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Child and Man

A magazine for the education
founded by Rudolf Steiner

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For the Closing of the Waldorf School

The "Free Waldorf School" was founded in Stuttgart, Germany, by Rudolf Steiner nearly nineteen years ago. He was at that time asked by Emil Molt, head of the large Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory, to found a school for the children of the factory's workers. This Dr. Steiner did on condition that he should be free to build the school upon his own principles. The Waldorf School soon grew to include children from all social classes and from all parts of Germany until at one time it had 1200 children and over 60 teachers.

To the school came many people wishing to be trained in this new art of education, and a Teachers' Training Course was founded from which teachers went out into other parts of Germany, into Switzerland, England, Scandinavia, America and other countries to establish Steiner Schools upon their own soil.

On the 1st of April of this year the Waldorf School was closed by order of the State. During the preceding week, friends of the school, old scholars and parents gathered with the teachers and children to celebrate this event. Several teachers went to Stuttgart from Michael Hall, and they returned to tell us that it was a real celebration which took place; not for the *death* of the Waldorf School but for the eighteen and a half years of its life and for the new impulse in education which was first brought into life there. On the children's last day of school, the orchestra of nearly 70 children played, several classes performed Eurhythm, the choir of nearly 200 voices sang and every class teacher spoke to his own class in farewell.

Thus the Waldorf School was closed at a moment of great inner activity and steadfast enthusiasm which will now be carried individually by all those who knew the school. It is our wish in England to meet this great loss to our educational movement with renewed and deepened understanding for Rudolf Steiner's pedagogy and new courage and activity for making it known.

THE EDITOR, FOR THE TEACHERS OF MICHAEL HALL



PIETA
By a child of sixteen

CHILD AND MAN

Edited by A. C. Harwood

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Editorial

THE Festivals of the Year mark the beat for the changing music of the Seasons and for the life of Man as well. Children especially love to follow the Festivals and to experience the mood and the picture of each in turn. This experience feeds their imaginative life and strengthens their feeling and understanding for nature and her connection with the life of Man.

In the school life at Michael Hall the celebrations of Michaelmas, Christmas, Easter, and Midsummer are focal points for the year's work and it is our aim to interpret and to deepen the meaning of these Festivals in this magazine. The last issue included two articles dealing with the Festival of Christmas in relation to children and to the life of a school, and in this number our thoughts are directed towards Easter. Each of the articles here printed deal with the Easter theme of death and resurrection as it reveals itself in three phases of our education—in the myths and legends taken with the younger children and in the study of literature with the older children; in the modelling work done in periods of several weeks together with the children of fifteen and sixteen years; and in the teaching of the letters in a living way to children of six years in the first class.

Thus we hope that this issue of *Child and Man* will make clear to its readers how such a Festival as that of Easter is a part of the life of the school penetrating into every sphere of

work and becoming a part of the substance of the children's own lives.

The Death of Baldur and the Festival of Resurrection

IF we would perceive and understand the secrets of human culture in the different regions and peoples of the world, let us awaken once more the feeling of reverence for all that lies concealed in the different mythologies handed down to us from the distant past. The great imaginative pictures of myth and legend are anterior in their origin to the records of history and tell us of a time when human consciousness was not of the intellectual character of our day, but was of a pictorial, dream-like nature.

That is why children, with their simpler condition of soul, as yet free from the intellectual scepticism of later years, take such endless delight in these stories—so that many, if they are not given them by their teachers and parents, seek them out for themselves. That, too, is why, in our Rudolf Steiner schools, before we come to the study of history as such, we bring to the children these treasures of the past. They are the natural preparation for an understanding of history, if by that we mean an understanding of human destiny and of divine purpose in human life.

We have, preserved to this day, a body of Anglo-Saxon poetry. The earliest Anglo-Saxon work of any completeness is the pre-Christian epic, *Beowulf*. *Beowulf* contains reference to the great hero, Sigurd. Through *Beowulf* and Sigurd we are led back to all that lived as the great heroic imaginations of the Teuton peoples, in particular to the Sagas of the North, to Odin, Frigga, Thor, Baldur, and the many other mythological figures, the bearers of the great vivifying forces of the people of the north and west of Europe. In this article we will follow up only one thread of this magnificent pre-Christian culture, and we shall try to see how Christianity comes as the great answer to the mighty riddles already contained in the human heart at that time.

The Home of Baldur

Odin is the foremost figure of the Northern deities. He is the Father of the Gods, the All-Father—the great initiator

of Northern culture. Out of the misty conditions of pre-earthly creation, he emerges as a glorious figure of light. Between the Giants of Frost and the Bearers of Fire, the great battling forces of elemental nature, the powers that condense and the powers that dissolve, he appears as a being endowed with conscious wisdom—a being of a higher world.

He separates these warring elements, brings balance between them, assigns to each its place in nature, and so creates a harmony within the tension—and within this new state of balance, is fashioned the world, the stage and seat of human evolution.

Odin dwelt with the other Gods in Asgard, the city of the Gods. With him, too, was Baldur, his dearest and loveliest of sons; for what was Baldur but the diffused blessedness of heaven's light through all Nature? In him, Nature found peace, and power to live and grow. Like a distilled balsam working through all the world, penetrating all things, he poured his gentle radiance into the eyes of men, so that their hearts, too, found peace and joy in doing. Through him, men felt themselves at one with nature. Their eyes were "open." They were natural-born "seers" into Nature's secret kingdoms. We have an echo of this to-day in the stories and legends of people, often simple peasants, reputed to have had "second sight."

In Asgard, too, was Valhalla, the Hall of the Valiant, of the Chosen. There Odin himself welcomed the heroes of men, the champions of earth; they were his fosterlings and especial care.

Often and often did Odin descend from Asgard to Midgard, the home of men. The way he took was the way of the rainbow, that most wonderful of bridges that is at once of the earth and unearthly, the most striking, yet the most ephemeral symbol of the sky. In many legends and traditions is the rainbow regarded as the bridge between heaven and earth, a bridge upon which the souls of the mighty could walk, and by means of which the Gods (the Old Testament would speak of Angels) came down to men. As with the rainbow in outer nature, so was thought, the power of thought in man, to be the bridge uniting heaven's mysteries with those of earth.

By way of the rainbow, Odin and the other Gods around him paid frequent visits to the earth. There, in human form, they appeared before men. Men gathered round them as inspired teachers.

In earlier conditions on earth it was held no miracle that beings exalted above men could appear in human form on earth; nay, this was everywhere expected. In the East such traditions have always existed, leading to the holiest event of all, the Baptism in the Jordan, and the descent of Christ. So, stage by stage were men guided; so were laws and customs founded, and the great religious rites. At appointed times, heavenly teachers were born to men—if not heaven's own ministers, the divine principles themselves, whose visits were much rarer, then the chosen of God amongst the human race—the Norse would say, the warriors of Valhalla.

In Asgard, then, the Sun city was the abode of Baldur, the spirit of heaven's radiance.

Odin's Journey

Above Valhalla was Air Throne, the highest seat in heaven reserved for Odin alone. From there Odin could survey the world to its furthest reaches. All things present, great and small, were alike visible to him, and he alone was master of this united knowledge.

There below him was the earth, bathed in ethereal loveliness—not the limited earth of the physical eye, but the earth of springing life and sorrowing decay; the earth of motives, gentle and holy, coming up from hidden sources of the soul to spread in waves and ripples over the wide fields of human endeavour, and the earth of sudden passions clashing like angry thunders, gathering to tempests of threatening destruction; the earth secret as well as the earth manifest—the earth as a dream becoming, in which dream were mingled all the majesty and all the terror of innumerable hosts invisible.

Yet, with it all, his vision was held by things *present*; past and future were concealed from him. A deeper night enclosed even his great light of day. He gazed into creation's womb. The pageantry of countless forms of living and of dying was spread before him, yet the primal purposes and the ultimate ends that might give meaning to the whole were withheld from him. He was himself, in all his greatness, but the child of greater Gods before whose awful grandeur his wisdom waned as thought that sinks unconscious into the oblivion of sleep.

There was one Mimir, a giant, guardian of the Sacred Well of Wisdom. Its mystic waters lit up his mighty figure where

he lived on the edge of strange forests and of Odin's darkness. He was the watchman of the Gods at the portal of the higher worlds. Out of those worlds wisdom so echoed in his being that none dared approach him. To him Odin went demanding a drink of the Sacred Waters.

Not for the asking may we receive such gifts. We, too, must give, and freely. We must pluck from us the best of our lesser selves, yield a lesser crown, if we would achieve a greater glory. The Gods do not withhold from us what we have a right to ask, but we must win that right by way of willing sacrifice.

Odin the clear seer of day must give one of his two eyes for that which he asked. This he did, but in the moment that he drank the draught, a hidden fount of vision sprang up within him, a hidden music burst upon his listening soul. Through his act he was raised into a higher sphere of life: darkened to the day, he became a seer of the night.

He now saw, not only the world present, but the world of origins and fulfilments. Yet now, for the first time, deep tragedy filled his soul; he saw the rising of a tide of evils—he saw the end of all his world. His son, beloved Baldur, must die by treachery and ignorance of his own kith and kin. He could already hear the wail of mournful nature at his death. The fiends of Chaos were to be let loose, and he must see the Vision Splendid of his labours fail into the Twilight of the Gods.

Yet, dimly as the faintest dream, he could see further still. He could see, beyond the time of chaos, sacrifice and sorrow—"a new green earth appear." Out of the depths, creation would be formed anew, more glorious, more lovely, more perfected than ever. What was lost would be found again, redeemed to a greater splendour.

Transformed by new-born powers, he descended to the home of men. He wandered over the world from end to end planting in the hearts of earth's children the seed of a new knowledge, the knowledge of death and resurrection. He traversed the world; he passed through regions of frost and cold, through regions of silence and of death, to the uttermost abyss—and there, suspended from Yggdrasil, the tree of destiny, he gazed down into the hungry, raging chasm, where lived the hordes of evil and destruction.

Nine days and nine nights he hung over the abyss. Nine days and nine nights he drank into his being the full agony

of that evil—he suffered the pain of worlds. After that time, he returned to Asgard—returned with a secret he could share with none. There he greeted Frigga, his wife, and their son Baldur. He gazed at his loveliest of sons, to see the shadow of the sacrifice already upon him.

The Death of Baldur

There came a time when Baldur the bright, the beautiful, Baldur the joy of heaven and the bliss of human hearts, grew overcast and sad. A great weight pressed upon his spirit. He was haunted by shadows. They entered his dreams. They passed into his thoughts. Gradually they took shape as the wasters of life. His visions failed. The beauty he upheld grew thin and wan to his gaze. It was as though the world he loved were falling away from him. He heard the knell of death.

Frigga, the queen, saw the change. Odin the watchful knew that the time of sorrow had come. In the nether worlds, in the ghostly regions, a couch was being prepared.

Could Baldur die? Then day must lose its light, and night its peace. Then gloom must fill the heavens, laughter be stilled, and deadly cold creep over the world. Then glory must sink through twilight into night and heroism be dead.

Could Baldur die? Then Asgard must cease, and the hungry demons of the abyss must mount and swallow up creation. Without light and hope and happiness there can be no life.

What was to be done? Frigga sent her swift messengers throughout the kingdoms of the world. Stones and plants and beasts, the metals of the earth, the spirits of the elements, Gods and men, must swear, through them no harm shall come: willingly they swore. Yet there was one little plant that Frigga overlooked, one small, insignificant little plant, the weakest of things, the mistletoe. Creeping upon the life of others, its pale moon-berries know no brightness. It is a stranger parasite serving itself alone. It lives on death and sucks in poison. Not Baldur, the Sun-being, was its God, but Loki, the deceiver, the will-twister, Loki, the mischievous hater, the spirit of enmity, exulting in destruction.

Like a snake, Loki crept among the other Gods, jealous of all good, loathing the light, hating all beauty. This Loki, with his thin cunning, was the warp on which the fate of the Gods was woven; the dull grey thread that held the tapestry.

Loki was suffered in heaven for his own special gifts. His wily tricks were called for in emergencies. His nature was to analyse, to know each thing for itself. Out of a total wisdom he made the single thoughts. Where the others created unity, he separated the single things, and set each against all. When the Gods think, dreams are born to life; such thinking is wisdom's might. Loki's thinking was other. It was cold, ruthless intelligence, torn from the wisdom-world. His thoughts were arrows piercing the face of life. At his touch life shrivelled. He was destined by his nature to destroy, and he could not be other than he was. All feared him, yet he must be suffered. A deep law, greater than the power of the Gods of Asgard, said, without death there can be no new life—and he was the instrument of death.

Loki knew the stranger mistletoe; it was his plant.

On a day, the Gods were assembled around Baldur. Frigga wished to show her triumph. In innocent sport they threw stones and darts and arrows, the most dangerous of missiles, at Baldur. All things had sworn and nought could harm him. Asgard rang with the laughter of a common joy. Then came Loki, in disguise. He placed a tiny twig of mistletoe into the hands of the blind God Hodur, brother to Baldur. Unwittingly he threw, and Baldur fell.

Then was joy turned to grief. All nature wept and mourned, all save Loki. The wild glee of his own destructive might was upon him. This was his day.

Came the decree from the lower worlds: let there be in all heaven and earth not one God or man or creature that failed to weep at Baldur's death, and Baldur should live again; in other words, let there be a united will in heaven and earth, and he might live. But Loki laughed in scorn. His laughter was the final death-blow. Baldur sank from the sight of gods and men, sank into the hollow glooms beneath the world.

Loki was left triumphing in his single fury. The brightness of the world was gone. Nature grew cold and human hearts dry. The ugly white light of Loki shone blinding into men's eyes. Heaven's visions died for them. The forces of cold intelligence, greed and enmity, the forces of self-love, were henceforth to rule on earth. Men learnt the sorrow of abiding death, despair, and loss of hope.

This is the story of the Twilight of the Gods—the painful dirge of loss that has sounded through the ages—so that we

hear its echo clearly even in the nineteenth century and down to our day.

We may ask, looking at the world to-day, whom do men really serve, the childlike purity, the innocence and bliss of Baldur, or the fierce intelligence, cruel and selfish and life-denying of Loki?

It is again the story of the Fall, and the consequences of the Fall. Men have striven singly and in numbers against these consequences, but that is not enough. Except a higher force enter human life, there is no help. Death must follow death to the very end.

The Problem of Baldur

In the death of Baldur we have not a physical but a spiritual event. Baldur faded from the outer spheres of nature to sink into the depths; he faded equally from men's seeing souls to make his home in the depths of their unconscious being. Thereby human life was changed. This change we have all experienced, for it is repeated anew in every human life on earth. Every child on the way to manhood experiences the death of Baldur.

No one has given more wonderful expression to this than the poet Wordsworth. He devoted his best powers to the search for an understanding of man, and to this end made his own life the object of his closest study. No poet has dwelt with greater love and longing on the theme of childhood—a longing as of pain at an irreparable loss. As a child he felt himself near the Gods and one with nature. As an adult he was outcast and alone. The outer forms and manifestations were the same. The same beauty seemed to be there. Yet something he had known was dead. With all the wisdom of his later life, he could not enter nature as of old. Only in his memory could he recall the bliss and joy of an intercourse with life that was now denied him.

All this he brought to wonderful expression in the opening stanzas of his Ode, *Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Childhood*.

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.

It is not now as it hath been of yore;—
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

A little later in the same poem come the following immortal lines:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the east
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

In this vision of his childhood's being, Wordsworth finds the consolation for his later years, the assurance of his own soul's origin and immortality. The "vision splendid" has faded from our sight. Bereft of Heaven's glory, we wander through the noisy years of life; but within the silence of our own souls, in the secluded, personal, and intimate life of memory, we have assurance of the Ancient Glory—it lives in us as a hope and seed for the future. We are not completely abandoned. As children we had not yet reached the powers of the intellect, the powers whereby we can form the Thought of Freedom. As adults possessing these powers, we have grown blind to the super-personal, universal majesty that bathes the innocent dreaming life of children. This is to suffer in ourselves the death of Baldur. The world of intellectual thought that we have entered is a grey, shadowy world compared with the heaven-lit world of childhood.

Such a story as that of Baldur carries blessing to children especially in their tenth and eleventh years. That is a time, as has been described in other articles in *Child and Man*, when

they enter on the first trials of dawning self-consciousness and separation. It is as though the Angels were leaving go of their hands and they were being told to become men and women on earth. It is as though Baldur himself were speaking to them through this story—as though he were telling them, “Do not be sad and despondent that you must now begin to enter on the hard roads of life. What you are experiencing has to be experienced by all men. It is the way of the world that all mankind must go. In you I repeat my descent into Hell, the place of unrelieved glooms and shadows. But remember the promise of Father Odin, the promise of ‘a new green earth.’ That promise lives in you too, and it will carry you forward through the difficult times to come.”

In previous numbers of this magazine, articles have been written giving indications of a course of study suitable for older children. We followed the way from the old Sagas with their God-seeing wisdom, through the many changes in human consciousness and their expression in literature down to the nineteenth century. In those articles we stopped with the Romantics. We described the mighty visions and aspirations that filled the noblest hearts at that time; how men felt then an accession of new powers to achieve the spiritual, with what great hope they hailed the dawn of a new era. There was to be a gathering of free spirits on earth. The voice of mankind was to sound through the vaults of heaven with a song of new discovery and praise.

But alas, the rattle of machinery was to drown that voice. That rattle was to grow louder and louder and the roar of the engine was to smother all else. The new hopes of freedom, peace, and culture, of the unfolding of human possibilities and the emergence of the divinity in man were all too soon to be overshadowed by the insistent demands, hard and unyielding as the metals themselves, of a new industrial and economic life. Materialism was to raise its banner and all life be plunged into a battle for earthly prosperity. The joyous announcements of the earlier part of the nineteenth century grew fainter and fainter in the ears of succeeding generations.

As Wordsworth had sought comfort in the memory of his own childhood, so did many, in the hard years that followed, seek to grope their way back, in a last hope, to earlier conditions of human life—they sought to re-awaken in themselves the

childhood of the race. Hence came such works as *The Earthly Paradise*, by William Morris, and all the efforts of the pre-Raphaelite school and others.

In Matthew Arnold we have a poet whose whole mood was filled with the tragedy of his day.

(From *The Youth of Man*.)

Well I know what they feel!
They gaze, and the evening wind
Plays on their faces; they gaze—
Airs from the Eden of youth
Awake and stir in their souls,
The past returns—they feel
What they are, alas! what they were.
They, not Nature, are changed.
Well I know what they feel!

Hush, for tears
Begin to steal to their eyes!
Hush, for fruit
Grows from such sorrow as theirs!
And they remember,
With piercing, untold anguish,
The proud boasting of their youth.
And they feel how Nature was fair.
And the mists of delusion,
And the scales of habit,
Fall away from their eyes;
And they see, for a moment,
Stretching out, like the desert
In its weary, unprofitable length,
Their faded, ignoble lives.

While the locks are yet brown on thy head,
While the soul still looks through thine eyes,
While the heart still pours
The mantling blood to thy cheeks,
Sink, O youth, in thy soul!
-Yearn to the greatness of Nature,
Rally the good in the depths of thyself!

Again and again Matthew Arnold sings the death of the Child in Man; it is the death of spontaneous joy, of natural imagination, of the naïve experience of the Godhead in all life. The fumes, the noise, the hardness of the modern city, are death to the soul; but worse than all these is the loss of the image of man.

(From *A Summer Night*.)

And the calm moonlight seems to say :
Hast thou then still the old unquiet breast,
Which neither deadens into rest,
Nor ever feels the fiery glow
That whirls the spirit from itself away,
But fluctuates to and fro,
Never by passion quite possess'd
And never quite benumb'd by the world's sway ?—
And I, I know not if to pray
Still to be what I am, or yield and be
Like all the other men I see.

For most men in a brazen prison live,

Later, in the same poem :

..... and between
The lightning-bursts is seen
Only a driving wreck,
And the pale master on his spar-strewn deck
With anguish'd face and flying hair
Grasping the rudder hard,
Still bent to make some port he knows not where,
Still standing for some false, impossible shore.
And sterner comes the roar
Of sea and wind, and through the deepening gloom
Fainter and fainter wreck and helmsman loom,
And he too disappears, and comes no more.

Is there no life, but these alone ?
Madman or slave, must man be one ?

The pain expressed in these lines is not merely the poet's alone. Neither is it an accident that amongst his works is a poem entitled *Baldur Dead*. It is a theme that lay near his heart. Indeed, *Baldur Dead* might have been the title of his collective work, so much is it an elegy on an age that has gone.

Again there comes the question—What is the answer to the death of Baldur? How are we to emerge from the death struggle that meets us on every side in our modern life? What is our way to the future? Where are we to find the forces of resurrection? Where are they at work?

The Mission of the Grail

Such is the wisdom of life, that within the dying we already perceive the seed of new life. Without death there can be no new life.

The child must die into the youth, the youth into the man; and man must die to his own earthly nature, if he is to find his spiritual nature.

As there are laws in organic life, so there are laws in spiritual life; and as the laws of organic life give modified results according to the external conditions in which they must manifest, so do the laws of spiritual life vary in the different historical epochs in which we seek them. That is why there is one wisdom for the East and another for the West, one for the Greek Age, and another for our day—but these different wisdoms find themselves united at a certain point in a single all-human wisdom—and that single all-human wisdom appeared on earth in the Being of Christ. As Paul showed again and again, in Him each can find his own special fulfilment. All that was before Christ must be transformed by His Divine Alchemy into the new forces of the future.

Baldur suffered death in the spirit; Christ went further, he suffered death in the body. Odin contemplated the abyss; Christ went down into the abyss. He gave Himself that others might live, that others too might have wherewith to give.

The Christ-event on earth took place less than two thousand years ago. That is not long in the history of the world. A thousand years later, something quite special was born of that event—something quite new that came to life in the souls of men. Single men, here and there, following their separate paths through life, became aware of a temple hidden from outer sight within the soul, and the search for that temple became their great goal. In that temple, the single individuals, drawn from all quarters of the world, became one community, fed from a single source—the deed of Christ. That hidden temple, never to be found by selfish seeking, was the Castle of the Grail; the wanderers who came there, the Knights of the Grail.

It is something of the nature of a minor miracle to read page after page of Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, to follow the rapid movement of knightly events, to seek one's way through a profusion of details feeling everywhere the heroic struggle of the light-filled moral forces in man against the darker forces of sensuality and egotism—to follow this narrative through many, many pages, and then, to turn a page, and quite suddenly to enter a new world—or rather, the same world transformed; to see the same figures, doing apparently

the same things, but imbued with quite other motives, stirred by a new spirit.

A spiritual fire sweeps through the pages that follow, not a destroying fire, but the power of the Holy Ghost that kindles and awakens. The mysterious vessel of the Holy Grail, the vessel that contains the sacrificial blood of Christ become through the resurrection, living spirit; the substance of healing and renewal for all time; the nourisher of all the unfulfilled promise of the human race—this vessel is everywhere, though rarely seen. Many may know of it, may feel its presence, but only they may *see* it, may feed *knowingly* from it, who can die to all fleshly desires and promptings, who have learnt to love the Christ beyond all else.

Sir Launcelot, a noble figure in Arthurian history, is himself excluded. In a dream he realizes his own unworthiness, how entangled he is still in himself, how much a victim of his hungry senses. Yet his child, Sir Galahad, than whom can be no purer soul on earth, is destined to achieve. He stands before us from the first, a free moral being. The Highest Good is his immediate search. Child of Launcelot, he begins where his father ends. He not only finds the Grail; he is proclaimed King of the Grail: but in that glorious moment, his body falls away from him and he enters into the living Christ. He dies into the Christ.

Such a fate leaves us wondering, until we realize that here is no ordinary mortal scene enacted but a high mystery, a chapter from the spiritual history of man; for mankind as a whole, an event of the distant future, an event that would say to us: Christ *is* in the world. But to know Him we must become one with Him; to become one with Him we must die to our earthly natures.

Through Christ's descent into the innermost sanctuaries of the human soul, the spiritual forces in men can grow to such power that even while dwelling within the body, the spirit of man may know himself a member of a heavenly kingdom. Man may stand planted in outer life, but his spirit, that is not of this world but of the Father which is in Heaven—that spirit, even as earth-dweller, may find the Castle of the Grail, may be nourished with the forces of transubstantiation, may know the Christ. Through such an experience the outer events of life, whilst remaining apparently the same, are actually transformed. All life acquires a new meaning and a

new value. The world of outer life is no longer seen from the aspect of the senses but with the eye of the spirit.

The last part of Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* is remarkable not so much for what it contains as for what is omitted. As suddenly as we entered the magic History of the Grail, so suddenly do we now leave it. We are again at the beginning. The same characters are there. The old narratives are resumed. We read on with a sense of disappointment, for it is as though the Grail had never been mentioned. It is just this feeling of disappointment that is all-significant. We realize that the world cannot go on in the old way. Inevitably the heroes die, one after the other, down to the sadly beautiful death of Arthur himself. The old brotherhood that he had ruled so gloriously breaks up. If there is to be a true brotherhood of men again, it can only be a brotherhood of the Grail. The book does not say it, but we know in our hearts that it is true.

The story of the Grail is the new Saga for human life, a Christian Saga. In it the old Sagas are transformed through Christ. The old Sagas were sung into the listening hearts of men by Angels and Higher Powers. Men heard them, remembered them through the generations, and transcribed them for later days. The new Saga was first conceived and heard on the Earth itself. It was born directly out of the human soul, and the sound and the glory of it is destined to grow and expand to fill the heavens.

The French and German versions of the Grail differ in many respects from the English. They have another hero, Parsifal. Sir Galahad is so godly a figure that he might represent for us the very end of all human endeavour, when death and mortality shall have been overcome, when the world as it is shall have passed away and only the Word, the Christ and His Kingdom shall remain. In Parsifal we have a being exalted beyond the common lot of men, yet nearer our time. We understand him better. He is our very selves immersed in the great struggle of human destiny. He walks each step of the way that all must walk if they would come to Truth. To write at full length about him would take us too far and must be reserved for a later article. Here we would only indicate a few essential facts.

We see him as a child united with nature. We see the questioner slowly awaken in him as it must in all men, and with the questioner, the search for an Ideal upon which to

shape and model his life. He sees that Ideal in knighthood and achieves all that a good knight may. He wins lands, honour, love, and fame. There seems no more he can do. Vaguely he wanders forth in search of his mother whom he has not seen since the day he left her, a foolish, untrained boy. He wanders on not knowing that she is dead, and, quite unwittingly stumbles upon the Grail. In ignorance he enters and witnesses the holy mysteries of suffering man. He sees a sick king, Anfortas, and a multitude of knights. All seem to have been expecting him, to be awaiting something from him, but he is unaware of this. Anfortas even gives him the sword of the Grail, a spiritual sword to wear beside his own. He takes the gift, not knowing its meaning or worth. In ignorance and stupor he goes to sleep. In the morning the castle is empty. The sword-gift is beside him, but there is not a soul to be seen. Perplexed he wanders forth. As he leaves the Castle, the gates close behind him, and in that moment the accuser in his own soul awakens. He hears a voice cry after him, "Fool! Accursed! Outcast!" The Castle and grounds disappear behind him; they are not of this earth. Slowly the meaning of the words dawns upon him and with it a feeling of unutterable failure. *He had been called and was found unready.* All that he had hitherto valued becomes worthless to him. Love itself grows bitter for him, earthly fame a mockery. The outer world is still there, the world where he had achieved the bounds of success. Now, facing the newly awakened inner man, he is the poorest of knights, indeed outcast, wretched, and accursed. He has seen the Kingdom, and that Kingdom is now denied him. He is filled with insatiable longing to re-enter the mystic castle, to make good his failure. Long years follow, years of homeless wandering, of despair, of endless struggles, hopes, and disappointments. Nowhere can he find that which he knows exists. At length he meets a hermit. From him he learns the mystery of man revealed in Christ. Now for the first time a void in his being is filled up. Spiritually renewed and refreshed, he goes forth once more, with undivided mind. He now knows what he then had lacked. At length, at a moment least expected, a messenger from the Grail Castle comes to lead him back there. Now as man, with all the marks of manhood's sorrows, he re-enters the Holy Place of his youth's great vision. Now he understands pain and suffering and the only source of healing. As knower in

the Spirit he is proclaimed King of the Grail. Through his knowledge the dying Anfortas is restored to health. Parsifal now stands before us as the leader to a new phase of human culture and experience. As a new man, as a new seer, he becomes the representative of our own times. He is the new man in every man, the spiritual man to be born from within our mortal natures.

. . . *And To-day*

In the most wonderful way Rudolf Steiner brings the theme of the Grail and of Parsifal into connection with education.

In the eleventh class, with the help of Parsifal, we can meet the great forces of idealism in our youth, their enthusiasm for the future. We need not leave them foundering, bewildered, and discouraged in the face of all that threatens life to-day, with the heartless picture of a mere struggle for existence. We can awaken in them the feeling for the great spiritual powers that lie immanent in man, powers that will lead him from physical to spiritual conquests. We can show that that which man lives by is not his physical but his moral nature. As we were able formerly to bring before him the old heroes, Sigurd, Beowulf, who follow in the way of Baldur and who, glorious as they are, must each in turn die, so we may now show the birth of the new heroes, Sir Galahad, Parsifal, Lohengrin the son of Parsifal, who follow in the wake of Christ, and who will go forward with Him into the future, to the fulfilment of Odin's promise of a "new green earth" and a new humanity.

We may go further than this. We may take example after example to show how the forces of death are led over into forces of new life.

By what power was Shakespeare able to pass on from his tragedies, his death-dramas, above all from Hamlet—dramas that end in disillusionment, defeat, disappointment, and death—to a play like the Tempest that abounds with new vision, with new energies for life; that shows treachery conquered by knowledge and discord by love; that sees emerging out of the old world a 'brave new world?' By what power is Goethe able to take the old Faust as he appears in all earlier versions, including the Dr. Faustus of Christopher Marlowe, a man doomed to inevitable destruction, and to create out of him a

quite new Faust for whom service is love and love is service; to lead him through trial after trial of the soul to the pinnacle of man's awakening to his higher destiny, a destiny in Christ, so that though he may not speak the Word, Christ speaks in him? How does Dostoevsky create out of the untold misery, darkness, decrepitude, and bafflement of man as he knew him, such a figure as Alyosha, in whom we feel a new man born of the old with powers unconquerable in the face of life? By what power is Wagner able to recreate in music the Twilight of the Gods, and then to rise to the sublime beauty of Parsifal, a work which heralds a new future and shows the ultimate triumph of the immortal spirit of man?

In all these mighty men of later human culture we experience the meeting of old and new, of past with present and future; we experience death and, through death, resurrection.

We may ask, who is the suffering king, Anfortas? He is a being who should be the leader of the Grail, the leader of the spiritual culture of mankind—but he cannot lead. He has sunk too far into the life of the senses, has succumbed too far to the forces of dying nature; the world is too strong for him. He lacks the powers necessary to his day if the light of Heaven is to continue to shine clear and calm in the souls of men. Knowing of Christ, he has yet lost him. He must await the coming of a new man—of a new force in man. He awaits Parsifal.

Every human being that grows conscious to-day, grows conscious first of the pain of Anfortas, grows aware of the spiritual heritage of man that he cannot by his own powers sustain. There is a night-time in the life of every heroic soul, for the way of true heroism must ever lead through death. Yet, however sick we may be with the pain of Anfortas, we may yet know the healing that can come through Parsifal. We must be willing to travel his road if we would achieve his end.

During the three Easter days we may experience the full cycle of human evolution, the death of Baldur out of the heavens, the unutterable darkness and gloom, and the ascent of the spirit of man from out of the depths. In Christ, his crucifixion, burial, and resurrection, all this is fulfilled. In Baldur we are led from life to death: in Christ, through death to resurrection.

L. F. EDMUNDS.

How Does Artistic Work Prepare for Life?

PAINTING may be called education of the soul, Modelling education of the will.

The Greeks in their sculpture created an image of man, but it was not only one type of man they created. We can distinguish three types of heads amongst their plastic works: the Athene head, representative of thought, the Mercury head, less an expression of conscious thought than the head of a man just awakening and perceiving the sense world for the first time, and the type of the Satyr, who appears to dream, submerged within the elemental world, giving us the impression of unsubdued Will-and-Nature forces.

This great plastic art is the gift of a people who were also the first to create and develop the art of philosophic thought. It is as though the Greeks in their sculpture wished to retain a picture of the human being at first lost in his dream-like experience of the elemental world of nature—the Satyr—who then awakens in the Mercury type and tries to perceive the world through the senses and, at last, struggles through to the triumph of clear thought in the representations of Pallas Athene. The winged helm of Athene, Goddess of Wisdom and patron of Athens, city of philosophers, is a wonderful expression of the soaring power of clear, free thought. All of the Greek plastic heads can be found to belong to these three types. It was, therefore, during the Greek period of historical development that mankind experienced the birth of those conscious, intellectual powers which led finally to the development of scientific thought and with them also, as a kind of balance, the birth of the plastic art, which expressed this development.

To struggle with a material, such as clay, awakens the will to work, and the will power thus awakened leads the child into the future. It is, therefore, in youth when the human being matures and acquires the faculty of independent thought that we wish to awaken the artistic powers. Goethe says: "I think science might be called the knowledge of the universal, deductive knowledge; Art, on the other hand, is science applied in action. Science is the Theorem; Art the Problem."

Through Art we can come to a true and penetrating knowledge of man. In free, creative activity problems are often brought to light which the individual could not have grasped with his intellect alone. I often spoke to my pupils in modelling

in this sense, saying: "Don't think too much about *what* you should model. Have the courage first to learn to know your material. Realize first of all that gravity dwells in clay and everything which you form out of it overcomes this heaviness. Your hands are much nearer to the clay than your thoughts. Let your work develop out of the enjoyment of handling the material." Often the children are astonished at the creative possibilities which they discover within themselves. They feel that what they have themselves created has arisen not out of the sphere of thought but out of a deeper, creative sphere of their own being where their own problems lie—problems not yet understood, or even touched, by their thoughts.

We must leave to the Art schools the task of teaching to copy from models. In such imitative work it is the sense organs which are active and the hands merely carry out what is observed. To learn to do this is important for the artist, but the young and still developing individual should always be led to the experience that he is himself, through his modelling, engaged in releasing form out of matter.

Let us look for a moment at the plastic figure of Joan of Arc. (See photograph.) She stands before us in all simplicity as a country girl, but her gesture says: there lives within me something greater than I am; something wiser than I am which leads me out beyond my own self and of which I can not yet say what it is. This figure appears to me to be a true expression of youth, who stands before us, soon to go out into life. It is our task to give this youthful being confidence in his own creative powers which lie deeper than the realm of the intellect, are deeper and greater than he "knows."

It is good when the pupils at this age discuss their problems together and exchange their thoughts, but often the struggle with the problems of their own life makes them feel lonely and uncertain. It should, therefore, be the task of the teacher in art to awaken the pupil's confidence in his material and in himself.

Thus we are led to the interesting question: How am I to guide my pupils in their work?

There is no model before the pupil with which to compare his own work. Criticism fails to touch the educational problem. For the teacher merely to pass a judgment of "good" or "poor" is entirely superficial. What can alone help the student is for the teacher to characterize what he has accomplished in such

a way that the nature and limitation of his work are revealed to him. His personal problems must be extended until they become "objective" problems.

Sometimes the children will want to model heads from an unconscious desire to try to form for their own understanding a true picture of the human being. For just as the Greeks created types so the modern being wants to create individualities. And it is in the head, the most plastic part of the organism, that the individuality most clearly reveals itself. Goethe has said of sculpture that it is music come to rest, and music he has called sculpture brought into movement. With this in mind we can see that the head, as the most highly formed part of the body, is that part which has most completely come to rest. The limbs move freely but the head is like a rounded and resting image of the great, immovable firmament of heaven which surrounds the world.

Instinctively we work out the head of a figure in greatest detail, but we leave the decision as to how far the limbs are to be fully formed or are to remain hidden within the clay to our artistic judgment.

Every plastic must reveal the struggle between form and material and the most perfect work is not necessarily that in which the details are most evenly developed but that which is so "freed" from the clay that it truly shows the relation of form and material.

I always tell my pupils that their work must be done in the plane in which their arms move horizontally, for this is the creative sphere for human activity. Practical work can be done at a lower plane with arms down-stretched, but not artistic work. The children must then learn to work with first the full hand, with the palm and mount, until the clay is worked through, then the fingers are to be used to refine what has been roughly shaped, and, at last, tools like finer fingers may be used to execute details which the fingers are not able to do. Thus the work begins with the solid hand, passes to the fingers, and, finally, for finishing off, the tool may be called in.

About the nature of the head itself, the following can be said to the children: Let us look first at the eyes—they receive the light, they are passive—indeed, we know that it is the light itself which forms the eye. The eyes are set in hollows: there we must remove clay.

Now let us turn to the lower part of the face, where speech

is formed, which is active in comparison with the eyes; here clay must be added. This comparison will stimulate the child to an activity of inner observation.

Another wonderful contrast is that of the child's head, resembling a round sun, large in proportion to the rest of the body, and the head of an old person, which has the proportion of one to nine of the whole organism. Here all forms are concave; they are, so to say, modelled through the inner activity of soul and will which have worked upon the expression of the face. In the face of youth there is a wonderful balance between the round, universal forms of childhood and the new dawning of the possibility of individual expression. One can lead the children in this way to understand that every deed which they perform and every perception which they receive has a part in shaping their own features and expression, and contributes to the establishment of their own individuality. They are at the age when they should learn to understand and to control themselves, and thus learn to shape their own destiny. Very much is said to-day about sport as an educator of the will. But the will is truly engaged when the human being is aroused to creative activity. Therefore we want to stimulate the children to make the *decision* to do and develop their work. It is so easy, as a teacher, to "finish off" the children's work, but what is far better and, incidentally, requires far more selflessness on the part of the teacher, is to leave the pupil to find his own way. But the teacher must give the children a content of thought to guide them which they should then feel free to apply in their own way. As the hands must have the clay to work upon, so the thoughts must have a guiding thought as substance to work upon.

For instance, one can say: *feeling* expresses itself in the raised head; *will* in the head whose gaze is directed straight ahead; *thought* in the lowered head. If you want to express *will*, you can tell the child; then the gaze must be awakened and be directed straight ahead.

Without this help the child's will to work strikes out into a void and instead of a battle with real problems he is likely to be tilting with a windmill.

It is interesting to observe that some children find it easy to form young heads, others continually model old heads whose features are fully and finally shaped and whose forms are all concave.

Everything which we tell the children, right down into anatomical details, must lead them back to the picture of the *whole* human being. Children of seventeen and younger are not yet mature enough to understand specialized and technical criticism, for this is something cold and has nothing to do with the warmth and earnestness with which boys and girls in youth meet the world.

Creation in clay seems to me, in the truest sense of the word, to lead to an understanding of the meaning of the Easter Festival. It is a "resurrection" of Form out of Matter through the free deed of man. Two figures done during the last modelling period illustrate this thought. One shows us a being looking down thoughtfully to earth. For the young human being it is a picture of man wanting to understand the earth. The same pupil then modelled a head which seems to proclaim the awakening of the will towards individuality. Both pieces of work gave me great satisfaction and I then said to the pupil: I am grateful for that which you have achieved; let us not be disappointed if you do not immediately produce anything more. Do not have the feeling that you must continue to create, just because you have been successful to begin with. I spoke to him in this way because nothing is more harmful for the developing being than the feeling of pressure to create: everything must arise spontaneously at this age.

But I was then delighted to see him take a heap of clay and appear to play with it, watching with wonder what might arise out of it. And there arose a beautiful figure, as though full of longing and struggling to free itself from the clay. What this being of his creation might be was a riddle to him, but it was to me an answer to the first figure which leaned down towards the earth, towards the material from which it had sprung. Here was the question of youth to itself and the answer rising through a power greater than the child's own conscious knowledge. For such things can not be intellectually planned, they arise out of the joy in shaping and freeing the clay itself.

Each child in the class in his or her own way brought this to expression. Themes from their history lessons, like Buddha and the Sphinx, were given creative expression, and each child met the problems latent in the clay out of his own powers.

We began this article by saying that painting is education for the soul. Let us now think for a moment of the great artists of the Renaissance. First of all let us turn to Raphael. His great gift to humanity was the "Mother and Child," whom he pictured in colours so often and so wonderfully that they have become for us a symbol of *life*. The Mother stands before us, surrounded by her mantle of blue, and carrying the child. Around her is spread all of nature—not nature meant as landscape in our sense, but rather as a "tapestry of the soul," in whose colours all the wealth of life and of the soul appear.

But Michaelangelo—what is his great gift to mankind and what medium did he choose for his expression?

I once spoke to a modelling class about this question. Michaelangelo's gift, in answer to Raphael's, is the "Pieta" and his medium, sculpture. Two children tried to model a "Pieta" of their own (see frontispiece)—not because I gave it as a task for I would never force the application of such a content, but because we had spoken about the secret of Life—and Death—forces which live in this work.

In the "Pieta" the mother of Christ looks down upon the dead figure of her son whom she holds upon her knees. Her youthful features are transformed through sorrow until they are an expression of eternal womanhood. Her countenance is radiant, with eternal sun-like power. The Christ figure is under the sway of the forces of death and everywhere the bodily forms are concave.

In the Christ we have a picture of the human being who sacrifices himself for the earth, who becomes matter, becomes earth. But within death is the necessity of resurrection. His features have been utterly transformed through the sorrows of earth, for he, with his higher being, has taken the material of earthly life and utterly transformed it. And, as Christ, through death, gave meaning to the earth and to all matter, so also for the young human being, the experience of freeing matter through its transformation into form can give meaning to the experience of Easter. Youth longs to awaken its creative will and thus share in the great task laid upon man as a citizen of the earth.

GERDA HILLMANN

The Child and the Alphabet

"**W**HY do you first teach your children to write and only begin to teach them to read in the second class, when they are eight years old?"

This is a question often asked by visitors to Michael Hall and by many others who may be inquiring into the curriculum of a Rudolf Steiner school. Its answer is most important and this article will try to make both the answer and its importance clear.

When children are born they can do what all animals can do—eat, sleep, and make a noise; but they cannot yet do what all human beings should be able to do—to stand erect and to use their hands freely; to walk, to talk, and to think. How children learn to do these three things will affect their whole life. If they grow up to slouch and crawl over the earth with back bent and shoulders sagging, if their feet cannot get free of the ground but shuffle and drag as they walk, and if their hands are clumsy and unable to do the differentiated work required of a human being, then they are ill—ill in their will, in their physical body. If the words which the human being speaks are not a true expression of the feeling and thought which live within him, then he is ill—ill in his soul. And if the human being cannot think in such a way as to know the world and himself within it; if his thought is merely a haphazard jumble of impressions continually flooding through his mind as the details of a landscape flash past a person riding in a railway carriage, then his thinking is ill—his spirit cannot use the tool designed for it, and that is illness for the spirit.

When the child at about three years of age completes the first and fundamental process in thought and distinguishes between himself and the world around him and refers to himself as "I," the three capacities which make the human child more than a wolf or a lion cub are born. Higher beings than the human being may know of have made this development possible and the child is, as it were, born a second time. At birth he enters for the first time into the use of his own body which has been for nine months prepared for him within his mother's womb and now, at three years, he enters into a new individual use of these human capacities, and the beings who have guided and made possible this development now relinquish a great part of their task to the parents and later

to the teachers as well as to the child himself. The parents and teachers must from this moment onwards continue the work which during the first three years went on deep within the unconscious organism, and it is their task to educate the body, the speech, and the thought of the child until they are worthy instruments to be used by the individual spirit of man which is finally born into full independence and potential power at twenty-one.

But it may seem that when and how one learns to read and write are purely technical questions of pedagogical method and quite unrelated to such general processes of development. It is easy, however, to see that this is not so if one only realizes that to learn to read is a highly complicated process calling heavily on children's power of thought. And what one reads are words and these words must first be written. But before they can be written, words must be spoken, even if only inwardly, for writing is a silent speech carried out not by the mouth and larynx but by the hand. If, therefore, one has no power to use and understand the word, the greatest skill in reading becomes an empty technique. It is in order to deepen the understanding and to awaken true skill in the use of words, thereby awakening and strengthening the child's active inner nature, that the curriculum indicated by Rudolf Steiner first concentrates upon the teaching of the letters and writing and only later makes a beginning with reading.

How can a deeper knowledge of words and a truer feeling for language come about through the right emphasis on and the right way of teaching the letters in the first class? A brief glance backwards to the origins of written language will perhaps make the answer to this question clear.

The growing child repeats in concentrated form the historical experience of mankind which developed during thousands of years in the past. Or, it is perhaps better to say, that the development of the child *reflects* within a short span of time the historical developments of mankind, just as a pool of water cupped in a rock will reflect within its small compass the movements of a vast space of sky. And as in the general development of mankind the creation of the alphabet and the learning of the art of writing preceded the ability to read, so it is also a natural sequence in the life of the child.

What, then, is the origin of the forms of our letters and how can we as teachers re-create them for children to-day?

Tracing the alphabet back to its origins we almost always find them to be of an imaginative, pictorial kind with the consonants generally drawn from nature. The pictorial origin of the letters is especially clear in such a language as the Egyptian hieroglyphs, where, to begin with, each written sign represented not a single letter but a whole word. Thus the human eye was represented by an eye, the human hand by the picture of a hand, the word *light* by the form of a pyramid, the heart by a heart-shaped vase with two little handles, the soul by the picture of a bird, etc., and only gradually did these "word-signs" come to represent single sounds and letters.

It is also interesting to learn that the ancient Egyptians, as well as the Hebrew people, did not write down the vowel sounds but merely the consonant skeleton of their words. This use of language indicates clearly the different nature of consonants and vowels: the consonant being derived from pictures of external nature and the vowel arising in the inner mood of soul out of which the word was spoken. And thus in our own language as well we can distinguish between the consonant which forms speech and the vowel which, as it were, is its mood, is the soul of language. Our own organism even can teach us this difference, perhaps better than anything else. If we had a speech only of vowel sounds our teeth and tongue and lips would have very little to do, for we would simply let the breath stream forth from the lungs through the larynx and whether we spoke from the throat or palate or inner mouth or lips would be sufficient to vary the sound of the vowels. But with the consonants palate, tongue, teeth, and lips must work very hard indeed to produce them clearly. The tongue particularly must be agile and must know if he is to press against the teeth or retreat toward the palate or curve toward the roof of the mouth or vibrate like a leaf in the wind in order to help form a "T," or a "G," or an "L," or an "R." Thus in all speech we have two activities: the moving breath stream and the skilled action of the mouth and its organs, which interrupt the flow of breath from within the organism through the larynx into outer space where each human breath joins with the breathing of the world. Thus in the vowel sounds streaming from within we give expression to our moods—of fear, in "U-U-U"; of wonder, with "Ah . . ."; of question in "Eh . . . ?"; of delight and appreciation in "O . . .", and in every variation and combination of the vowel

sounds we have another quality of mood, another expression of the inner soul movement of man. Just as the human soul would dream through life unless it were awakened against the hard forms of the outer world, so we would dream in our speech were it not that the consonants are constantly interrupting and forming the comparatively undifferentiated flow of the vowel sounds. It is very important, therefore, if we are to give little children a true feeling for the laws at work within language that we should distinguish clearly in our own minds between the nature and origin of the consonants and the vowels when we first speak with the children about the letters and their sounds, and introduce to them their written forms. The consonants we will bring to them through pictures drawn from nature and more external human gestures; the vowels they will experience through stories related to the inner drama of the soul which the children may then act and experience immediately for themselves.

Let us now take examples of the way in which we might introduce the consonants of our own language to the children in the first class of six and seven years of age.

To-morrow, then, we shall introduce the letter "S" to our class, and to-day we must discover the secret of what the "S" really is within our own alphabet. Out of what picture did this letter arise? Only a little imaginative inquiry is needed to lead us to the picture of the snake, to the serpent, swift and sinuous, stirring the stillness with the rustling of grass and the surprise of a sudden hiss-s-s-s! Our imaginative eye must see the snake form in the letter "S" and our ear must hear the letter's sound in the sound of the snake itself. Every child will delight to hear of the snake in a fairy tale, will follow with delight its movement with his little arms, will run its form out upon the floor, will imitate with his whole body the snake's weaving glide, and some especially will love to act its insinuating role. When at last every quality of the snake has been explored and the serpent lives within the imagination of the child, then there will be a great clamour to be allowed to draw it in colour after having seen, perhaps, the teacher draw a scene on the blackboard in which the snake has a part. When, then, the teacher writes the word "snake" on the board, the child will discover the form he already knows and he will have created out of his own understanding what his own race once created long ago as the letter "S" in its alphabet.

The imaginative story of another letter particularly characteristic for English is hidden within the "W." For everyone whose life is fashioned under the winds and weather of England, whose horizon is bounded by the waters of the surrounding seas and who knows the early music of the waves, the "W" must have a special meaning. For in the moving, flowing form of the written "W" and even within the rigid lines of the printed letter is clearly written the form of the moving waves. It is only because we as clever adults have forgotten these things that it is surprising to discover a picture or a movement or form of nature hidden within the alphabet which we use so thanklessly. For the child, when the grown-up leads his imagination from the wild, white waves when the wind goes "whooooo" over the waters to the picture of the waves and the wind in the "W," a natural and joyous understanding is aroused and the child is led to create again out of his own active imagination what was once created by the original genius within speech.

Two other consonants which always arouse my compassion and stir me to go forth as their champion are the "K" and the "P." Each has a strong character of its own and yet both are so often ignored. And what is most humiliating, they are ignored just when they are marching at the head of such fine words as "knock," "know," "knuckle," or "psychology" and "pneumonia," or, at best, the "P" must often masquerade as a Siamese twin with the "h" and be pronounced as an "f." But there are words where both "K" and "P" are not to be ignored, try as the modern word-swallower may, and they are such words as—king or kill, and proud, pomp, parade, purple, prince, procession, pageant, pope.

Let us first of all prepare ourselves to present the royal purple "P" to our class, and let us hope that the child for whom nothing is good enough, who is discontented and proud, will not be away when we introduce this queen among the letters, for how often have we perhaps heard such a child "pooh-pooh" with her parrot superiority the naïve but perhaps sensitive and charming ideas of some less sophisticated classmate; how often perhaps she has pouted when not chosen to play the princess, or pursed her lips in prim prudery when the windy gaiety of another classmate has made her the target of fun. Such a child will see herself reflected in this letter, straight of back and proud of carriage, which can be imagined

with arms curved upward, palms upturned, in high disdain, and she will, although perhaps quite unconsciously, profit by this mirror image of her own pride. The children will take huge delight in acting the proud prince and princess, thus perhaps purging themselves quite innocently of unnecessary self-esteem which would only have festered or grown rigid under the direct attack of moral preaching. Indeed, one can have the sly suspicion that the grown-up is often playing the role of the "P" in his extreme condescension for what he terms "childishness," and that children see through this adult pomposity, and, had they the necessary technique, they could be far better satirists than we might care to admit. It is interesting, is it not, when thinking of the "P" in this character to remember such words as "Parson," "Preacher," and, even, "Papa"!

The "K" is a different quality altogether, and when considering it one must bear in mind that in the earlier forms of English the "K" was far more important than it is to-day. In words like "knight," where the "K" is silent, it was then given its full sound value. But the "K" still lives on in its true character in the word "King." Here he still stands erect with sword pointing up and forward in a great gesture of command and his leg is still planted firmly on the ground before him. Children will love to act him, model him in wax, paint him, and, at last, to draw him as they have done the other letters, and then write him until they know that he is not always a king but that he is also the letter "K" and an important part of the grown-up alphabet.

Let us conclude our excursions into the imaginative land of the alphabet by considering two important vowels: I and U. Perhaps we will tell the children of a great prince whom God had set to rule over a rich and wonderful realm, where every precious stone and healing plant and wandering beast had its home. God gave this prince great wisdom and set a golden crown upon his head as a sign that His heavenly light shone within the wise thoughts of the prince. Thus he stood upon the earth; his head lifted to the stars and the golden crown of God upon his brow. But for all this glory and greatness the prince was alone. Wherever he went within his realm he found no form like unto his own; he looked into no answering human eye, and when he spoke he heard only his own echo in reply. In his great loneliness when he called aloud he could

speak only of himself; it was always *I will, I have, I want, I live, I create*, and never was there a human being near him to whom his soul could reach out, forgetting itself, and say—*You*. But at last one day a dove flew to him, and, alighting upon his shoulder, let fall a golden hair from its beak, and the prince knew this for a sign that he was not alone as a human being upon the earth. Abandoning his palace and realm and royal robes, he set out, and after a long, hard search during which trial after trial was put upon him he found the princess. He stood at the foot of the tower in which she dwelt and stretched up his arms towards her, and with the arms of his soul he reached out to her, and told her of his great loneliness and love and of his hard, far journey. Thus for the children the "I" can stand as a picture of each individual upon the earth, his head enlightened by the wisdom of God and the knowledge of the heavens and the earth shining within his thought, for which the crown is a picture-symbol and the little line which we still draw at the top of the printed "I" is a reflection. The child can experience in the language of imaginative thought the loneliness of every man and the joy of companionship when the "I" can go out beyond itself and find and comprehend the "You." Within the depths of waking soul he will carry a ripening memory of association around the "I" and the "You" or "U" which will awaken when in later life he experiences the rhythm of give and take; of self and world; of I and You.

Critical thought, however, will whisper of confusion here and dogma. The letter "U" and the word "You" should not be confused! But they are really one, for the personal pronoun is but the written word-form of the sound "U," and in both English and German—in *Ich und Du*, and *I and You*—one finds the sound connected with the experience of another being; with the going out beyond oneself into the experience of another person.

The accusation that we are limiting the character of the letters and making a dogma of our interpretation of them need also not worry us if we realize that none of the pictures suggested here are meant to be exclusive. In each case they represent a particular quality of the letter under discussion, perhaps its essential quality, but not its only one, and the teacher must be sufficiently mobile and varied in his treatment of the letters not to allow them to remain as a fixed, static

form in the child's mind. In any case we need not worry too much, for whatever is imaginatively presented to the child is digested and transformed within him and becomes a capacity for understanding and appreciation. Thus, also, it is not necessary to treat every letter in the alphabet in the way described; indeed, some letters do not allow of a natural pictorial treatment as they have been abstracted away during the development of language from their original character. What is important is that the child develops a feeling for the spoken sounds and written forms of his own language, which will teach him to use it more creatively in later life. If this is successful, the soul life of the growing child will be enormously activated and enriched, and this life, stimulated in youth, will flower as capacities within the adult personality.

I want in conclusion to mention another branch of the curriculum of a Rudolf Steiner school which complements and enriches in a most wonderful way the work of the class teacher: in this instance, his work with the letters which we have described. This complementary activity is Eurhythmics, a new art of movement using both speech and music. In their weekly Eurhythmics lessons the little children will learn to form in movement the gestures of the sounds of speech, and gradually they will learn to recognize and do these sounds again in poetry until at last they are able to translate into outer movement the inner movement of spoken speech which is the essence of poetry.

We have wandered far from conventional pedagogy in our search for the answer to the question from which we took our start, and I hope that both the answer and its importance have become clear to the reader. If I might re-state the answer in other terms, I would say that we teach our children first to write, and only later begin with formal reading in order to stimulate and develop the imaginative creative growth powers which will lead the child into the future. When this has been started, then it is time enough to bring to the child the intellectual technique, the last abstraction of the creative process within language, which is, indeed, a death for the living word. If we have really awakened the creative, imaginative faculty within the child, then the genius of language, the word, which has suffered death at the hands of men, can find its resurrection.

H. B. BARNES

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JOAN OF ARC
By a child of fifteen

