a setback by the permanent discontinuance of this college. * * * I have watched its growth from the beginning, and was associated with Mrs. Hearst in the establishment of the Columbia Kindergarten Association, through whose influence mainly Congress was induced to make the Kindergarten method a part of the public school system in the District of Columbia. With this knowledge of the origin of the purposes and continued success of this particular college for the training of Kindergartners I do not hesitate to assure you most positively that its continuance is a necessity and its discontinuance would be disastrous.’

“ Mr. Richard Watson Gilder, editor of the Century Magazine, writes :

“ ‘ It would be a thousand pities if the kindergarten training schools at Washington should be discontinued or their work curtailed. The kindergarten is the best foundation for an education for rich and poor alike.’

“ Mr. Jacob A. Riis, the champion of the rights of childhood, writes stirring words of encouragement :

“ ‘ What do I think of the kindergarten? I think, with Superintendent Maxwell of the board of education of my city, here, that it is the greatest blessing of the nineteenth century bequeathed to little children.’

“ But it is useless to multiply commendations that might be given from many other weighty sources. I would close with

a few words giving my own impressions derived from a personal visit to this Kindergarten College in Washington. I saw the work both of the free kindergarten, carried on under the immediate supervision of Miss Niel, assisted by her corps of remarkably able teachers, at 1215 K street, and also of two schools, one for white and another for colored children, situated at some distance from this locality, but forming a part of the work of the college. The impression produced upon me was profound.

“ I watched every movement of this happy, natural, absorbed band of little children with intense interest. The lesson given at the free kindergarten seemed from beginning to end more like some exquisite rendering of a beautiful poem, which these unconscious children had themselves conceived and were themselves executing, than a task through which their teachers guided them.

“ The spontaneous little remarks of the children themselves, as they made shadow pictures on the floor, or sang to an excellent piano accompaniment their lesson songs, or took part with delight in games which conveyed the germ of some wholesome and elevating idea, or constructed bridges or buildings out of their wooden blocks; or did many other things of a similar nature—all produced on the observer the conviction that here was instruction precisely suited to the needs of earliest childhood, that it was based on the deepest knowledge of the child nature and was executed by teachers of great tact and experience.

“ But the point of vital import in this institution is not that it accomplishes kindergarten work of the highest grade, but that while doing this it gives a kindergarten collegiate training to its body of young women students, who are to become kindergarten teachers, furnishing to them the constant opportunity to see such work and to engage in it and then sending them forth thoroughly equipped to reproduce and to extend it wherever their lot may be cast. A large number of the alumnae who remain in Washington return to the college year after year to take advantage of the post-graduate courses and lectures by prominent educators, which have always been a feature of the college.

“ This branch of the work, together with the mothers' meetings, gives the college an ever-widening sphere of influence. But why say more? It must be that wealthy citizens of Washington, who have this work at their very door, who see young southern women of high culture, refinement and disinterestedness coming to study its methods and then to carry its bless-

ings to hundreds of neglected centers will do their share that it shall not perish.

“But far beyond that thought it is to be hoped that wealthy, noble-spirited men and women in the great cities of the East will perceive the true national character of this kindergarten college, and will make its destiny of a permanent and larger usefulness assured, by first contributing the \$16,000 to enable it to tide over a single year, and then to achieve a lasting foundation. The alternative before the kindergarten college is death or a larger life. Its work is so fine, so necessary to the country, that it does not deserve death. Let then the verdict of generous helpers be that it shall at once achieve a richer, larger life even than it has enjoyed in its initial years from the bounty of its generous founder.

HERBERT WELSH.

THE OUTLOOK COMPANY.

287 FIFTH AVENUE.

NEW YORK, May 31, 1904.

MY DEAR MADAM :

I have learned with the deepest regret of the crisis in the affairs of the Phebe A. Hearst Kindergarten College in Washington, and I take the liberty of writing to say that, in my judgment, it would be a great misfortune if the college should be discontinued. Washington is a strategic point on the educational map of the country ; there is no other section in which educational interests are so keen and so widespread as in the South. It will be a misfortune for the South and for the Kindergarten cause if at this stage the Kindergarten is not interpreted with skill, insight and power as it has been at the college under the direction of Miss Niel. I sincerely hope some way may be devised to avert what would be a lasting misfortune.

Sincerely yours,

HAMILTON W. MABIE.

MRS. GRACE GALLAUDET KENDALL.

MY DEAR MISS NIEL :

I cannot admit into my mind the thought that the Kindergarten, triumphant everywhere else, shall fail of appreciation in the capital of the country, and when I know, as I do, the exceptional quality of your own work, it seems to me impossi-

ble that your practical demonstration of the value of the Froebellian system should fail to produce its logical result. It will be a blow to education not only in Washington but throughout the South should anything interfere with the continuance of your great work. I have cherished the hope that the true ideal of the Kindergarten for which you so resolutely stand and which you so admirably embody might radiate from Washington through the entire South. The one great trouble in the past has been that unqualified persons have spread the kindergartens, which have been the veriest caricatures of Froebel's ideal. I have often wondered that in spite of such caricatures the kindergarten succeeded in maintaining itself in the North, East and West. I hoped that the South, beginning the work later, might avoid these grave errors, and I looked to you and to your work as a center of right influence. It cannot be that this hope shall fail. The work is too good not to be an invincible argument and to insure its own continuance. Please be sure to let me know if in any way I can be of service to our common cause, and believe me

Very sincerely yours,

SUSAN E. BLOW.

Casnovia, May 19th, 1904.

68 Marlborough Street,
BOSTON, May 31st.

MY DEAR MISS NIEL :

In my opinion the closing of the Phebe A. Hearst Kindergarten College would be a great loss, not to Washington alone, but to the cause of education all over the country. Your college is unique in that it not only provides Kindergarten training, but it has offered the broadest postgraduate course of any college of its kind.

The culture thus made possible to those preparing to teach and to those already teaching in Kindergartens and training schools cannot be measured.

Furthermore, the College has made possible for the South what no other Kindergarten training school has been able to do. It has generously provided free scholarships, and the moderate tuition fee has made it possible for many to come who could not otherwise pay the usual tuition required elsewhere. I know of no institution that is doing more to provide the young children and young women with a better training for life than yours, and I trust that your work will con-

tinue to spread abroad its great influence for good among the children and the women of our land.

In this way it is educating citizens, and influencing those in whose hands the future welfare of our country and especially of the South must rest.

No one can overestimate what a calamity the closing of your college would be.

Sincerely yours,

LAURA FISHER,

Director of Public Kindergartens of Boston, Mass.

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