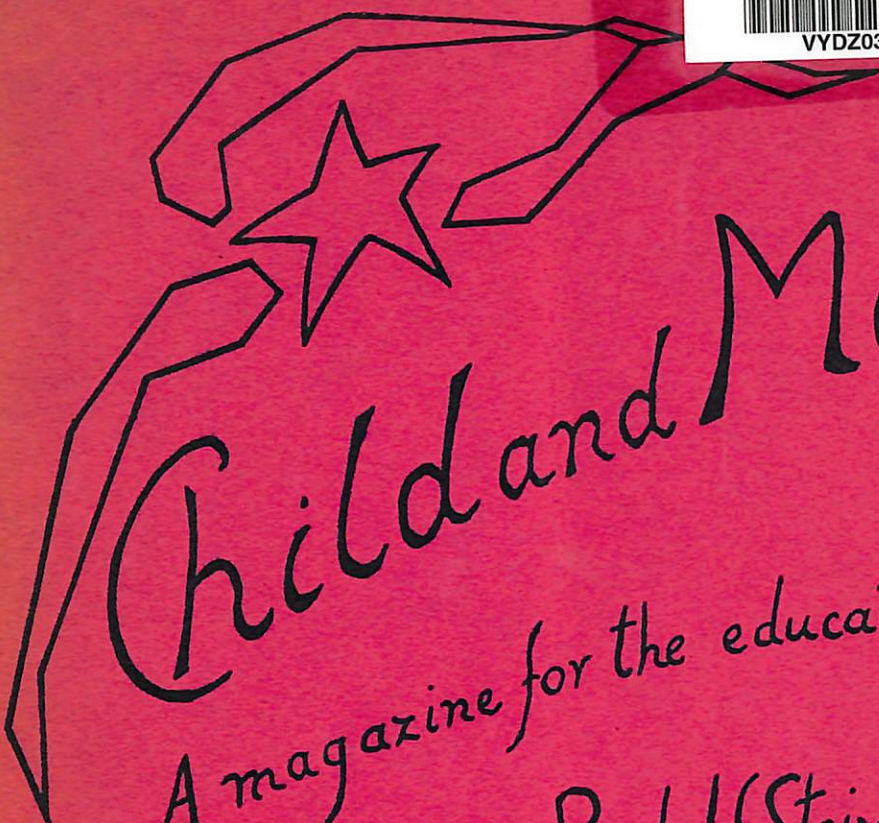


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Child and Man

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founded by Rudolf Steiner

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CHILD AND MAN

Edited by A. C. Harwood

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Editorial

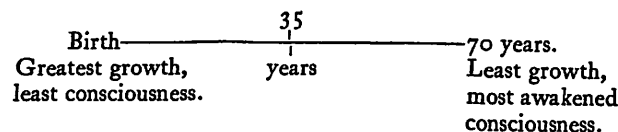
THE present number of CHILD AND MAN inaugurates a new policy—that of devoting a whole number to one particular aspect of the education founded by Rudolf Steiner. This new start is fittingly made with a number devoted to the age of the Nursery Class, in which all people concerned in education must be deeply interested because in it are laid the foundation of the child's knowledge, character, and capacities. In future numbers of the magazine from time to time will similarly be devoted to some special subject or aspect of the education.

Growth of Body and Growth of Mind

ONE can almost speak of growth of body *versus* growth of mind, for powers of the mind really only begin to unfold when some of the most vital processes of bodily growth have begun to slow down, and successive stages towards awakened consciousness are reached as certain parts of the bodily organism densify and complete some particular process of growth. The first few years of a child's life are, above all, devoted to bodily development. To quote one authority:* "The processes of growth which operate in the

* Report on Nursery Schools by the Board of Education (1931).

Suppose one takes the Biblical span of three-score years and ten as representing a normal lifetime, and divides this in two. During the first half life-forces prevail and the body increases in stature and strength—after thirty-five counter-forces prevail which eventually bring about death. From birth on these death-forces have been present, but during the years when growth was still vigorous they passed unnoticed. The following fact emerges: growth of body characterizes the early years of a man's life, and growth of mind the later years. (One may object that actually a man's mental state is often less vigorous at seventy than at thirty-five, and, unfortunately, that may be true of to-day. The causes, however, must be sought in early errors of education and other conditions of modern life prejudicial to health.)



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built up to form the brain do not further subdivide or even enlarge very much after birth—the enlargement of the brain after birth is due to the enlarging of non-nervous elements—makes it clear that even at birth itself certain vital elements of growth are withdrawing.

In drawing a line, therefore, to represent growth from birth (or conception) to death, one must make it descend, while an ascending line will represent consciousness and mental activity:



The realization of the fact that these two factors in human life do not run together, but in counter directions, has the greatest practical significance throughout the whole of life, but also a very special significance for all those responsible for children during the time which should be devoted to the upbuilding of the bodily organism. For undue mental stimulation can undoubtedly upset the delicate balance of these antagonistic forces on which depends the health of the body at all times. If this balance is upset during the time when the bodily organs are being developed, the result cannot help but be permanent, since it will be engraved in the physical structures themselves. Dr. Steiner has spoken in great detail of the fact that a man may be hindered from attaining his full faculties in later life through not being given the chance of building up his body rightly in the early years. Lack of understanding of the child's nature, and the failure to realize what is involved tend to curtail the period of early childhood, and hurry forward the time when the boy or girl begins to participate in the complexities of modern adult life.

Many pictures come to one's mind when contrasting the beginning of man's earthly life with the end of it; for instance, one is often moved to reverence the purity in the child's

nature, or be filled with awe at the boundless measure of their trust. Sometimes the "clouds of glory" enveloping young children draw very close. Many old people attain to a wisdom which gives them poise and peace, and win from their varied life-experiences a selflessness and insight which acts benignly on those around them. But it is helpful to regard the first seven years of life also from another point of view—to regard them as the first of the three great stages in man's development from birth to his coming of age at twenty-one. These three stages have so often been characterized in *CHILD AND MAN* that I need only allude to them very briefly here. Their recognition plays a very important part in the education inspired by Rudolf Steiner. The first period, from birth to the change of teeth, is the time particularly devoted to the development of the body; the time from the change of teeth to puberty is concerned with the unfolding of the soul life, and the period from puberty to about the age of twenty-one is the time when the spiritual activity of thinking becomes strengthened.

The first period of seven years is different from all subsequent periods insofar as the form as well as the substance of the human body is then changed, and the thoroughness of the change is outwardly recognizable in the phenomenon of the change of teeth. Since it is well established that it is during periods of greatest growth that most influence is exercised from without, quite a peculiar responsibility rests upon educators, i.e. parents and teachers, during the first stage of life. In the chapter on the influence of environment on growth in the Report on Nursery Schools already referred to, the following passage occurs: "External conditions do not act with equal intensity at all stages in the growth of a developing organism, but the effect of environment is more noticeable at the period when growth is more active." Dr. Steiner has shown how important are psychological as well as physical influences in the environment of the child. This responsibility is not therefore discharged when the physical needs of the child are provided for in the shape of fresh air and hygienic surroundings and scope for free activity, essential as these are; there still remains the need the child has for seeing actions that it is good for him to copy during this time when his imitative faculties are at their height—for seeing and hearing

things that will lay a firm foundation for his life of willing, feeling, and thinking later on.

A very important fact about the early part of man's life is that during the first seven years there is already a foreshadowing of the two subsequent stages. I would like to describe some of the ways in which a man's life up to his coming of age has a reflection in miniature in the first period, between birth and the change of teeth. This first period has already been characterized as being devoted to the body, a stage which finds its reflection in the years up to three; the second period, from the change of teeth to puberty, has been described as above all the time when the soul life unfolds, and this has its counterpart between three and five; the time between puberty and twenty-one, when one sees the spirit slowly rising from the depths and becoming more and more active in the spiritual sphere of thinking—this time is reflected in the life of the young child between five and seven.

		<i>Development in whole childhood</i>	<i>Development in first period</i>
Body		Birth to 7	Birth to 3
Soul		7 to 14	3 to 5
Spirit		14 to 21	5 to 7

Birth to Three Years

Although the whole of the first seven years is needed to elaborate the forms of the body, yet by far the greatest growth takes place in the first two and a half to three years, especially in the head. As far as the brain and nervous system is concerned, a certain stage of completion is then reached, so much so that we can speak of the child as having "learnt to think." The characteristic feature of the first period, then, is particularly emphasized in the first three years. The policy of non-interference applies emphatically to this time. Everyone knows the irreparable harm that can be done if the child is coerced into walking before he is ready for it. That the child be left free to develop at his own pace and along his own lines applies, of course, to the whole of the first stage. Dr. Steiner says that the child needs the love of those around him to help him in his

endeavours to walk upright; while learning to speak it is above all the trust in their hearts and words that will give him strength; when he is learning to think he requires clarity of thought in the minds of all those with whom he comes in contact.

Three to Five Years

The powers that unfold between three and five are powers of the soul as well as powers of the body. At three the child is often very passionate—what he wants he wants desperately, and the intensity of his emotions has not yet begun to be controlled by the power of thought. New interests, however, awaken for him every day, and he learns extraordinarily quickly how to adjust himself to outer life, if loving help is given him during his outbursts of temper. Sometimes one sees a child, hitherto a model of good behaviour because still enveloped in dreams, quite suddenly pierce through the mists that cling to him, and whereas before he did what he was shown almost inevitably, now he becomes so interested in doing all the wonderful things that occur to him from one moment to another that he no longer even hears what he is asked to do and fiercely resents interference. The power of rhythms, however, to which children become very susceptible, can now work harmonizingly, especially in the form of Eurhythmy. Rhythms of movement and speech and music are wonderfully blended in Dr. Steiner's art of Eurhythmy, and it is a blessing that it can be adapted for children even from the age of three. It is at this age that the first steps are taken which lead the human being towards the outside world away from his inner world of dreams. It is a matter of vital importance whether he is allowed to emerge gradually and in his own way, or whether his development is hindered and he is hurried into something less right for him by over-stimulating influences in his surroundings or the anxiety of those about him that he should begin to conform to grown-up standards of life. A normal child between three and five cannot boast of many social qualities; how should he? Must he not find himself before he can discover others? The incarnating being that was formerly living in spiritual spheres descended at birth into the depths of the bodily organism, where it had a tremendous task to fulfil.

What we see emerging round about three is only a dim shadow picture, by no means displaying the wisdom of the being who has been shaping the brain until it can become an instrument for his thought, who has raised the heavy plump little baby body until it can withstand the forces of gravity; who has mastered the intricacies of learning a language through the powers of imitation; who now makes use of the brain since he has learnt to think. It is for us to help this shadow picture to become a true picture, and not for us to attempt to impress other forms—above all, those arising from the mechanical side of our civilization—in the place of the true forms which are striving to unfold themselves.

Although even to the end of this period a child is by no means a social being, yet in comparison with the first three years other children mean a great deal to him. Needless to say it is a quarrelsome age—since the child is just beginning to realize his ego, but to the relief of all concerned, even the fiercest disputes are but momentary. Two children want the same toy at the same moment; if their shouts of “me want it” bring no result they become red in the face, and waste no more words but concentrate on the business in hand. Yet even then anything may create a diversion and avert bloodshed. The toy is then forgotten and they become wreathed in smiles, without a shade of a grudge against their antagonist.

The period we have been considering corresponds then to the school period that comes between the change of teeth and puberty, roughly from seven to fourteen years. This is not a period marked by rapid skeletal growth, but by more subtle growth processes. Perhaps I may call attention here to the growth curve given in the Report already referred to and quote from the text:

During the first year of post-natal life the babe grows rapidly, and this period may be called the *first springing-up period*. From one to five it grows more slowly and more steadily. This is the *first filling-out period*. From five to seven there is a *second springing-up period*. It is at this stage that the child rapidly increases in height, loses his milk dentition, and begins to cut his permanent teeth, and becomes thin and long in the leg. . . . At seven his head is almost as large as it ever will be. Between seven and eleven or twelve . . . occurs the *second filling-out period* . . . followed by a *third springing-up period* associated with puberty.

During the first three years the *head* had been growing very

rapidly; between three and five the rhythmic system had developed greater independence, and now one finds that the period from five to seven, which is a miniature foreshadowing of the period of adolescence, is characterized by rapid growth of the limbs just as is the bigger period between puberty and twenty-one, and at about five much cartilage becomes hardened into bony tissue.

Five to Seven Years

Between the ages of five and seven, as during the corresponding period from puberty to the coming of age, there is much skeletal growth. In both cases it is now the limbs that lengthen and harden. The chubby little girls and boys begin to lose their roundness, and as the limbs lengthen the body becomes leaner. Here one meets with another fact which has to be taken into account: while growth has been from the head downwards to the limbs, *activity* started in the limbs and then reached the head. Long before the child could think he was active in his limb system. Now, at five, he will sit quite still for a considerable time if he is absorbed in a story. Boys or girls over fourteen will voluntarily apply themselves to concentrated study. In both cases there is a great increase in their capacity for mental activity; in the child between five and seven it shows in his rich life of imagination and increased powers of memory, in the adolescent in his powers of abstract thought. Quite astonishing capacities for invention arise in a healthy child at about five; in his play, in his speech, in his drawings, wonderful new forces appear. To this is added a vivid memory, and as the memory becomes every day more capable, the first beginnings of discipline as such can be very gradually introduced. These dawning powers of memory must, however, in no wise be forced, but left entirely free until after the change of teeth, otherwise a strain will be put on the whole organism which will leave lasting results.

At twenty-one the young person takes over the guidance of his own life; at the change of teeth, which closes the period from five to seven, the human being takes over his own body in place of the inherited one, this being the first great step towards leading his own individual life.

GERTRUDE H. SARGEANT.

What we do in the Nursery Class

MANY people to-day concern themselves with the problems presented by children of pre-school age. Innumerable theories and ideas are discussed; a great deal of devoted work is done and many excellent observations are recorded. Yet as the individual teacher or parent stands before her child or children, she finds, generally speaking, that if only she could answer one question, many of her problems would be solved.

"What," she asks, "is the nature of this child and how can I help best to bring to birth his developing individuality?" Dr. Steiner, from his deep knowledge of human life on the earth, has helped us to answer this question.

He points out that the young child is "asleep," so far as consciousness is concerned, in his head and neural system and "awake" and exceedingly conscious in his limbs. At the same time, the bodily growth forces are most active in the head of a little child, while the limbs are soft and comparatively unformed. (An interesting fact in this connection is that the percentage which the brain contributes to the weight of the body in a man is 2·16, in a child 12·29. It has also been found that by about the age of two, the child's brain has attained 60 per cent of its adult size, and by the age of seven the size is practically that of an adult.) The child does not use his brain consciously as we do in order to express himself, because it is in the process of being formed. He does express himself in his limbs and movements.

Dr. Steiner also emphasizes the importance of the great imitative powers in children at this age. This imitation is there because the children do not, as yet, distinguish clearly between themselves and the world around them. Quite unconsciously, their attitude is one of reverent wonder. Their being flows out into the world, and, uncriticized, everything around them flows in and is echoed there. It has been expressed in this way, that the child, at this age, is a resonant instrument upon which the world plays.

Even when we have grasped these two fundamental principles of imitation and will-activity which run right through the early years, we still find very marked differences among

children in the Nursery Class according to age. Dr. Steiner says that the education of the little baby should consist principally in the self-education of those around him. It is our task in these years to make ourselves worthy of their unconscious imitation. From three to five, the blood circulation and breathing are beginning to develop more fully. Because these are rhythmic functions, the child loves repetitive games; it loves to repeat some simple action or to say the same words over and over again. In the fifth year the formative forces, having completed part of their work on the body, become released as vivid fancy: the child's games then pass from simple repetition to increasingly imaginative adventures. From now until the change of teeth at about the seventh year, the imagination is growing, and at the same time the child is becoming increasingly aware of the earth as his home. It is during this period, too, that the child gradually distinguishes the authoritative position of the adult. If his previous development has been harmonious, he now shows belief in adults and becomes consciously susceptible to guidance. His drawings begin to contain highly imaginative ideas, instead of being rhythmic scribbles whose only aim was the joy of making them.

The foregoing facts among others can help us to answer this question: "What is the nature of the child and how can I help best to bring to birth his developing individuality?" In our work at Michael Hall we bear these points in mind.

The main plan of the work in the Nursery Class can be described by saying that in the first part of the morning the teacher predominates and stands before the children, to awaken their consciousness, by giving them pictures of the world and of man in such a way that the children can take part actively in what is given them. The second part of the morning, on the other hand, consists of the children following, in a more unconscious way, their own impulses, in games and play.

Every morning, before the children come, the teacher of the Nursery Class and the helpers sit quietly together for a few minutes and think of the significance of their work.

As the children arrive, the next half an hour or so is devoted to taking off outdoor clothes, finding indoor shoes, and buttoning up overalls.

By the time the children have all arrived and become accustomed to each other, to the classroom, and to the teacher—with new children this takes some time—there is a circle of chairs ready and everyone sits down. There is generally a discussion as to who shall sit by whom, and many of the children eagerly try to tell the teacher and the other children something very important that has happened to them, such as "There is a yellow crocus in my garden and a one and another one and lots more," or "I've got a green 'bus at home," and so on.

After we have gathered in a circle, we say our morning prayer together. In simple words, we speak quietly of the love that there is in heaven and earth, in mother and father, in birds, beasts, and stones and in all loving people.

Story telling follows. For the younger children of three and four, it will be a short description of simple actions; for instance, one may describe a farmer going out to look at his growing wheat and the blue sky, and then going home again. For the little ones under five there need be no thread in the story. They are perfectly satisfied with isolated actions and they love to hear the names of things and rejoice in rich sounding words. The fantasy and imagination which develop in children of five and over can be fed and guided healthily by good fairy stories. Through these one can give the children, in a form which they can take, the whole story of man and his destiny on earth. This is another way in which the nursery class prepares the ground for the future, when the children will learn in detail the story of man in history, literature, and religion lessons.

The children have been sitting quietly listening to the story and are now ready for something more active. We usually follow the story-telling with the saying of short, simple poems accompanied by movements of the hands and feet. On other mornings we may have singing games in English, French, or German. Or again this time may be devoted to rhythmical movement to music.

The children have been moving freely and are now ready for a period of concentration, for the main occupation of the day. This can take different forms. It may be artistic work such as drawing, modelling, or painting; or it may be a

practical activity, such as cooking, gardening, or sewing; or it may take the form of watching a grown-up person do a piece of work: this for the child is as active an interest as doing the work himself. Whatever the work is, the teacher stands before the children and does the work herself, and then out of their powers of imitation, the children will want to do the same thing. This is the only healthy way of teaching children of this age. If this part of the morning is given in the right way, the children's chaotic will powers find an outlet which will become later the faculty of a firm and vigorous will. All the time that one is working with children under seven, one has to remind oneself again and again, that it is the physical organism one is helping to build up. It is not in the least important that the children should remember a certain number of French and German songs or that one should have adult standards in mind when looking at their drawings. It is important that the children are helped through their games and occupations to gain full powers over the faculties which later, at the right time, they can so easily use in learning to read and write and calculate.

After the main occupation of the day, preparations are made for lunch. In saying a short grace before lunch, we can bring a feeling of gratitude and harmony to the children as they think for a minute or two of the great cosmic processes of the sunlight, the air, the rain, and the earth that have helped to build up the fruits of the earth, that we eat at meal times.

After lunch the children play for the rest of the morning, and during this time one can observe them very fully. One can see how the little ones, between three and five, play the same games over and over again. A little boy, who had a wide choice of toys, chose for weeks at a time to play always with a rocking-horse; and day after day a four-year-old girl prepared breakfasts. The children over five are noisy, more vigorous, more full of ideas. They play in groups, too, while the younger children are happy to play alone or with one other child.

Twelve o'clock and it is time to go home. Ideally, children should be at home with their parents until it is time for them to go to school at the age of six or seven. Unfortunately,

modern conditions make this very difficult, and there is in consequence the need for good nursery schools where the child can be cared for not only in his body, but in his soul and spirit as well.

M. ROWE.

Nursery Class Conversations

"GOOD morning, John; you're first this morning." "Me first dis morning . . . me first" (reflectively, while shoes are being changed). "Me first, . . . me first, is Wendy here, is Robert here? Where's all de udder children?" (running off to look for them). He is a round, solemn little boy just turned three, serious and slow (though this is changing) and his whole countenance lights up with a shy, friendly smile when he greets you. While repeating "me first" he shook his large head, and one might have thought some philosophic argument was going on inside it, started by the words "me first," therefore it was a slight shock to find that the meaning of the words—at any rate what they had implied—had escaped him, and that he was merely echoing the sounds. A slightly older child would have realized at once that if he were first, the other children would not have arrived.

Two boys come running up the path with happy shouts, followed by a quieter little girl. She is five and a half, a year older than these boys and she takes off her hat and coat, changes her shoes, and dons her overall in a masterly fashion. Meantime the boys have been talking hard, without listening to each other or making any attempt to remove hat and coat. Upon the teacher remarking how grown-up Ruth is "able to get ready all alone," one of the boys interrupts his flow of words to say "I'm grow-upperer as her," but still he needs persuasion before he will demonstrate this fact in the desired way. A few days before he had run up the garden path—he rarely walks—holding one hand placed over the other as though carrying something precious. "I've the sun in my hands," he shouted. It was a sunny winter's morning, the first after many dull days. "Oh, where's the sun?" asked another child. "That one there?" inquired David, pointing to the sky. "Here it is, in my two hands," declared Michael joyfully. He

let the others peep, then danced off to the classroom to show it to everyone there. For the moment there could be no question of removing gloves or coat, so intent was he on guarding his treasure. Another day a little fellow of four came into the classroom and, turning to the teacher, said very seriously: "I been up dere," pointing to the sky. "I been up dere, I have . . . right up into the sky, into the moon, the moon . . . and it bumped and bumped and bumped . . ." (rocking himself from side to side).

Such talk as this about the sun and moon is by no means infrequent, and it tends to show, among other things, how unfettered are children of this age. They live in a wonderful world where anything may happen. They may, indeed, after the dawning of self-consciousness at three, have some dim presentiment of two spheres of existence; at this time such expressions as "I think, I believe" enter their vocabulary,* but their world remains essentially a unity in spite of that, for the sphere of their imagination is not kept distinct from what happens sensibly, and will not be before the change of teeth. Nor is their world split up by such considerations as what is possible and what not, what is alive and what not, what is good and what not—even what is themselves and what not.

Limitations of space and time do not concern them (grown-ups are all the more concerned when they are endeavouring to get a child somewhere by a certain time). As for space, children often reach out their hands and jump in their efforts to get something that is hanging from a tall tree, or even stretch out their hands to the stars. Here is a speech of Michael's; delivered with much vigour, as all his utterances are: "When I play the pinano I dance so well, and go up and down, up and down, till I stick to the ceiling!"

A little girl of five was telling her companion that she was expecting a younger child to tea that afternoon, and being already a charming little hostess, plans were discussed for her entertainment.

ANNE. I have got a baby doll and it's china and it has cracked its head. I am going to put it away when Juliette comes. She does not like china dolls, does she?

* See *Language and Thought of the Child*, by Jean Piaget.

RICHARD. No. (*He is Juliette's brother.*)

A. I'll put out some dirty dolls.

R. No, not *dirty* ones.

A. Well, Juliette likes soft dolls and all my soft dolls are dirty! Oh! (*eagerly*)
Does she like rubber dolls?

R. Yes, she likes rubber ones.

A. (*greatly relieved*). Then I'll put out the rubber one.

The following notes were taken at the end of a painting lesson. Three children only were left, the others having finished their pictures and run off to play in the garden.

WENDY (aged 3.6*). I'm going to draw a snake.

RICHARD (aged 5.1). I'm going to paint canabals to eat you up. (*Paints a blue band of colour.*)

W. Those aren't caramels.

R. "Canabals" I said. I'm going to dress up as a canabal one day and eat you up.

W. I'm going to dress up as a cambamal one day and eat you up . . . and put a big round towel on me

R. I shall bring fourteen hundred and ninety-nine dragons with me.

W. And so will I.

R. I will bring ten hundred and ninety-nine dragons with me.

W. And so will I . . . This is a big donkey—or crab.

R. A donkey? a donkey? Oh!

W. Yes (*very absorbed in her picture*) I fink donkeys are like this.

R. No, they are not.

W. This is a funny donkey.

D. (aged 4.6). (*He has been painting his picture in silence all this time*) Look at my lovely picture, Miss S. I washted my brush.

R. No you didn't.

D. Yes I did, didn't I?

R. (*to the world at large*). Do you like my painting picture?

W. Yes. Do you like my painting picture?

R. No, I hate it.

W. Oh! (*rather shaken, then in an aloof voice, very different from her previous tone*) I'm not talking to you. I'm talking to somebody else. . . . Do you know who I'm making? Well, I won't tell you. . . . I'm going to make a sun here. . . . I thought I'd have to give it up (*with a sigh*).

R. Are you hiding? (*She is still sitting by his side, painting.*)

W. Yes.

R. From me or from Anne? (*Anne is in the garden.*)

W. From Miss S. (*who is sitting in the room facing them, taking notes*).

W. Miss S. isn't here.

R. Miss S. is here.

W. She's gone to America; she's gone . . . she's gone to England.

R. Yes, that's right. She is in England.

* Three years and six months.

W. In our house.

R. This isn't our house, it's Miss S.'s house.

W. It's our house—we come to school.

R. You don't know where *our* house is!

This last remark but one is just a case where the child under seven juxtaposes two ideas instead of linking them logically. Wendy might have meant, "It's our house because we come to school here," or she might not. In any case there is quite a difference between placing these two pictures side by side, "It's our house" and "We come to school," and leaving the relation of one to the other vague, and the precise linking of one thread of thought with another by the proper use of the word "because." Juxtaposition tends to be replaced by the expression of logical relationship later on, and it is interesting to see how different they are, and yet how one may change into the other. In this particular instance the next stage seems near.

The above has an unusual quality that these two children were actually holding a conversation, that is, they are talking to each other about the same subject. It so often happens when children are together that, although they talk and talk—often all at once—each one talks for himself alone. In this case the little boy is in advance of his age (five years and one month) and he kept the threads together.

One morning we had two little visitors who had come to take part in the Eurhythmy Class. Most of the children were getting flowers to prepare for a birthday festival, but David was in the classroom with his little brother of two and a half; he feels very responsible for "little brother" on these occasions, and is charmingly helpful.

LITTLE BROTHER. I want to write.

DAVID. He can't, can he? I can do lovely drawings. (*To me.*) Put some writing there, will you? What are you going to write?

L.B. That is his face (*pointing to the shorthand*).

D. No, that's Miss S.'s writing. You're writing to yourself, aren't you. Michael wants a horse. (*Darts off to fetch one for him and catches sight of something else.*) On the very tip-top, isn't it. Isn't it a nice little castle?

L.B. (*still very interested in the notes*). What you going to write dere, down dere, down dere. Is a man's face dere? Make a funny man, make a funny man, make a funny man. (*Funny man's face quickly made at the bottom of the page.*)

D. Will you make his legs? Make the man's legs, will you? And now make his body, will you? (*Great enjoyment when this is done.*) And now make his hair, will you? (*This is added.*) Its like the Good Little Girl's hair, isn't it. She had *such* long hair. (*This alludes to the Mother Holle play they had seen.*) Make the Sun, will you? When you have hooked it on there you must make it a bit crosswards (*for the sun was to have a face too, and David hooked on the body and legs as well, also inside the circle.*)

David drew a chair next to the funny man and the Sun man, saying, "This is the top; this is the leg; and this is the sitting bit."

(*Enter another LITTLE BROTHER of three.*) You can't cook there (*in the garden, where he has been until now*) because we must have some chairs there. (*A noble attempt at a difficult "because."*) He sits down by the fire and looks attentively at the fireguard) Little doors that side. We could pull it open and put the kettle on.

The following quaint conversation had been in the mind of a little girl of nearly six for several days, for she made three other attempts before she brought it so far as this: "Miss S., I told my Mamma I was going to ask you to lend me one of your picture books for a few days, to look at." Miss S. "Well, then, I should ask her if I were you." Ruth. "But I don't know what she'd say!" Miss S. "Well, you ask her and see." "Please, Miss S., will you lend me one of your picture books?" She had been speaking to Miss S. all the time, of course.

Two children went out into the garden to see how many yellow crocuses had come up. Wendy pointed to one not yet fully open and said: "That one finks its sleeping time." "Yes," said her companion; and pointing to one what was already fading: "And that one's going down into the erf."

Children play together happily and most profitably, but there is no real co-operation in work or play that lasts for long among children under seven. Two children will certainly play together—possibly even without quarrelling—for an hour or more, but if one listens carefully one finds little true co-operation. They love being together, and seek each other out, but there is not the same concern in what the other one is doing that there will be later on.

I would like to conclude with two incidents from a much earlier generation of Nursery Class children, who are now well on their way up the school, and also with something from the other Michael Hall Nursery School.

The children arrived at school all agog with the news that

Cambridge had won the boat race by a length and a half. In those early days I was not so acclimatized to children of this age, and much more ready to take their remarks at their face value. They had many more things to say about the boat race, and I remember I felt very impressed with their topical information. At the same time I felt a twinge of shame, for it reminded me that I had not opened the paper that morning. "Wonderful children to be able to follow events in this way," I felt. Soon they were in the classroom playing until all should be ready to assemble. One child clambered on to a long, low, tressle table that stood there, and started to row. He was soon joined by others, until the boat was full, and the crew rhythmically rowing. To the accompaniment of a lovely sing-song they moved backwards and forwards, chanting "Oxford and Cambridge won the boat race, Oxford and Cambridge won the boat race." . . . Only then did I realize that "won by a length and a half" did not mean the same to them that it did to me.

I was a visitor one morning at the Nursery Class attached to Michael Hall, while the children were sitting round telling each other stories. A little boy started off: "We went somewhere, and we went to a big, big river, that is what we did, and a big splash came over the boat." It is almost as sad to have to read these stories without seeing the accompanying gesture and hearing the manner of telling as it is to see black and white reproductions of their drawings. This applies very particularly to the next story, which was wonderfully told, in a most impressive, controlled way, yet with every possible variety of inflexion. This little boy of five started off with a story rather reminiscent of Guy Fawkes Day, and decidedly lurid and bloodthirsty. But he had no sooner said, "That is the end of it," than he started off on a second one.

"A dragon came along. The dragon was going to kill him, but he saw a little palace with a big church on top and all the soldiers round, and horses and guards waiting outside, and——" (the tale is here interrupted because the storyteller wishes to blow his nose and cannot immediately find his handkerchief. As it is evidently going to be a lengthy business the teacher suggests that perhaps someone else would like to tell a tale meantime). Boy: "NO" (most emphatically). "Well, this

dragon was kind, he was a kind dragon, but he got unkind and unkind, and soon a Prince came to kill him, and all the people came outside . . . [interruptions] and then the people went back home, now I have another story." Again suggestions that it was somebody else's turn. Boy [pleadingly]: "But its only a little story, as big as my thumb, and well, this man was a shepherd and this man—[aside] I don't mind people holding things up" (this because one of his listeners was holding a stick up over his head). "Well, this shepherd *had'nt* any sheep. He hadn't any big mother sheep, he had got tiny, weeny, little ones, and they got bigger and bigger [very dramatically] and bigger, and bigger [with accompanying gesture of the arms], till they got as big *as all these children here!* And they went about and they used to play with all the little butterflies, and pretend to eat them, when they was little, and baby foxes. And sometimes in winter the shepherd had to go out and find all those foxes because the foxes had been stealing their food." The other children have been listening remarkably well, but some now get restless and break away. Quietly but firmly the storyteller continues, as soon as there is an audience. "Then they get bigger and bigger, and some were a little too big, and the shepherd had a little baby, and the baby was a girl, and this girl didn't have eyes like Bridget, different eyes"—looking intently at the little girls' eyes—"it was like Jill. That's the end." It wasn't though, but he agreed to leave the rest to tell us at lunch.

It is extraordinarily interesting to see what is and what is not present in such a tale as that. Vivid and colourful pictures arise and follow each other in quick succession, but what a complete lack of effect following a cause. With the one exception that the shepherd had to find the foxes because they had been stealing the food there is no suggestion that one picture is related in any definite way with the next. Yet on hearing the tale one was really impressed with the vitality and the power of the speaker. He is in many ways a remarkably fine child, and will have great possibilities if he can keep unharmed these picture-forming powers until, after the change of teeth, they are metamorphosed gradually into forms of thought becoming more and more logical and abstract.

In the bad old days children used to be threatened with

bogey men and dark cellars and told stories that no normal person to-day would consider suitable for a moment. Parents would not tolerate nurses who could not be trusted in this respect; but is sufficient attention paid to the fact that one can err not only in the content of one's words, but also in the form speech takes? By the wrong sort of reasoning, calling for an appreciation of cause and effect; by expecting more concentration than is healthy for the children to give, and a premature stimulation to abstract thought, destructive influences reach the child. There are many who do not yet realize the injurious effects of cinemas on young children whose sense organs are still being developed. Here it is the *process* which is harmful, altogether apart from the type of film the children see, and something of the same nature applies to the construction of the sentences addressed to children. *If* it is felt desirable to reason with a child, though this is frequently overdone or begun at too early an age, at least the argument should be simple and pictorial, and never abstractly logical.

This does not mean that we should speak "down" to the children, using baby language; that would harm them in two ways: first, it would be artificial and young children are most sensitive to anything insincere and untrue; secondly, it would deprive them of a model to imitate. One can, however, call up what is most alive in one's own speech, the faculty of image-making. Ordinarily our language is strewn with the corpses of dead metaphors.

One can see that the younger the child is the more he imitates. At first he echoes the words of those he hears, adding funny sounds of his own, but long after he can construct fine sentences for himself this imitation still goes on. It persists throughout the period to the change of teeth, becoming rapidly less frequent after five. The social element in speech follows the same path; very young children talk for their own sake even when surrounded by others; their remarks are not generally addressed to special people unless they are commands or questions—and even their questions children often answer themselves! This non-social element in speech continues throughout the first period, but in most cases disappears rapidly after the change of teeth. During the period when they are living most intensely with those around them through

semi-consciously imitating them, children are little concerned with their hearers in their more conscious speech.

During the Spring Term the children had enjoyed very much indeed hearing the story of the Elfin Grove with many beautiful pictures painted by an artist friend. The children sat down to model in a very happy mood, but a little boy over six said to his companion, rather seriously, "I've never seen any fairies; I don't believe there are any, do you?" As children near the end of this first period of life, the realization of two planes of existence gradually creeps in, and then they ask, "Is it true?" The harmony which should prevail during the transition from the time when these two planes exist in their consciousness and yet are not kept distinct, to the time when they are accepted as belonging to different spheres, may be disturbed by premature attempts at awakening, and by the effect of mechanical toys, cinema, etc., and this happens only too often at the present time. To return to the story: Charles went on modelling in silence and then said again, "Of course there are angels, but I don't believe there are fairies." Here-upon another child broke in confidentially with, "Well, do you know, the lady what helps my mother says there's no such things as angels!" Shocked exclamations from the whole class followed this statement, but above the hubbub Charles rose up, and leaning over the table very excitedly exclaimed: "Silly! tell her she's silly. Tell her to wait till she's dead, then she'll know there's angels because she'll be one!" Later on Charles came back to his original question, and this time Nicolas replied quietly: "Well, you see, some people are a little magic, and they see fairies; other people don't see them."

GERTRUDE H. SARGEANT.

A Playhour Afternoon

THE playhour was in full swing. There were about a dozen children in the large airy room, whose French windows opened out on to the garden. The lengthening rays of the afternoon sun fell on the soft pink walls, and these in their turn appeared to make everything in the room, the

children, the teacher, the toys themselves, glow and radiate warmth and happiness.

Round the sand tray, placed in a good light by the window, three five-year-old children were building hills, towns, rivers, and castles. "May we have some water, please: we want to sail boats on the river, you see?" said one child. The teacher, whose task it was to be everywhere and yet nowhere in particular at the same time, said, "Yes, John," and the child, without being told what to do, found a coloured mug, ran out to the wash-basins, and fetched the water.

During his absence, the other two children suddenly broke up the hills and castles; and by the time that John had returned, carefully carrying the mug of water with both hands, not only was the sand in the tray a chaos, but a good deal of it was scattered on the floor.

John became very angry and flung his mug on to the sand tray and the other two children said to each other, "Let us play another game." At this moment the teacher intervened quietly. Picking up a dustpan and brush, she began to sweep up the sand on the floor. The two children who had demolished the castle watched her for a little while and then both said, almost together, "Can I do that, too?" The teacher handed over the dustpan and brush. "John," she said, "the water you brought so carefully in the red mug has turned into a lovely lake. There are shells in the cupboard. If you fetched them, you could build a high wall round the lake, couldn't you?"

Having redirected the overflowing energy of the three five-year-old children, the teacher turned to watch a little girl of three. Singing gently to herself, she spread out a blanket in the doll's cradle, then another, and after that another; her doll's hair appeared to need combing, and looking round for a comb, she saw a long, flat piece of wood whose shape certainly had the right proportions; with this she combed her doll's hair. She then put the doll to bed and piled six or seven blankets on top of it, smoothing each one out carefully. The next minute the contents of the cradle were on the floor, and once again the little girl was spreading out a blanket and another and then another.

Near her stood a boy with a pale face. He blinked his eyes seriously as he watched her. He must have been nearly four

years old. He did not do anything except watch the other children, shyly, and he did not say anything, except to remark once that his train, at home, went by electricity. At a small table nearby, the castle that the teacher was building with bricks of many shapes, sizes, and colours, had reached the third storey. "I wonder if I could add another floor?" she said, partly to herself and partly to the boy. The boy looked interested and handed her a brick; he added the next one himself. Crash! Down fell the whole castle. "I'll make it this time," he said, picking up the scattered bricks.

So the children play. The little ones of three years are awakening gradually to the world around them and learning through imitation and through rhythm, in all its aspects; they love all toys that are movable and repetitive. The five-year children, on the other hand, are beginning to grow in their limbs and need, in consequence, much greater scope for their movement and will-life. At this time, the will-life develops from a purely dynamic activity into directed and imaginative play, in which lie the seeds for a strong and creative life of will in thought and deed.

M. ROWE.

Children in a Garden

An ideal setting for children is a beautiful garden. There they can romp, play, truly at home amid the flowers, grass, and trees, finding endless interests in the fluttering insect world and the movements of the birds. A child seems to be intrinsically a part of the "growing and becoming" of which every garden is the scene. The same forces are at work in the child—though at a different tempo—which seem fairly to push the plants upward and outward into the light and air. The ground beneath the children's feet is surely all-important. Shall it be Mother Earth bearing her mantle of plants radiating out healthful power, or shall it be some concrete mixture on which no life can flourish, cutting off light and air from the patient earth beneath?

In the gardens of the nursery classes where our children

play we use methods of horticulture indicated by Dr. Steiner, which preserve the "liveness," if I may so express it, of the earth and plants. No poisonous sprays are used against fungi or weeds, and no "artificial" go on the ground. We think these chemicals kill the life forces of the earth and plants, acting often as harmful drugs. They merely tend to make the earth and plants thirsty so that they absorb more water and thus increase bulk at the expense of vitality, perfume, and resistance to disease. Instead of the chemical substances, we give back humus, treated with special herbs. The taste of vegetables thus grown and the vitality of the seeds are vastly different from the commercial variety.

As the seasons progress we do garden work with the children into which they enter with the greatest interest. At times the seriousness of our mood is beautifully reverent, as we sow the seed particularly. That the seed can change into a whole big plant, actually bearing other seeds, "like we had before," is a real miracle to these little folk. It is wonderful to see five-year-olds planting out lettuces with the greatest delicacy and care for the firm little rootlets and the tender leaves. A small foot may descend on another less fortunate seedling at the same moment, as limbs are not quite under control at this age and have a way of straying, but on the whole crops are very good. There is a real appreciation for the fruits of the earth when we gather in what we have helped to produce. Never was stewed rhubarb so ambrosial as when the red stalks were ready to pull at last, after many an anxious inspection. On many occasions they had been found to be too small, but at last, with the utmost care, we broke off the ruby stalks, and brought them indoors in a truly triumphant procession. This was a happy and memorable occasion. The next thing was to wash the dainty stalks, cut them up, and proceed to cook them, remembering to add a generous amount of sugar. With fervent expectations we prepared the table elaborately, and from dolls' bowls and plates we ate our tiny portions.

Unfortunately we have not any running brooks, but with a ready mind we can let the stones tell delightful sermons and find much good in everything, even in a suburban garden, which, from the children's point of view, is a kingdom of

delight. As we dig we interview the worms and hear about the good, kind help they give to the roots below.

At the time of writing, at the end of March, our seed potatoes which have been developing sprouts before our eyes (having been upended in a box by the window for the last few weeks), are now ready to go in the ground before the end of term. Last year, no gold digger could have been better pleased with nuggets than we were to find the families the potatoes had made beneath the earth. Summer brings the fine job of carting the mown grass to the compost heap in wheelbarrows, trolleys, anything on wheels. Since it was cut the grass has been ramparts of castles, heaps from which cocks could crow, or rain, snow, or hail falling down as fancy suggested. The number of leaves the autumn winds blow off the trees for us to collect, again for the compost, must be seen to be believed.

WANAKA WELLS.

The Nursery Class as a Foundation for Later Life

AS a layman closely interested in the Education which Rudolf Steiner has given to the world, and particularly occupied with the study of modern Society, I am increasingly impressed with the fact that social problems of very many kinds can be traced to individual disharmonies which arise very early in the child's life. We can, I think, see quite clearly how certain political conflicts can only be understood as large-scale expressions of innumerable tiny stupidities which have been daily enacted in the nurseries of an earlier generation.

At a recent conference on Rudolf Steiner's methods in education attention was drawn to the dramatic cleavage which exists in the modern world between the people who have excellent intentions, but somehow do not manage to seize the reins of power, and the people who are notably devoid of real morality, and even not particularly intelligent, but whose strong will-forces carry them inevitably into the seats of the

mighty. We have the spectacle of millions of human beings enduring the rule of dictators, simply because, although they may dislike such a life very much, they have not the faintest idea how to create for themselves the kind of social life which they can imagine as ideal. Moreover, it is quite clear that a deep distrust of self is typical of modern people in general, and that most of us feel habitually that it is the job of someone else to know how things ought to be done, and our function to find such "leaders" and follow them.

This must mean that for a great many human beings, there is a deep inner gulf between knowledge and action. This gulf seems often to be particularly wide in clear-thinking people. An enormous amount is written and said by such people about how to make the world a better place, but a mysterious inertia, an inability to seize opportunities for actual creation, seems very characteristic of them—of us. For the most part, we are so dreamily enclosed in the beautiful web of social reform which we spin out of our heads, that we can never rouse ourselves to buttonhole the important man who is probably passing at that moment and would, with his influence, be an invaluable colleague. Still less can we live actively enough into the lives of other human beings with whom we must work in order to organize and keep in being the great living fabric composed of actual people in which our ideas must find embodiment.

One can understand how this characteristic of a man, which determines whether he is going to be a thinker only, or a doer as well, must have been pretty well settled in the first seven years of life. One can see how in this period, as never later, boys and girls live in their will, in constant movement. Movement of some sort is their natural reaction to every experience, in muscular activity they find their relationship to the world. It is obvious that anyone who, failing to appreciate this, systematically tries to make a child sit still and be taught, runs the risk of ruining the child's character in two ways at least. In the first place, the child will certainly become educated, but in a way foreign to its nature, so that in later years its outlook on life will be artificial and unsatisfying, however correct in matters of fact: in the second place, the check to spontaneous expression will become permanent, and the adult will certainly have the characteristic I have depicted of finding great difficulty in

carrying thought into action. A Rudolf Steiner teacher, on the other hand, though certainly using periods of quiet in a rhythmical way during the nursery-class day, will actually teach entirely through the child's imitative faculty, its talent for experiencing in action whatever is suggested to it.

It is quite appalling to realize how widespread to-day is the paralysis of those creative powers which could be present in every human being. We really are a generation of spectators and listeners and bystanders and readers. Nor is this confined to persons of strictly academic type. How do subordinate clerks, artisans, and labourers (who make up the majority of our population) employ their leisure hours? They read books, they sit in cinemas, they watch football and racing, they listen to music, they listen-in to the radio. All these things can be good in themselves, but they are all passive, absorbent. Lenin described religion as "the opiate of the masses": nowadays we should assign that title to football, or rather the watching of football.

No human being can be fundamentally satisfied by perpetually listening and reading and watching. I think it no exaggeration to say that war remains possible in our time, in spite of all we know about it, because fundamentally, large numbers of people are in the habit of expecting something external to provide interest for them, instead of making life interesting through their personal creativeness. Deep down, they are perpetually bored, and dangerously ready to seek self-forgetfulness in some vast catastrophe which will at least give them something exciting to do—*something to do*.

It may seem a far cry from world-war to the nursery class; but it seems quite reasonable to me that a child who has not been given conditions in which it can play joyously, rhythmically, beautifully, in the first years of life, will inevitably become an adult deficient in actual creativeness and therefore a bored and dangerous being. I can quite understand that ground lost in this way in the first seven years will never be made up except in comparatively rare cases where the adult undertakes a difficult, conscious self-training in later life. And a person who can do that could have gone still further ahead if the ground lost earlier had not needed to be made up.

It seems to me clear also that the quality of our moral

impulse must be very largely determined within a very few years after birth. Cannot we see quite clearly how the man who behaves himself only for fear of the consequences—legal punishment, loss of caste, unpopularity, Divine wrath, and so on—must have been a child brought up in early years under cries of "Naughty, naughty child!" and punishments. Parents really ought to be forbidden to use the word "naughty" during the early years. It is a sterile abstraction, meaning simply that the action complained of is antipathetic to the parent and—usually—will be visited with painful consequences to the child. Thus an inner morality grows up consisting wholly of prohibitions. The adult comes to feel subconsciously "Evil is that which brings pain to me: Good is that which does not bring punishment upon me." His morals are thus entirely negative, and the motive of warm love for what is good and true does not exist in him.

I can see, too, that direct moral instruction to a small child is rather worse than useless. If the child is intelligent, it will from such instruction acquire an intellectual code which may happen to be theoretically good: but its morality as an adult will be of the kind which consists in conformity to some abstract creed, and has no real roots in character. Moreover, the killing influence of ethical theorizing upon the minds of children must surely be responsible for the painful feeling so many adults have that moral acts are rather dull, and that most really satisfying things are slightly naughty.

How very much better to shape a child's whole day so that it is entering with positive enthusiasm into a skilfully varied succession of occupations, which are beautiful and good because the teacher quietly sees to it that they shall be! How much more inspired, when a child embarks on some harmful act to deflect its impulse delicately into some activity which will satisfy the same inner impulse wholesomely! There is no need here for a sermon: the child inwardly experiences the harmony of the right way as contrasted with the ugliness of the wrong. By these methods, the foundation of morals for later life becomes a positive enthusiasm for healthy and shapely living—as contrasted with an uneasy tightrope progress over an abyss of innumerable evils. In this way morals are taught incidentally, as an inseparable principle of an Art of Living.

I understand that Rudolf Steiner said that the best environment for a young child was that of a large family, brought up of course with insight. One can see, however, that even if the large family exists, the parents are unlikely to have their attention sufficiently free from the other business of life to give their children that subtle supervision which can mean so much for later life. Hence the necessity for the nursery class in the modern world. There could hardly be a more valuable social investment, if the considerations I have outlined here are as weighty as I feel them to be. It may very well be that in the gentle intimacy of the *Kindereich*, the Children's Kingdom which Dr. Steiner said every nursery class should be, our teachers can silently settle for us many of the problems which have baffled the statesmen of all the Grown-up Kingdoms for centuries.

G. L. ROWE.

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