

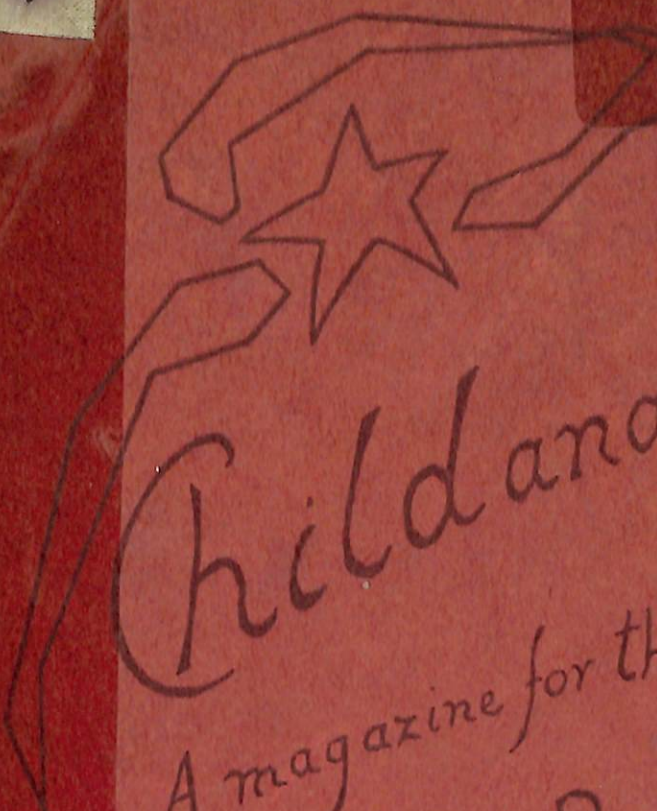
C

A. 6

RUDOLF STEINER LIBRARY



VYDZ030159



Child and Man

A magazine for the education
founded by Rudolf Steiner

ANTHROPOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
REFERENCE LIBRARY

Vol 1

Price ~~One Shilling~~ 6^d

No. 3

CHILD AND MAN

Edited by A. C. Harwood

Published termly by the teachers of the New School, Streatham Hill, London, S.W.16. Annual subscription 3s. 3d. (post free). Single copies 1s. (postage 1d.).

Editorial

DURING the past few months the question of Education has been rather pathetically in the public eye. The difficulties which attended the passage of the Bill for the raising of the compulsory School age were many and various, but some of the points raised were of especial interest. It was perhaps significant of a certain weakening in the belief in education generally that the friends of the Bill thought it necessary to urge in its favour that it would withdraw a certain number of potential employees from the labour market and so ease the unemployment problem. The revival of the religious question, too, in connection with Education, and the time-honoured dispute between education for a calling and education for knowledge, showed how very uncertain people to-day still are in their minds as to the nature and function of Education, and its bearing on fundamental issues in life. Such disputes must naturally continue in the sphere of Education as long as, in broader aspects of life, spiritual experience is regarded as the opposite of practical ability. But if it came to be realized that in this age there is a wisdom based on pure spiritual experience that is in every detail far more practical than the empirical knowledge which is to-day somewhat rapidly breaking down, the controversy in the sphere of education between technical and general education (as it is sometimes called) would entirely lose its point.

Education would be recognized for what it is, a spiritual work which concerns itself with the development of the human being in Body, Soul, and Spirit; but because in so doing it relates him in the fullest possible way to all the forces of the world around him, therefore also the most practical of arts in face of the conditions under which man lives. It would not then be a question of people being educated because they are unemployed; but because they are educated they would find a social way of being employed.

Children's Questions

FROM about the age of three children begin to be full of questions, and it is sometimes a matter of great difficulty for their parents to find the right answers to them. Every question demands its own individual answer, but it can be of great value in deciding what answer to give to have a clear idea of the kind of answer which is required. For it is altogether wrong to imagine that a little child should be given the same kind of answer as would be suitable for a child of eleven or twelve, but in a simpler form.

The range of questions which even young children will ask is truly astonishing. Indeed, in many respects the youngest children will often ask the most fundamental and far-reaching questions—on life and death, and life after death, and many subjects on which their parents have often resigned all hope of definite knowledge. A child of four (to quote an actual example) has asked these questions in the space of a few minutes:—

Do men die? Will you die? Shall I die? What do the angels say to you? Are angels shy? Who made God? Do you like God? When you die do you come alive again?

It must come as something of a shock to little children if parents declare themselves unable to answer questions fundamental to a knowledge of human life, and the questions of children must be a challenge to many parents to carry their thinking to the point of becoming clear and certain on many things which they are often content to leave unsettled.

There are two things, however, to be noticed about the questions of little children; they will often ask question after question in rapid succession, as though it were not so much information they were seeking, as the satisfaction of hearing the answering voice; and they will listen with more pleasure to an imperfect answer which is spoken with love and warmth in the voice, than to a complete and final reply given in a matter-of-fact tone. It is, indeed, to a large extent true that when little children pour out their endless questions they are seeking something much deeper than the mere satisfaction of curiosity; they are seeking to bring around them the living tones of the human voice. For the voices which they hear do not remain arrested in their consciousness, as is the case with adults, but penetrate even to those deep unconscious processes which take place in the building up of the physical body. Indeed Rudolf Steiner has shown the exact connections of the sounds of the alphabet with the formation of the different organs of the body; and hence it is that Eurhythmics, which expresses the various sounds of language and music in movements of the limbs, is not only an art, but can be used as a means of healing.

It is, therefore, just as much a matter of *how* you answer little children's questions as of *what* you answer. Pure full tones of speech (and modern voices, especially those of intellectual people, are often terribly clipped and dry) not only give a child a feeling of blessing, but help him to form his bodily strength for later life. A child is first nourished by his mother-milk, and then by his mother-tongue.

But as a guide to what kind of answers little children need, it is often to be noticed that a child will supply the answer to his own questions, and not infrequently reject the one given by the adult for another of his own invention. Such answers which children give to themselves as a rule are much more full of fantasy than those which an adult would supply. A child asks: Why does the sun take the water up into the sky? and then adds: Is it for the angels to drink? Or seeing a piece of wire-netting over the funnel of a steam-roller, he asks: Why do they put that netting on it? but immediately adds: It must be to keep the birds from building their nests there.

It is not easy for an adult to copy this wonderful power of fantasy, and a certain sense of intellectual truth may often stand in the way. But it is always good to remember that what little children need is a certain living fantasy in the answers they receive. To offer them logical explanations (however true to a scientific mind) is to give them a stone when they ask for bread.

Sometimes little children's questions arise plainly from their desire to unite themselves with words to the objects around them. A child sees a caterpillar for the first time, and asks: "What is that?" "A caterpillar." "What is a caterpillar?" But what he wants from the second question is not a definition of a caterpillar in ideas, but the joyous affirmation of the reality before him; "*That* is a caterpillar." "A Spae-woman lives by telling people their fortunes and interpreting their dreams," says the *King of Ireland's Son*, "that is why she is called a Spae-woman."

When children have passed the age of six or seven they naturally need much more connected answers to their questions than when they were younger. They wait more consciously for the reply, instead of living in the speech which is the answer. It is at this age, for instance, that children will ask many questions about the heavenly bodies, the nature of the sun and stars, the creation of the world, etc. And ready to supply the answer are numerous Children's Encyclopædias, Newspapers, Science books, and what not, with beautiful diagrams of the Sun, a flaming ball on a black page, many times the size of the earth, or a man cut in half showing the heart like a pump, the lungs like a pair of bellows, the nervous system like a set of telegraph wires, etc. Whether or no these things are in any sense representations of the truth is not for the moment the question: though it is worth noticing that by the time scientific theories reach popular children's books they are often quite out of date even judged by their own standards.

There will be plenty of time for children to investigate scientific theories at a later age, when they can really understand some of the conceptions on which they are based. For these scientific conceptions arose only at a very definite point in human history, and the mind of a child is not to be compared to the wave of intellectual thinking which historically brought

them to birth. A child between seven and twelve or so has in him much more of the piety and luxuriant imagination of the Middle Ages. To him the stars are not vast spheres incredible millions of miles distant in space; he feels their clear shining beauty as something very close to him. The sun is not a huge stationary mass of burning gasses; its rising each day fills him with a wonderful feeling of joy and thankfulness. The pictures of the heavenly bodies in mythologies are far truer to children than the distances and dimensions of modern astronomy. The Norse people said that wolves swallowed up the sun at the time of an eclipse, and to a child, who has a fine sense of the *devouring* quality of darkness, the nature of an eclipse is much better expressed by such an image than by a diagram of revolving shadows. For in an eclipse it is truly *as though* the wolves devoured the sun, and that "as though" is, after all, the furthest claim made by the true scientist. Newton did not say that the planets are attracted to the earth by gravity; but that they move *as though* they were so attracted, and it is not his fault that men have made a dogma of a hypothesis.

It is, in fact, of real importance not to give a child scientific conceptions on these subjects too soon. They tend to destroy the vivid feeling and imagination proper to this age; and, because they are received before the child has developed the power of following the thoughts on which they are based, they become matters of faith instead of matters of knowledge. Very few people in their adult years have even the will to investigate the mathematics on which is based the Newtonian planetary system or modern atomic theories. In a sense a scientific age is the most credulous of all ages. A thousand years ago a man could at least say: "I see the sun move with my own eyes"; but to-day many a man has to say: "Somebody proved a long time ago that the sun stands still. I forget exactly who it was, and I don't know how he proved it, but it's a fact all the same."

When children begin at this age to ask, How a thing is made? it is worth while considering how much of the true explanation has real meaning for them. There are children's books to describe how everything is made, but from such books children often get a very superficial, it may almost be said glib, impression of the work men have to do in the world. Such works are generally illustrated with photographs which give children a

very easy picture of various processes, but very little feeling for the real conditions under which the work is done. A few flashlight pictures of miners hacking at a seam, together with a section of a mine with the cage descending, and a child will soon think he knows all about a coal-mine, and turn to the next page to discover how a gramophone works, or what the Great Wall of China looks like. But there is something extraordinarily superficial, muddled, and uncreative about such a way of acquiring information; it is really far better for children to make their own pictures in their mind's eye from living in descriptions they hear of the intense silence under the ground, of men walking to their work for miles in galleries where they cannot go upright, of the dripping of water, etc., etc. In short, they should have some such picture of the inwards of the earth as George Macdonald gives of the interior of a mountain at the beginning of the *Princess and Curdie*. And, above all, the mine should not be an isolated fact, but a knowledge of mining should come as part of the children's general thoughts at the time, in some connection with chemistry, perhaps, or history or geology.

One of the worst results of children's books of the "How it Works" type is that a child will often collect an extraordinary amount of theoretical information and forget to observe things which come within his own ken. Many children can describe the solar system, but do not know where the full moon rises, or what planets are in the sky. They know a lot about the assembling of a motor-car, but are very vague as to how butter or cheese or soap is made. It is always best to try to keep younger children's questions as to how things are made to those objects which they can really understand and observe, perhaps by themselves making them. Generally speaking, it is much easier to impart information to children too early than tactfully to withhold it until a better season.

But a certain reticence in answering children's questions is of great help in keeping the questioning faculty alive. For it is a sad fact that the power of asking questions only too often fades away as children grow older. It is perhaps a test of whether children's questions have been answered rightly in their younger years to see how profound are the questions they ask when they are older, and if they are readily satisfied with

the answers. For by the time they reach a more intellectual understanding towards the age of fourteen they should have a strong desire to probe every question in life to the bottom, and not be lightly satisfied by theory without knowledge. For children of this age there is a deep meaning in that part of the story of Parsifal where, as a young man, he first sees the wounded Knight, but does not ask of him the question he should. Many of the questions which children should have in their hearts at this age will indeed only be answered by life itself. They stand in the threshold of life, and life will answer them; but only if they put to life the right questions.

A. C. HARWOOD.

First Lessons in Physiology

I N the Nature Study of their early School years the children hear much about the kingdoms of Nature, but in a certain definite order. First, at about the age of nine, begins the study of man himself, in connection with the forms of the animal kingdom, then the children hear about the animals themselves, then the plant kingdom, and finally the minerals. The reason for this development of the subjects is that the growing child is connected differently with his bodily processes at different ages, and there should always be a correspondence between the subjects a child is taught and the state of his development. After birth the child's soul and spirit descend further and further into connection with his body, till at about the age of twelve his life unites itself firmly with the hardest part of the body—the skeleton. It is at this time that the mineral world is introduced into the lessons, because the minerals on the earth's crust correspond to the bones in our body. But after studying various minerals, the children return again in their Nature Study to the consideration of man, for it is very beneficial to bring before them certain facts of physiology and hygiene at this stage. If what they are thinking about consciously in their lessons corresponds to what they are experiencing subconsciously in a dream-like way, they will be helped to unite more surely and firmly with the body that is the foundation for their physical life.

There is another advantage in introducing the subject at this age. Before they have reached puberty children are less self-conscious, and can regard the facts of hygiene and physiology from a more objective standpoint. For before puberty the soul of the child is still closely involved in the physiological processes of its own body, whereas afterwards it is, in a sense, released and he becomes more self-conscious about them. It can be of the greatest service to children to learn a little physiology while they can still treat the subject quite objectively.

What will help them, however, is not a mass of physiological and anatomical detail, but a living picture of the harmonic interplay of forces in the human body; not a heap of building stones, but a building *plan*. They should come to look upon the body as a work of art, the expression of man's spiritual faculties.

One approach to such a course of physiology is to lead the thoughts of the children back to their very earliest recollections, and thence to the realization that twelve or thirteen years ago they were not in the world at all. No doubt they were looking down on the earth to which they were soon to descend, looking especially to the parents who were to make it possible for them to have a physical body, for without one they could not live upon the earth. When the actual moment for birth into this world came, the soul and spirit entered into the little body it had been forming inside the mother organism, and the first thing that happened when the soul and spirit entered was that the body began to breathe. But the newly-arrived soul has to learn how to use its lungs, and the breathing is not very regular at first. It has to learn how to *use* the body, but at the same time it has to build it up to make it suit its needs. With a new-born baby the movements of the limbs do not express its soul life. It moves its hands and feet indiscriminately, without definite purpose. Nor do the eyes focus properly at first. The children will think of many things that their little brothers and sisters had to learn to do. They had to raise themselves to the upright posture which man alone enjoys; they had to learn to walk, to speak, to think.

Before passing on to the manner in which the human soul builds up its body, the children must discover that the world around them consists of solids, fluids, gases, and warmth

(the Earth, Water, Air, and Fire of the Ancients). These four elements are found again in their own bodies. The skeleton is the firm foundation, and is to the body what the rocks and mountains are to the earth. These were the last to be formed in the development of the earth, and the bones are the last to form in the human body. A new-born baby has hardly any real bones, only cartilage that is later changed into bone. On the earth's surface there is more water than land, and in our bodies there is more fluid than solid. The air we breathe, filled with sun light and sun warmth, is taken to every part of our bodies. Our bodily warmth depends upon the stream of our blood.

Thus the substances of our human body may be shown to resemble the substances found in the outer world. What of its form? The human spirit thinks, feels, and acts, therefore the body is also of a threefold nature. For thinking quiet is necessary, and our thinking instrument, the brain, is enclosed in a bony casket where it is at rest. All rigid forms and hard substances belong to the head system. In great contrast to this head system is the digestive tract and the limbs, for here there is continual movement and changing of form. But between the head and the abdomen is another system of organs, and in the thorax we find neither the immobile and rigid nature of the head system, nor the dynamic energy and turmoil of the metabolic and limb system. There is, instead, the rhythmic breathing in and out of the lungs, and the steady beat of the heart. This rhythmic system keeps a balance between the other two, and it is interesting for the children to discover some of the ways in which this balance shows itself. The Metabolic System, which is nearest to the earth, takes in solids and liquids; the Rhythmic System air; and the Head System light, sound, and colour.

This threefold nature of the body is an expression of the threefold nature of the soul. The head allows itself to be carried tranquilly through the world, for quiet is necessary for thinking. In the breast is the feeling heart, and it is here also that we free ourselves of the oppressive air coming from the rest of the body, and refresh ourselves with fresh air from the atmosphere. Our will expresses itself through our muscles and our limbs; our feet must carry us over the world, and with our hands we must transform the world. The organs of digestion,

which are closely allied to the limb system, break down and build up anew the substances we take in from the outer world.

When turning from these general pictures of man's bodily relation to the earth, on which he lives, to describe the structure of the body in more detail, it is well to avoid showing children of this age pictures from physiological plates and atlases, because it is above all the *living processes* they should grasp. Instead of fixing the attention on the actual visible organs a conception of the interplay of forces concentrated behind each organ, should be aimed at. Pictures of the heart, lungs, stomach, etc., give an impression of something static, with a fixed form, whereas in reality the organs are pulsating with life and movement. Only the bones have sharply defined contours, and these are clothed with muscle during life. Therefore it is more helpful to show the children some simple sketch or diagram than a beautifully prepared coloured plate of the internal organs.

When describing the various stages of digestion, the children cannot fail to be impressed by a description of the manifold processes that each piece of food must undergo before it can be turned into flesh and blood. Not until the substance we take in from the outer world has been utterly deprived of its own properties can it receive the impress of the human Ego and be incorporated. The fruit that has ripened in the light and warmth of the sun serves as nourishment for man. As he breaks down the material substance of the fruit, the forces of heat and light are released again and enter into man. Only substances that have these life forces* in them can serve as nourishment to man or beast. Light and heat are cosmic forces coming from the sun, and the children should feel reverence for the forces that come to them with their food. Meals could be veritable "Festivals of Incorporation."

When speaking of the body generally we regard blood as a fluid, but when looking at it closer we find that it is composed of all the elements of Earth, Water, Air, and Fire. The corpuscles are the solid constituents; the plasma the fluid; it carries the fresh air to the rest of the body from the lungs, and bears away waste gases; the warmth of the blood maintains an almost even temperature in the body, whether we

* The name vitamin has been given by modern scientists to certain manifestations of these life forces.

are at the North Pole or the Equator. Our blood is only really alive while it is flowing in our bodies; when it flows out of the body in wounds it changes immediately. But even in our bodies the blood is continually dying and being created anew. This "very special fluid," the blood, is so fine and delicate that it responds to our emotions. When we feel shame it rushes to the surface, and when we are excited it flows more quickly through our body. When we feel fear it withdraws to the deeper vessels, and shock can make it move so slowly that the pulse will be imperceptible.

The blood flows into our muscles, and the muscles respond, not to our feelings, but to our Will. By controlling our wonderful system of muscles we are enabled to work in the world, and to be of service to the world. We do not know *how* our muscles respond to our will; we cannot follow consciously the processes that result in the simplest movement even of our voluntary muscles, but we can study their structure and love them for the infinite variety of work of which they are capable. Through our muscles invisible inner movement can become visible outer movement. Like the blood, the muscles are not overcome by earthly gravity, but help to raise man off the ground and keep him in his upright position.

With our bones it is otherwise, they are, in a sense, dead, and they can only be moved by muscles. Here gravity rules, for the bones have absorbed earthly mineral salts. But the children should be shown how beautifully formed and proportioned the skeleton is. Its architecture may well be called "frozen music." Compare the bones of the foot with those of the human hand, which is freed from the earth. The foot is perfectly constructed for its special requirements as a support to the body, but the bones of the hand are so made that man may become creative as an artist or technician in any field of work that will serve his fellow-men. The threefold nature of the skeleton is very marked; the head is spherical, enclosing the organs within it, the ribs are rounded, forming a strong framework with the organs inside, but whereas those nearest the head meet, forming a circle, those nearest the metabolic system open out more and more, and the last two are too short to go right round. The bones of the limbs enclose nothing, but act as supports, and are surrounded by muscles.

Many practical details about diet and health can be brought to the children during this course of study which may have a very beneficial effect on their lives. But there is one other aspect of equal importance which may affect them even more profoundly. It was one of the great tasks of Rudolf Steiner to show in many detailed ways the connections which bind together the human being—in Body, Soul, and Spirit—with the Universe which surrounds him, so that a man need no longer feel himself alone in an alien and unfriendly Universe, but rather that cosmic forces are at every moment sustaining and cherishing him. One such connection between Man and the Universe, which the children should know as one of the facts of experience, is a certain numerical correspondence between the rhythmical movements of the sun in the cosmos, and of the breathing powers in man. The sun, in its yearly course through the circle of the Zodiac, is at the Vernal point on the 21st of March each year. The Vernal point, however, is not a fixed spot, but advances a little each year, and it actually takes the sun 25,920 years (a Platonic Year) to reach the same spot again on the 21st of March. The rate of healthy breathing in man (eighteen times a minute) is also 25,920 times in a single day, the same rhythmical law which covers such vast stretches of space and time in the relation of the sun to the fixed stars appearing also in the daily life of man. It cannot fail to fill a man with awe and reverence to realize that the number that governs the movements of the heavenly bodies is the same as that which rules in every breath by which he lives.

M. SERGEANT.

Childhood, Manhood, and Old Age

It is a popular method among scientists of all kinds to summarize the result of their investigations by means of a graph. This method is perhaps the last attenuated remnant of the days when men conceived reality in the form of pictures rather than of facts, but at the same time its prevalence is a tribute to the growing need of humanity to think of facts once more in a pictorial form. Let us suppose that a man is called upon to draw the graph of a normal human life. In what shape will it appear?

The human life takes place in time, and the picture which it presents will naturally vary with the varying conception of the medium in which it exists. At first sight it might seem that time is as constant a medium as can be imagined, but it is probable that a great change has come over man's conception of time in recent ages—especially since the invention of the clock. The shepherd who tells the time of day by gazing at the sun or stars, or even by feeling the different influences of morning, noon, and evening, experiences time as filled with living presences; the man who glances at the hands of the clock sees time recorded as a process devoid of content by a spatial measurement. Time has, indeed, become so much a matter of spatial measurement, that it has become very difficult for modern minds to grasp the idea of it as a vital process. Yet if one thinks clearly about any living organism, it will become apparent that there are other forces besides purely physical and spatial ones which maintain it in its form. If an organism dies, the purely physical and spatial entity remains, but the body none the less disintegrates. The plant is an organism, and it is in the plant kingdom that the living time body is manifested in the most striking manner. A plant can hardly be said at any particular moment to be a plant, for it only manifests one of its divers forms at a time. It is only the plant which develops in time from seed to leaf, and leaf to flower, and flower to fruit that can truly be called the plant. The animal and human kingdoms possess this time-body also, though the presence of other powers makes these kingdoms less noticeably rhythmical in their nature than the plant. But in these kingdoms, too, the time-body exists not as an abstraction, but as a living body of formative forces, which brings about certain natural and rhythmical developments.

If a graph of a human life be drawn in clock time it will be a continuous straight line; if it be drawn in human experience it will be a circle, or some figure whose end approaches the place of its origin. For it is more than a phrase to describe old age as a "second childhood." The end of life is intimately bound up with the beginning, as is clearly shown by the vivid memory of their childhood often developed by old people, who, in exceptional cases, will even imagine

themselves living in the scenes of their childhood, and speak of incidents which they had entirely forgotten during the middle years of their life.

This connection between childhood and old age was probably more comprehensible in earlier ages than it is now. For one thing, earlier peoples, looking upon life with a simpler and more artistic eye, conceived it as having a certain natural span in which definite developments took place. The soul not only descended from a spiritual world at birth and entered during childhood into a closer and closer connection with the body, but in old age a connection with the spiritual world was made once more, a connection which was the natural herald of the final return to the spirit in death. Hence, whereas a modern man thinks of life as enjoying a somewhat arbitrary length, and even seeks for means of prolonging it, to earlier peoples there was a normal human life which had its definite season no less than plants and flowers. Three score years and ten is the biblical life of man, and there is surely a wonderful picture of the human soul, returning at death and in sleep to the spiritual world whence it came, in one of our oldest English rhymes. For Babylon or Currin-glass, or whatever city is named in any particular version, must be taken as the type of the eternal City of God.

How many miles to Babylon?
Three score and ten.
Can I get there by candle-light?
Ay, and back again.

In all earlier civilizations old age was naturally regarded as bringing with it a certain wisdom; the patriarch was the author of counsel, and the assembly of "old men" became naturally one of the directing forces of human society. This figure of the old man has been much ridiculed by modern authors—particularly Mr. H. G. Wells—in whose view antiquity would appear a place peopled by credulous simpletons as compared with the enlightened epoch which they themselves adorn. But when it was believed that by a natural law of human time—if such a phrase may be used—a certain spiritual wisdom manifested itself to man in old age, the connection between the beginning and end of life becomes

more apparent. For if old age is the time of a spiritual wisdom become personal, childhood is the time of a spiritual wisdom which is still universal. A child may not act wisely on any special occasion of his own life, but the wisdom with which in the first three years of life he learns to walk, to speak, and to think is unparalleled at any other time of life. Anyone will surely agree with this judgment of Rudolf Steiner, who has watched a little child learning the first marvellous feat of balance, or forming his first connected sentences, or bringing first a stool and then a chair to reach for a toy in a place which has proved too high for his reach—accomplishing, in fact, by a divine gift of nature all those acts of a spiritual intelligence which experimental psychologists spend so many patient years trying to induce in rats and mice and black beetles.

To try to observe or develop such symptoms of a personal intelligence in an animal is to ignore an essential difference between man and the animal. Men do, indeed, share a most important attribute with animals. They have developed a step beyond the rhythmical life-processes of the plant, and as well as a time-body they both possess a consciousness-body, which has organized a system of nerves into the physical and time-body. But anyone who observes the *course of life* in man and the animal will observe a most important difference in the development of the two. When the animal emerges from its cub-hood and attains the faculty of reproduction, it arrives at one bound, not merely at maturity but at old age.* For although the working of the reproductive forces, which are a social characteristic, keep up an illusion of youth, the animal becomes at this age suddenly completed, contained in itself, even ossified. Anyone who has watched the kitten die into the cat will appreciate the nature of this sudden change from youthfulness to a set old age. With man, however, a period intervenes between childhood and old age, the period of manhood, during which the human ego, maintaining itself in a state of balance between childhood and old age, can work freely through all the powers of the soul. In order that the ego of man may enjoy those powers to the full, however, two things are necessary. The vegetative plant-

* See Rudolf Steiner's *Lectures to Teachers*, p. 25.

like force of childhood must not play into middle life, nor must the hardening, animal-like tendency of old age throw its shadow before it. A man in whom either of these two things happens, will not be able to bring the powers of his soul to their full fruition, and in abnormal cases even pathological characteristics will appear in later life. The normal is sometimes best understood from the abnormal, and it was perhaps for this reason that Rudolf Steiner, in discussing the relationships of childhood, manhood, and old age, dealt with certain pathological features which may arise in these cases.

If the ageing process comes prematurely, and the whole bodily system (especially the head) becomes ossified too soon, certain animal-like instincts which should be kept back by the human ego manifest themselves. Men in whom this happens will develop extraordinary powers of reading thoughts at a distance (a well-known English professor gave not long since a demonstration of his abilities in this direction), and prophetic feelings for coming catastrophes similar to the instincts by which animals foretell eruptions and earthquakes, or to the cosmic wisdom of birds of passage. The possession of such abilities in man, however, is not a matter for pride; it is merely a sign that the animal forces of old age have overtaken a man too early.

If, on the other hand, the plant-like forces of childhood are carried into maturity an altogether different condition will result. A child's sense impressions are not the same as those of the adult; with the adult, impressions of sense go no further than the sphere of consciousness; with the child, especially the very young child, they enter into the deep unconscious processes of the assimilation and digestion of food, and of the whole metabolic system. If this process, natural to childhood, is not transformed, but survives into manhood, a man's affections and interests may become unhealthily bound up with his physical body. If he lose a favourite dog, or cat, or parrot he may suddenly fall seriously ill, and unless a new object of affection can be found, he may become permanently morose and hypochondriacal. It is in such cases that psycho-analysts are sometimes able to effect cures by bringing—through interpretation of dreams, the study of reactions, etc.—the unconscious cause of the malady

into consciousness. But the sphere which they investigate is not, as they sometimes claim, the hidden region of the soul, but that of organic processes which have wrongly intruded from childhood into maturity.

It is not in such exceptional cases only, however, that a man may suffer in the middle period of manhood from the encroachments of childhood and old age. Even if the condition of the child does not remain in its physical characteristics, it may continue as a state of the mind and soul. Many men never seem to attain to the power of transforming childhood into maturity. They remain locked in their own boyhood, and the interests of their schooldays remain their paramount attraction to the end of their days. Such a man can only be compared to a plant which remains always in the stage of the leaf, and never succeeds in metamorphosing the leaf into the flower. On the other hand, it is only too apparent in how many men the hardening process of old age sets in too early. To-day comparatively few people are able to extend the sphere of their interests after the age of thirty or so, still less can they undertake a new form of thinking which departs from the type of thought in which they have been bred. Maturity and the approach of old age do not bring an extension of faculties, but only a hardening in existing pre-occupations. Old age—says Mr. Shaw—brings golf instead of wisdom.

Education, however, and school-life can help a man to develop all the powers of his soul, both in manhood and old age. Yet to understand fully how this can happen requires just such an exercise in apprehending new principles in thinking as present such difficulties to the ordinary adult mind. It is no less than to conceive that in a living organism, having its existence in time, a smaller period of life may reflect its characteristics into a longer period—that in fact the period of childhood, though in its essence it be pure childhood, may yet contain in it something which is like a reflection and a foreshadowing of the powers and periods both of maturity and old age. If a man lives through his childhood in the right way, the seeds which are then cherished in him may bear their fruit, not only in early manhood, but into the furthest old age, the smaller period of childhood finding the

echo of its harmony in the whole cycle of life. But to develop a harmony of life it is first necessary to understand the rhythmical sequence of the different periods of life. Many historians to-day are seeking to understand history as the rhythmical sequence of certain natural developments in civilization; Rudolf Steiner alone has proclaimed the rhythmical law which underlies the development of the individual life as well as human civilization as a whole.

It is clear from many of their institutions that the older peoples of the earth recognized a natural growth into new powers with the development of life. Children were even called by different names as they attained different ages; a man became eligible for initiation into this or that of the Mysteries at different periods of life; many of the offices of state or priesthood could only be held by those who had attained a certain age. To-day it is fairly easy for people to recognize a rhythm of seven years in the period of childhood. The change of teeth in the seventh year, and the fact of puberty about the fourteenth, are visible testimony to the important changes which take place at these ages; the tradition of "coming of age" also at twenty-one is still sufficiently strong to call for some recognition of the full birth of the powers of the ego at this time, though the physical changes are not so apparent as at seven and fourteen. Beyond this time, however, few people would recognize the same rhythm extended into later life. And for this there is perhaps an adequate reason.

Man in his evolution must be conceived as a being who has stepped out of a state of instinctive union with the powers of Nature into one of conscious independence of Nature—and even hostility to her—through the powers of his individual ego. This gradual attainment of independence can be characterized in very many ways, but in one respect which bears strongly on the development of the individual life, Dr. Steiner has shown the great change which has come over the relation of man to Nature. Mankind is still endowed by Nature in his childhood with the gift of developing an extraordinary number of faculties without any conscious effort of his own. From the time when he learns to walk to when he begins to use his judgment, and even later, he develops

many powers without any direct help from his education (it may sometimes be said in spite of his education). This capacity for a natural spiritual growth, which will still carry a man well into the fourth seven-year epoch of his life, used in earlier times to carry him very much further, so that wisdom grew in man in his maturity in something of the same way it grows in the little child to-day. But since the ancient Indian epoch of history—the time to which the Vedas and Upanishads look back—this capacity for a natural spiritual growth has continually retreated; and to-day, Dr. Steiner has said, there are few men of whom it can be said, if their lives be attentively examined, that they have grown in soul and spirit beyond their twenty-sixth year. There are, of course, exceptions, men who have achieved through the powers of their own ego that continuance of spiritual development which was once the gift of Nature, and in such cases especially it is often of great interest to study the moments at which the important developments of their lives took place. In all old myths and fairy stories, and everywhere where an older spiritual knowledge is presented in the form of pictures, some traces of knowledge of these periods of life are to be found. Shakespeare's *Seven Ages of Man*, which are sometimes regarded as rather nonsensical clap-trap, are obviously drawn from some old pictorial tradition, or are taken from an instinctive feeling for the quality of the different epochs of life. For up to the fifth epoch, that is to say that beginning after the twenty-eighth year, they present very interesting pictures of the periods of life. From the ordinary point of view there certainly seems not much sense in saying that a man is first a feeding baby, then a schoolboy, then a lover, then a soldier, then a justice, and then degenerates into old age. But if the figures of the justice, the soldier, etc., be taken as pictures of the development of man at different ages they become full of interest. For it is just that principle of the transformation of one state into another implied in such a pictorial way of speaking of the stages of life that lies at the base of Rudolf Steiner's art of education. In the first seven years of life the child is essentially the feeding child; even the sense impressions from his surroundings enter into the process of building up his own individual physical body,

and the art of the teacher and all who have charge of children at this age is to surround them with an environment which will truly nourish them in soul and body. Little children instinctively look upon everything around them as good, and if the powers of the will, so prominent in these early years of life, are given free play in the right surroundings, a child can bring from this age not only a strong will, but, in association with it, a natural piety and feeling for the holiness of the world around them. Dr. Steiner once said that if a man were to take all his powers from this early age into later life, he would be a religious genius. For to a religious genius all things are as holy as they are to the little child.

But by the seventh year, the coming of the second teeth shows that the first process of building up the body is completed, and after this time it would be quite wrong for the teacher to depend on the child's free will in imitating what is around him. The children develop a natural desire for authority, together with wonderful powers of imagination and artistic sense. This second seven years of life is essentially the age of the schoolboy, when children expect to receive everything from their teachers, and they, if they are wise, will give their teaching in an artistic way, which will keep alive that fresh imagination and love of beauty. For from this age children can bring into later life all that creative power, which, in whatever walk of life it be exercised, has always something of the artist in it. Indeed, it is not possible altogether to prevent children from being imaginative at this age. For the powers of imagination arise in reality through the transformation to a more spiritual function of those forces which build up the body in the first years of life. The teacher cannot prevent this transformation and the luxuriant fancy which follows on it, but by being himself imaginative, he may help it to take place in the fullest way, or by being intellectual he may check it, so that the growth forces remain too strongly connected with the bodily processes, with the possible consequences which have already been described.

The opposite danger, if young children are taught intellectually, is that the hardening forces of old age will make their appearance too soon. Children do not naturally develop the power of logical thinking and individual judgment till the

time of puberty, but intellectual teaching will hasten that development, and thus make the children much more conscious than they should be at the change of puberty, often with harmful effects. What is it which brings about this change of puberty? It is nothing else than that the body of consciousness (or astral body) becomes freed, in the same way as the body of the growth forces was freed at the change of teeth. It is the astral body which organizes the nervous system in the physical organism, and which man shares with the animals. But the substance of the nerves has always the tendency to ossify, to become bone, and hence it is that if the consciousness dependent on that system is awakened too early, something of the hardening, the animal-like character of old age plays too strongly into childhood, and from there carries the tendencies to premature old age into middle life.

Nor does the power of judgment, which wakens at puberty, manifest in the calm decided fashion of later life. Rather will children be found critical, extravagant, enthusiastic first for this and then for that, but this turmoil of feeling—for which the figure of the Lover is a fitting emblem—is in a sense but a sign of their desire for the truth, and at this age, above all others, they must be guided by their own inherent seeking for wisdom.

To the teacher who has an artistic comprehension of the periods of childhood, then the task of education is to cherish the powers of each age and bring them as holy gifts to the man who reaches at twenty-one the full powers of his ego—the bearer of the qualities expressed in the figure of the soldier.* What are these gifts? They are the gifts with which Shakespeare has endowed his Sylvia—the type of the perfection of the human soul.

Who is Sylvia? What is she,
That all our swains commend her?
Holy, Fair, and Wise is she,
The Heavens such grace did lend her,
That she might admired be.

To bring Holiness, Beauty, and Wisdom from childhood is right education, and means for life as a whole the development of all the powers of childhood, manhood, and old age.

* Students of Dr. Steiner's work will recognize that the fifth period of human life corresponds to that historical epoch in which the idea of Justice is born.

An Assembly at the Rudolf Steiner Hall

THE name of Rudolf Steiner in its connection with education is beginning to be widely known. It is not only in this country that schools have been founded with a view to putting into practice the guiding lines laid down by him for the art of educating children; in Switzerland, in Holland, in Germany and Austria—indeed, in most of the countries of Europe, and in America—such schools are now to be found, and in each and all of them the children are being educated in a quite special way.

One of the best means of gaining some impression of this new education is to take every available opportunity of seeing the work of the children of such schools, and, not less interesting, of seeing the children themselves. A specially good opportunity occurred on March 21st, when an "Assembly" of the children of the New School, Streatham Hill, was given at the Rudolf Steiner Hall. This performance, which was mainly carried out by the older children of the school, consisted of short plays in English, French, and German, Choral Recitations, Gymnastics and Eurhythm.

Perhaps the first impression made on the onlooker is the fact that the children themselves are convinced of the truth and value of what they are doing, and another impression is that they certainly are most excellently taught. For instance, the same children spoke in three languages—English, French, and German—and displayed a real feeling for the essential characteristics of these languages. The first item on the programme was a scene from *The Tempest*, in which acting was combined with Eurhythm. How different this was in mood and gesture from the scenes taken from *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* by Molière! And again the little German play, although so simple, was quite in the character of Grimm.

The gymnastic display, which was accompanied by a few explanatory words, was one of the most interesting features of the afternoon. These exercises are quite different from anything ordinarily known as gymnastics; they are not only designed with a view to developing the children physically, but their aim is also to make the children conscious of the different directions of space, to make them able to move

consciously in the world of space. The bigger boys and girls took part together in these exercises, and it was a real pleasure to see their harmonious and disciplined movements.

Eurhythm always forms part of such a performance, for this subject is taught in all the Rudolf Steiner Schools. Both boys and girls do Eurhythm throughout the whole course of their school life. Here again we have movement in the realm of space, but these movements must correspond to some sound, either of speech or music. Eurhythm was described by Rudolf Steiner as "Visible Speech and Song," and the children recognize the underlying truth of this, and make the movements with pleasure and conviction. At this Assembly a series of preparatory Staff Exercises were shown by a group of younger children, and later the older children showed both poems and music with a simplicity and earnestness which clearly showed what an impression this art of Eurhythm has made upon them.

Chorus speaking also is specially developed in these Schools, with admirable result, as anyone who heard the recitation of the German poem by Albert Steffen and Spencer's Sonnet on Easter will readily agree.

So much for the actual work which was shown. With regard to the impression made by the children themselves, this was no less striking. In this age of artificiality it is rare to see growing girls free from mannerisms. And that these children are remarkably free was proved by the jarring note struck by the few affected movements which were noticeable during the course of the afternoon. On the whole the children looked natural and happy, equally so in their fancy dresses, their school jerseys, or their white Eurhythm frocks, and above all they were obviously intensely interested in what they were doing.

The Exhibition of painting, modelling, and handwork, which was on view in another room of the Rudolf Steiner Hall, was a revelation. It would be difficult to describe, for instance, the beauty of the paintings and crayon drawings. They are the visible results of imaginations, which have not been repressed and hindered as is too often the case, but developed and strengthened by every possible means. After such an afternoon, there is no room for doubt as to the value of this wonderful art of education, which has as its inspiration the teachings of Rudolf Steiner.

J. COMPTON-BURNETT.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY UNWIN BROTHERS LIMITED
LONDON AND WOKING

