



**Der Tischler.**

‘Daß Jedes seine Sprache spricht,  
 Entgeht so leicht dem Kinde nicht:  
 Doch was uns leicht, wir achten 's  
 nicht,  
 Legt, Eltern, drauf das rechte  
 Gewicht.’

**XXXVIII.**

**THE JOINER.**

Each thing around us speaks  
 A language all its own.  
 And though we may have grown  
 Hardened and dull of ear,  
 The little children hear.

But, ah, they cannot know  
 How blest such hearing is,  
 Until, alas, it flies!  
 Then let us help them keep  
 The gift whose loss we weep.

In this game the fists, by a sliding movement over a flat surface, represent the act of planing. The strokes should be sometimes long and sometimes short.

To what truths does this simple game point? What is its inner sense? What relationship has it to life?

Through the play of The Finger Piano the child's attention was directed to the connection between tone, movement, and number, or, in a word, to the characteristic phenomena of sound included under the general form of time. But sound is connected also with the phenomena of space, for if any material substance be stretched to a great length its tone is deep; while, on the other hand, if the length stretched be short and thin, the tone will be high. The concepts long and short are therefore mediatorial between the phenomena of space and those of time.

That these concepts have likewise important bearings upon child life is self-evident. How often, for example, must you say to your little ones: "You may stay out of doors, but not too long." "You must work now, but only for a short time," etc.

As the play of *The Fishes* gave you occasion to suggest both the literal and analogical meanings of straight and crooked, so the play of *The Joiner* offers a point of departure for the evolution of the literal and analogical meanings of long and short. As the picture accompanying the former play gave varied illustrations of straight and crooked, so the picture of *The Joiner* gives varied illustrations of long and short. It will delight your child to seek these different illustrations and discover their contrasts and connections.

The goal of this play is the discovery that outward size does not presuppose inward greatness. The contrast between the great giant Goliath and the stripling David suggests to the imagination an inverse ratio between the physically and spiritually great. Hence the former is in the child world a comic character, while with dear little David each embryo hero feels the keenest sympathy.\*

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\* Froebel closes this commentary by quoting two lines of a little poem probably familiar to most of his German readers:

"Giant Goliath was once alive,  
A very dangerous man."

This poem was written by Matthias Claudius (1740-1815), and printed in the *Wandsbecker Bote*, a periodical published about a hundred years ago in Holstein. (Miss Lord's note.)