# CHILD AND MAN

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## *Editorial*

We are glad to welcome as contributors to this number two writers, who are indeed well known within the Rudolf Steiner educational movement, but may need some introduction to those who have met Child and Man only since it has been published in its new form. Dr. Lehrs joined the staff of the Waldorf School at Stuttgart in its very early days. He knew Rudolf Steiner personally and had much to do with the teaching of science there. L. F. Edmunds has been on the staff of Michael Hall for many years and, while he is now mainly responsible for the teaching of scientific subjects to the older children, he has taken a class through its eight years in the lower school. He has thus had a wide experience of the education.

We also welcome further articles by Dr. Lissau, Menheer Laffree and Frau Zahlingen (Bronja Hüttner), all of whom have contributed before.

The circulation of Child and Man is still much lower than could be wished. There is little reason why it should not reach 500 almost directly, if readers would recommend it to others. I shall not be content until the number has passed into four figures and very much hope that subscribers will help me to achieve this aim.

H. L. Hetherington.

# *Science Teaching in a Rudolf Steiner School: the Task and the Method*

AMONG the great advances made in the nineteenth century in the understanding of nature, there is the realisation that every organism, including man, repeats at the embryonic level the evolution through which it had to pass to reach its present stage of development. Expressed scientifically: phylogenesis is repeated in ontogenesis.

This discovery has thrown new light on the position of man in the kingdoms of nature. But whilst certain long-established illusions have become dispelled by this knowledge, it did not bring forth a new picture of man's own true being. The picture that had been arrived at on the path of external observation was only a half-truth.

It remained for Rudolf Steiner to complete this picture by showing that what was true for man's bodily development was also valid for his spiritual. Every man in his early years passes through a development of consciousness which, though shortened in time, is analogous to the development of consciousness of the whole of mankind. Only to understand this properly one must not imagine that human consciousness was ever in any way similar to that of present-day animals.

While man to-day experiences himself as standing opposite his surroundings as an independent and individualised being, there was a time when he knew himself equally surely as being *one* with his surroundings. A similar experience we have to-day, and then only partly, is our relationship to our own bodies. In this state of consciousness the soul of man was poured out, as it were, over the whole world. He was in the world and the world was in him. Ancient Indian writers describe this condition clearly in the portrayal of Atma and Brahma. Many thousands of years had to elapse before that other state of consciousness was reached, which marked the beginning of our modern "scientific" age. Before that time it was natural for man to experience nature as he experienced himself, that is, as a being endowed with soul and spirit. In order to understand nature he looked first of all at himself, since he experienced himself as that being in whom all natural forces were revealed as a totality. Then from the standpoint of his own being he looked out upon the animals, the plants, and the stones as forms revealing in an ever-decreasing degree the spirit which he knew to be living within himself. For his way of comprehending nature, he himself was the most easily understood and the stone the most difficult to grasp.

This changed radically when man awoke to that form of consciousness which we call the intellectual. When possessed of this, man experiences himself as being absolutely enclosed within himself, and nature as completely without. The first philosopher to express this form of consciousness was the Frenchman, Descartes (1596–1650), who said: "I think, therefore I am." (Had a man even in Greek times sought to express himself similarly, he would have had to say: "The spirit of the world is in me, therefore I think.")

Intellectual consciousness is bound to the brain, that is, to an organ which does



not serve the organism in so far as it lives, but in so far as it dies. This is why the American physiologist, Alexis Carrel, says in his book *Man the Unknown*: "Death is the price man has to pay for his brain and for his personality." The intellect, therefore, can most easily grasp that which is dead in the world. In outer nature this is the mineral world, in man, his skeleton. Both are governed by the laws of mechanics. Thus the beginning of the modern age is marked by the intense study of anatomy, by Galileo's investigation into the behaviour of freely falling, inert masses, and by the statement of Malpighi, one of the first botanists, that every true investigation must begin with the mineral kingdom and seek to reach man by passing through the kingdoms of plant and animal. This procedure has been adopted by natural science ever since.

* * *

To present a child in the lower classes of a school with natural phenomena in Malpighi's order and with the help of mechanical explanations, would be to outrage his psycho-physical organism. For at this time the child is only making his way towards that condition of soul and body which the adult had reached between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. Only at about the fourteenth year does the child reach this point of development. The toddler and the very young child live in a condition of oneness with the world, which recapitulates earlier stages in human evolution, although naturally this experience is modified by the conditions obtaining in our times. It is well known that little children will hit an object which they have knocked against. The psychological reasoning of adults, based as it is upon the experience of the intellect, seeks to explain this by saying that the child endows the outer objects "animistically" with souls, similar to the soul he experiences within himself. Nothing can be further from the truth. At this age the young human being does not distinguish soul from body, nor does he distinguish his own body as bearer of his soul from any other physical object in his surroundings. Subject and object are as yet in no way distinguished. Put in other words, the child experiences the objects in his surroundings as subjectively as he does himself, and equally he experiences himself as objectively as he does his surroundings. Thus a little child will hit his own hand, when he has done something with it which he knows to be wrong. Another example is furnished by the following little event witnessed by the writer.

A mother entered a grocer's shop with her five-year-old son, greeted the assistant standing behind the counter and told the child to do the same. This the boy refused to do. The mother repeated: "Say how do you do to Mr. X." The boy shook his head and remained silent. Further repetitions were of no avail, until finally the grocer, speaking kindly to the boy, told him he would like to say how do you do to him, but could only do so after the boy had said it first. Whereupon the child was heard to say softly, but quite clearly to himself: "Head, say how do you do!" Then he repeated the greeting to the grocer aloud and joyfully.

* * *

The condition of the child before school age and in the first school years demands that the individual animals, plants, stones, clouds, moon and stars are

brought to his consciousness as beings who act and converse together as separate personalities. A mechanically conceived nexus of dead causes and effects has as yet no meaning for the child. Everything is rather the immediate result of the deeds of beings. When Rudolf Steiner spoke before the opening of the Waldorf School to those who gathered round him at Stuttgart as the future teachers of the school, he gave many an elucidating example of possible conversations between objects of nature. We need not describe them here in detail. Similar examples are to be found in fairy tales known to all. When such tales are invented by the teacher, however, they must never be sentimental, nor must they attempt to use nature as a cloak for moral precepts. Whatever tales are composed by the teacher, they must always be drawn from the characteristics of the actual plants, stones, and so on.

The way of describing nature here presented, however, would remain utterly ineffective if the adult were to feel secretly that "in reality" the matter was quite different, and he had to present it to the child in this form, only because the child was as yet too stupid to understand the "real" state of affairs. To find the proper standpoint, let us consider for a moment what is the place in natural phenomena of the mechanical connection between cause and effect, the only one accessible to adult man's intellect. Here we shall find useful an analogy which Rudolf Steiner occasionally used to stress a similar point.

In the mud of a cart-track we notice certain impressions running more or less parallel to one another. We investigate their cause and discover that they were made by the wheels of a cart. We push our investigations further and enquire into the cause of the movement of the cart. This we find in the limb movement of the horses pulling it. The physical causes of these movements we are able to trace to certain energy-processes in the bodies of the animals. To push our investigations further in this direction, however, has obviously no point whatever. For what really set the energy of the horses in motion, giving rise to all the phenomena we have hitherto investigated, was, say, the intention of the farmer to drive his cart to market to sell his produce. Here we find ourselves in the realm of an individual will, governed by a definite thought-content. It is obviously senseless to enquire further along lines of a purely mechanical cause and effect.

Our example quickly led us away from the realm of mechanical causation into quite a different nexus of causes. But such are, indeed, the origins of all seemingly mechanically caused events in nature. Only, the span of time is much greater here and it increases with each lower natural kingdom. Let us be clear about the fact that to speak of cause and effect we must observe certain changes in our surroundings. For instance, we say that a stone becomes warm *because* the sun shines upon it, we call the sunshine the cause and the warming of the stone the effect. If some objects were always to remain warm, because they were irradiated by the sun, and others always remained cooler, because they were never met by the sun's rays (for the sake of the example, let us ignore all other possible causes of change of temperature), we could not form the concept of causation as we did a moment ago. In order to become the subject of our observation and judgement, two objects must come into a relationship with each other, which results in a change of state in one (or both). Following our example we would have next to consider the motion of earth and sun and investigate its cause. This leads us into regions, where, indeed,



the human intellect has tried to form all kinds of mechanical theories. In reality we are led here to a realm of causation fundamentally similar to that of our first example: namely, into the region of purposeful will of individual beings (though of an order higher than man's).

It is by no means to be denied that science is justified in selecting isolated events such as the change of temperature of an object and in considering them as the results of certain energy processes, without pressing the enquiry further into realms of whence and whither. This procedure has led to illusion, only because one has been tempted to regard this as sufficient for "explaining" the world. And in education, it becomes a sin against the living spirit in the child to present the world to him in this way. The little child is one with time just as he is one with space. For the child, therefore, we must never divorce the farmer going to market from the ruts of his cart wheels on the track. Indeed, we present him with truth when we reveal to him something of the Mind and Will of the Creator while describing His creation. To recognise both as well one may in outer nature, and to clothe one's understanding in words warmed by feeling, is the task of anyone who teaches children of this age in the sense of the Rudolf Steiner pedagogy. The indications which Rudolf Steiner has given can be a guide in this task.

* * *

When the child has reached the ninth year, a new task presents itself to the teacher. At this point in the child's life something occurs which, at a different level, appears in early childhood when the child first says "I" to himself. This word "I" is the only word of his language which the child does not learn by way of imitation. (If he did so, he would—as is sometimes the case with backward children—call other people "I" and himself "you.") A sudden lighting up of the experience of the difference between the child's own individuality and that of another, must underlie the appearance of the use of the first person in relation to the child's self. But however strongly this is felt, it remains a deeply subconscious experience.

About seven years later the same experience occurs again, but this time far more consciously, distinguished moreover from the former, in that the child begins to experience himself as divided off from the whole world. He begins to be aware that the world, as mere sense-perception, conceals something. At the same time he begins to feel the boundless immensity of the world and his own smallness. This calls forth a feeling of impotence in face of the world, of other people and even of God: a feeling hitherto quite foreign to him.

At this moment it is of decisive importance for the healthy further development of the young person, whether he is in touch with adults, who can build a bridge of confidence between him and the world. This, however, can only be done by someone who is able to describe to him, by means of the spoken word, those connections with the world which once lived in the child unconsciously, but now no longer do so. Just because this need in the child has to be met, a proper teaching of nature observation is so important at this age.

Rudolf Steiner once said of this ninth year: "Now the force of man's ego-nature begins to stir. As a result of this, a question arises deep in the soul of the growing

child. This question can assume one form in one child, another in another. But woe! if this question is not answered correctly by an older person!" What is here referred to may best be illustrated by a conversation, which once occurred between a teacher of the Waldorf School and a nine-year-old boy, who boarded with him, as the two were walking through a little copse at sunset:

BOY: Do grown-ups know everything?
ADULT: Why do you ask that?
BOY: Grown-ups ought to know everything.
ADULT: If you really think this, why do you ask me?
BOY: There are grown-ups who do not know everything.
ADULT: Who, for example?
BOY: Mrs. X. I asked her: If God made everything, who made Him? She said she didn't know.
ADULT: Do you know anyone who you think knows everything?
BOY: Yes, Miss Y. (His class-teacher.) She told us this morning in class that Heaven is not only up there far away from us, where we see the sky, but everywhere (pointing to a bush beside the path), in every leaf. And (with great emphasis) *that is true*! (Short pause, then suddenly turning to his companion): Do *you* know who made God?
ADULT: (Who had been expecting this question): Do you know everything that God has made?
BOY: No.
ADULT: Do you think you will know everything one day?
BOY: Yes.
ADULT: When?
BOY (With great conviction): When I have been right through the school.
ADULT: Oh! that would be awful! Then you would have nothing more to learn for the rest of your life! No, the school wants to teach you just enough for you to be able to learn more and more after you have left school. It is in your life after you have left school that you will learn so much. And it will take you a long, long time to know everything that God has made. But how can anyone know who made God, before he knows all the things He has made? I know you will understand that a person must know all the things God has made before he can know who made God. You must go on learning more and more in school and later on in life, so that you can know more and more of God's creations. When at last the time comes when you know them all, then you will be able to have the answer to your question.

To this the boy replied nothing. But his expression showed well enough that he was satisfied. He never put this question again. He had had his answer: an answer which directed him to his own powers of will.

* * *

A few indications may be given here as to how the teaching of natural science is approached at this age: For reasons which have already been stated, the teaching starts with man and only reaches the mineral by way of the animal and plant.



In the teaching concerning man, the child's attention is drawn to the outer form of the human body. This is shown to consist of three parts: head, trunk and limbs. All three are formed by the same principle, the spherical form, but this principle does not come to expression equally clearly in each case. Only the head expresses this form completely. Even this is not uniformly round, but slightly flattened where it rests on the trunk. (One brings to the child a strong experience of the dynamic relationships which are at work here by using a ball of wax.) In comparison, the trunk represents only part of a sphere. (See Fig. 1, which is a copy of a drawing made by Dr. Steiner, when he first described this subject to the teachers.)

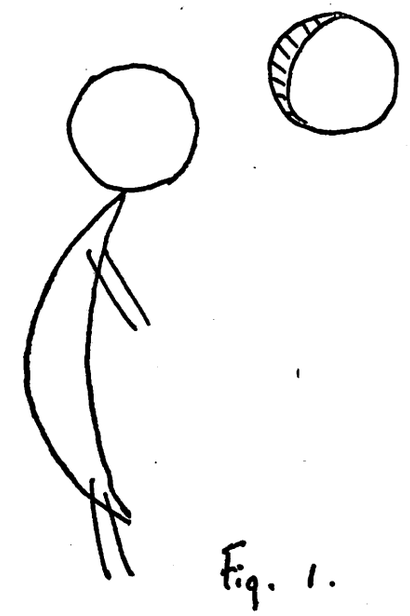


Fig. 1.

The greater part is not visible. The teacher prepares another ball of wax and cuts off a part of it with a knife. He shows the children the portion cut off and points out how the rest of the sphere is now invisible. He then reminds the children that they have often seen a similar shape, when they have looked up at the moon which is sometimes a full disc, but at others only a portion of it.

This indication must not be misunderstood. It is *not* the intention to suggest a kind of mystical, cosmic relationship between the trunk, with its heart, lungs and other organs, and the moon. Rather the intention is to show the child in a visual and convincing way that there are things which are greater than their visible parts, and that to this category belongs a part of his own body. In the earlier years of his life the child was instinctively aware of this. Now he is brought to the point of winning this knowledge once again by observation wisely guided by the teacher. Man belongs with part of his being not to himself but to the outer world. The knowledge of this fact will be of the utmost importance in the future life of the child

and is called into his newly awakened consciousness by the teacher, when he shows him the morphological secret of the structure of the middle part of his body. This he makes understandable by his demonstration with the small wax ball and by pointing to a phenomenon observable in the far spaces of the heavens.

This experience is strengthened by a discussion of the third part of the body: the limbs. Here the sphere, which is the basis of the human form, is not visible at all, because it is as large as the universe itself. The only part of the sphere that is visible in the human form are four radii, which ray down from the circumference to the centre (*not* the other way round), and of these only the ends are visible. Of this at this point no more is said, for the child at this age could not understand more, being at that time not sufficiently conscious in his limbs. The teacher points the child to a future time, when he will be advanced enough to understand more. (This is a principle of method which is of pedagogical value especially at this age.)

Instead of further elaboration of this point, the child is made conscious, with all the emphasis at the teacher's command, of the different tasks of the limbs on earth, by being shown the clear differentiation between the arms and legs, a fact which distinguishes man from all animals. Animals use their limbs only to serve their own bodily needs—theirs are "selfish" limbs. Only his legs does man use in this way. For with his arms he can work for his fellows. In this way the transition is made from the external observation of the head to inward experience of the volitional activity of the soul in the limbs. The child is first shown what he is as the wrought work of his Maker, and is then led to a realisation of that part of himself which he can use for his own activity.

* * *

About the teaching of the animal kingdom which follows, only a few things can be said in the compass of this article. A number of animals are described in such a way that it becomes clear to the child that they represent merely one or another part of the human form. This theme is followed up through the other families of animals, so that it becomes obvious to the child what Goethe expressed so pertinently by saying that the animal kingdom was the human form spread out over the world. Naturally, such a thought must not be presented to the children in an abstract form. Rather are the various kinds of animals to be shown to him in such a manner that a strong intuitive feeling is evoked of their bodily construction and their habits, and of how much these two things belong together. In this way the child learns to know both the parts of his own body and his true relationship to the animal kingdom. He understands that he is the only being who contains within himself all the possibilities of a physical body, which appear in nature as divided out into separate beings.

It will not be difficult to understand what Dr. Steiner meant when he said that through such teaching of zoology the child is helped to develop a sense of moral responsibility which will be very fruitful in later life. Dr. Steiner's other remark will not be so readily understood at first sight: that through a rightly conducted teaching of the plant kingdom a healthy faculty of judgement will be inculcated. The following example may make this clear.

When Rudolf Steiner was discussing with the teachers the introduction to the



first beginnings of the teaching of botany, he showed how he would do it. He chose the dandelion as his example and, without naming the plant, began to describe the various stages of its development, beginning with the last: the round ball of seeds. With a series of simple descriptions, always calling upon the children's own recollections of what they had seen, he took them back through all the stages of the plant. After having thus evoked a picture of the entire plant by passing through its various stages in time, he concluded by saying (now naming the flower for the first time): "Children, this is *the* Dandelion."

We cannot here attempt to bring forward other examples from the wise suggestions which Dr. Steiner made. It must suffice to explain that the plant is always treated first as an organism in time, and secondly as standing in relationship with all the surrounding elements: earth, water, air and fire. Each is shown as having its own peculiar part to play in the forming of the plant. Thus the child is brought to the experience that anything which appears in a transitory form in space presents a riddle, which can only be solved if one extends one's observation out into space and time. How sorely needed is this very faculty in life, if one is to judge events healthily!

* * *

This is not the place to describe the whole curriculum of natural science as it stretches through the twelve classes of our schools. Our aim is only to give some impression of how the curriculum, in this as in all other subjects, is conceived in the light of the developing child. When the mineral kingdom is reached, the minerals are so presented that they appear in their relationship with the whole earth, her mountain formations and so on. At this point the child is introduced to that realm where nature's purely physical forces hold sway. Here the teaching of physics and chemistry begins. After that the path is retraced through the natural kingdoms, beginning with the mineral kingdom in the sixteenth year, followed by the plant world and finally the animal. These are now treated in a more "scientific" way. Still, natural details are never brought forward in such a way that only abstract knowledge is communicated to the pupil, but always so that his powers of thinking, feeling and willing are called upon in a harmonious way. At this stage of school life it is the aim to implant into the young man or woman, standing on the threshold of adulthood, the conviction, which Goethe once put as follows:

If in the moral sphere we are to rise by faith in God, Virtue and Immortality into an upper realm, so drawing nearer to the Primal Being, why should it not be likewise in the intellectual? By the contemplation of an ever-creative Nature, may we not make ourselves worthy to be spiritual sharers in her production?

ERNST LEHRS.

# *The Rudolf Steiner Education and Present Educational Thought*

RUDOLF STEINER founded the Waldorf School in 1919. He emphasised that its birth had nothing to do with a cheap zeal for reform, a revolutionary outlook or simply a grudge against some features of conventional education which now were to be reversed, but that it sprang from a new and intimate insight into the being of man. And yet he repeatedly characterised this school as the first truly modern school, the first born out of the spirit of the age. To elucidate this point he dwelt at some length in later years on the three educational ideals which we meet first in Greece, then in Rome and the Middle Ages, and finally in the later Middle Ages, and more particularly in the Renaissance and Modern Times, the three ideals of the gymnast, the rhetorician, and the doctor.

The educational ideal of the "doctor" is still so near to us as to be almost self-evident. The "doctor," the "learned man" is of course synonymous with the educated man. The acquisition of knowledge is still felt to be the main object of education, at least by a majority of people. An extensive knowledge of facts, based on a good memory, and an ability to relate these facts intelligently to each other, and also to new ones is the mark of a good scholar. When, however, Rudolf Steiner developed his educational practice he appealed to fundamentally different faculties. He did not, primarily, foster the intellect of the child and his retentive memory, but began to develop the creative faculties in man, and to sharpen and enliven sense perception. He called upon the faculty of playing in the seven-year-old upon his powers of imaginative phantasy, he taught the teacher how these can be developed, strengthened and slowly changed by an artistic way of teaching, and how finally these powers can turn into keen vision, imaginative understanding and artistic creation. In this way the bloom of youth need not be lost, but may become the mainspring of an interested and active life of the adult. As long as we do not destroy the sense of wonder which lives so strongly in any young child he himself will want to know, and wish to acquire knowledge. Facts will no longer overpower him, lose their significance and be stored in his memory for safe keeping, they will appeal to his emotional life and become the inspiration of action, artistic, social and practical. At the same time the class will no longer resemble a group of runners in an obstacle race which the most precocious child is destined to win, but turn into a social community where each has some creative part to play.

I am conscious of having hardly touched on the two questions of why Rudolf Steiner spoke of the first modern school, and why, seen historically, the ideal of the "doctor" is doomed to failure in this century of ours. But I hope that I have made my point sufficiently clear to allow me to turn to the main part of this article. At the time when Dr. Steiner founded the Waldorf School he was much at variance with contemporary educational thought. On the one hand there were numerous reformers who rivalled each other in inventing ever more radical measures to overcome the obvious defects of traditional education, while traditional education



itself, particularly in the field of secondary schools, did not yet feel the need of great changes.

Now, thirty years later, the scene is different. The radical reformers are largely a thing of the past. Traditional education has changed from its classical, academic aspect to scientific and technical teaching, and this change has gone so far that most educationists feel the time has come for a completely new attitude to the most essential problems of education. This is particularly obvious in this country. And the teacher at a Rudolf Steiner School who looks through some of the statements on questions of education made by men of standing cannot but be amazed by their closeness to many of his own views. Some of the most prominent men in the field of education bid us to do as we do, and exhort others to change their methods, thereby bringing them closer to our own.

I am not saying that these people are advocating Rudolf Steiner schools, nor that what they are saying conforms to our practice. The fact that the basis of our work is Rudolf Steiner's insight into the being of man gives our schools certain distinctive features. But it does not isolate us in many important respects from present educational thought. In fact, certain similarities are so strong that we must ask ourselves how it has come about that Rudolf Steiner schools have actually been carrying out for thirty years things which educationists demand now. There seem to me to be three reasons for this: The first, and most important one, is the truly prophetic insight of Dr. Steiner in the historical necessities of our century; then there is the fact that from the first Rudolf Steiner schools were established as Free Schools whose policy is decided only by the conscience of responsible teachers; and finally there is the other fact that you cannot reform schools without reforming the teachers, that good and enthusiastic teachers will come to a school only from a sense of vocation, that they must be ready to give their whole to it, and be prepared to change themselves and never stop growing.

The rest of this article will mainly be devoted to quotations, and as not everybody may be familiar with the men quoted I am giving first a list of the names of some of them:

Sir John Maud, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education.
Mr. H. M. Dowling, Headmaster of County Grammar School, Crewe.
Mr. G. Kendall, formerly Headmaster of University College School.
Mr. K. Barnes, Headmaster of Wennington School, Wetherby.
Professor V. H. Mottram, till 1944 Professor of Physiology in the University of London.
Professor MacMurray, Professor of Philosophy, Edinburgh.
Mr. P. H. B. Lyon, till 1948 Headmaster of Rugby School.
Mr. F. L. Freeman, Chief Education Officer, Southampton.

There is widespread dissatisfaction with the products of modern education. When Field Marshal Montgomery says, according to *The Times*, of July 16, 1948:

> "The young are not sure of themselves, they have a feeling of insufficiency, they lack basic faith, they have a low morale, they are unconsciously afraid"

one might perhaps feel inclined to wave it aside as the eternal complaint of the older generation that young people are no longer what they used to be. Yet, I am afraid most people in touch with youth would come to the same conclusion. Mr. Lyon, in his farewell address at Rugby, complained of a different kind of

shortcoming, yet it is related to the one mentioned above. *The Times* of June 21, 1948, said:

> "There was one rather far-reaching criticism he (Mr. Lyon) had to make and he did not know how far it applied to all boys, and not only or chiefly to Rugbeians. There were far too many of their boys without any real desire to devote their leisure either to the voluntary service of the community or to their own better education."

Then there is Professor Mottram whose precise facts cannot be denied:

> "In my first and last years as Professor of Physiology in the University of London I set one question in the final B.Sc. papers exactly the same. Whereas in 1920 I had several brilliant answers to which my external examiner and I gave full marks, in 1944 from nearly treble the number of candidates there was not one above the 40 per cent pass level."

In a broadcast in July 1948 he argued that pupils never learned to think and, which is the same, that they cannot master their native tongue; consequently undergraduates in their finals

> "emit a murky smoke of vague statements, cliches and false logic."

Thoughts have lost their reality and do no longer touch our emotions or fertilise our will. Bertrand Russell is quoted in *The Listener* of February 10, 1949, as saying:

> "We know too much and we feel too little. At least we feel too little about those creative emotions from which a good life springs. In regard to what is important we are passive; where we are active is over trivialities."

These faults are traced by the educationists to two causes: Education is too academic, that is, it is still obsessed with the ideal of the "doctor," and too specialised, which is typical of the "doctor" education in its last stages. Professor Mottram deals with the first fault:

> "Has it ever occurred to any of us that the whole of our system of education from top to bottom has passed inevitably into the hands of a particular sort of mind? The person possessing this sort of mind becomes a teacher, writes all the textbooks, sets the examination papers, marks them and grades the candidates. He has the stranglehold over education from beginning to end. This sort of mind is the academic mind. . . . It delights in systematical thought and in logical processes; it stresses the need of understanding the reason underlying a procedure before using that procedure; it tries to reduce every object of study to a series of propositions, each succeeding proposition being logically based on the ones before it. It believes that everything worth while is provable by reason, and that you have only to prove a thing logically for everyone to be convinced of the truth. . . . It is into the hands of such people—people of the academic mind, of whom I am one—that education passes. They write the textbooks, they make the curricula, they set the examination papers, they mark them, they train the people who are to teach the next generation. The diabolical thing is that they cannot understand types of mind different from their own."

In a broadcast in February 1949 Sir John Maud said:

> "The only kind of secondary education we know at first hand in this country is grammar school education. And we do know that that sort of education is not the best sort for the great majority of children."

The second fault of education, specialisation, was dealt with most admirably by Mr. K. Barnes in a broadcast last October. In the relevant paragraphs he not only deals with the schoolroom, but with society as a whole, and hints at the same time at the antidote:



> "Technical specialisation is inevitable, but there are serious dangers in it. The most serious is the irresponsibility that it encourages. The scientist is in danger of becoming not, as H. G. Wells envisaged, the master of the modern world, but its slave. Scientists are desperately needed and the science student sees in his studies a reasonably certain path to economic security. But what is the price of that security? Surrender to a machine that is vast and impersonal. The whole process tends to create conditions that encourage acquiescence, irresponsibility, even cynicism. Irresponsible scientists, or for that matter irresponsible intellectuals of any sort, are a serious danger to a democracy. They fit well enough into the fixed pattern of a fascist or nazi state, but democracy is a living, growing thing in which there must be continual adjustment between the group and the individual. For the health of a democracy a high proportion of its intelligent citizens must have a comprehensive view of the activities and needs of the community, both spiritual and material. To have a comprehensive view they must have a wide awareness, and to be aware they must be sensitive.
>
> "Sensitiveness is destroyed by unwise education, by undue or ill-conceived specialisation. This sensitiveness has nothing to do with shyness; I mean by it a condition in which everything in mind and body by which contact is made with the world is alive and receptive. Let me use an analogy. There is a certain disease of the eye in which vision is restricted to the centre of the retina, so that the victim can see only what is included in a small circular space straight ahead of him. He cannot see anything to the left or right without deliberately turning his eyes towards it. Over a wide area the eyes have become insensitive, and such a man must be unaware of much that happens around him. Specialisation tends to create a similar disease of the mind. The man whose mental outlook is thus narrowed down is impoverished in his knowledge of the world about him, and therefore of so much the less value as a citizen. He cannot act in a real and constructive way because the greater part of the real world is unknown to him.
>
> "So much for specialisation and democracy. What of its effect on what we call culture? It is all one really. To be cultured is not merely to be knowledgeable. It is a commonplace that the erudite, the well-informed, are not necessarily cultured: your culture is what you live by; it includes your values and standards of personal, social and political behaviour as well as your knowledge and ideas. The people who remain awake and responsive to their environment and to the needs of a democratic society will also be those whose knowledge becomes unified into a genuine culture. Here I should say something to show that specialisation may be as great a danger in non-scientific subjects as in the sciences: premature specialisation fosters the academic attitude of mind, in which thought aims at a satisfying theoretical pattern, something that begins and ends in itself. In the fully educated person, however, a 'philosophy of life' will not be merely a theoretical structure that holds together the bits and pieces of departmental knowledge; it will be something that is gathered from experience and is a guide for present action."

I have quoted Mr. Barnes at such length because of his wide view, and also because he has to offer some positive suggestions, of which more later. In his criticism he is not alone. Professor MacMurray said according to *The Times* of July 26, 1948, the art faculties

> "were succumbing to the technological outlook and becoming a set of departments providing professional training and encouraging specialised and often pointless research."

Examples of such "pointless research" are discussed at some length in the first volume of Professor Toynbee's *A Study of History*.

In the criticism of present-day education we find ourselves at one with many prominent men. Yet also the positive suggestions they have to make are very much in line with our own practice, although we shall find that the difficulties, and also the differences, will begin when we try to carry out these broad suggestions; for many of the most fundamental questions have not been answered, perhaps not even faced, as Mr. Barnes clearly sees:

> "There has been too much empty idealism in education. The true aims of education have been known for centuries, but men have been content to state ideals without asking what frustrates them

in practice. There are far stronger forces at work on children's minds than the fine words we preach to them. It should be our severely practical task to find out what they are."

Yet there is agreement on fundamentals. Specialisation must be fought against in school, and technical instruction given outside it.

"The training for industry is a function of industry, not of the school."

If this axiom of the Central Advisory Council for Education in England is rigorously carried out much will already be achieved. Again and again it is stressed that we shall have to work towards

"a real sense of community and respect for others and their daily work."

This can only be done if the precocious and intellectual child, as well as the captain of the school team, are dethroned from their predominant positions.

Professor Mottram asks himself what the faculties are which made man man, for it is those which we ought to cultivate.

"At the head of the list are the faculties which we can loosely term spiritual: awe in the presence of the sublime; reverence for the true, the good and the beautiful; worship of the numinous. No education is worth while which is not through and through spiritual, but such things cannot be taught, they can only be caught."

This is why Sir John Maud says that

"real progress depends, surely, on the increasingly high quality of those who teach: on their liveliness and intellectual integrity and professional skill as teachers; but even more on their convictions and their moral courage—courage in wrestling with their own personal problem and courage in letting the children have the benefit of that struggle."

And later he concludes:

"A first-rate school is something unique. . . . So we can sum up the job which lies ahead like this: it is to increase the number of unique schools and colleges."

The aim of education ought to be to make children, alive, sensitive and imaginative. When Mr. Freeman gave his Presidential Address to the Association of Education Officers in January 1949 he took as his subject the three ideals of goodness, beauty and truth, and held that our overlooking the central position of beauty had also endangered the other two cardinal ideals. Conversely, we cannot teach morals nowadays, but we can train the sense of beauty, and with it will develop a new morality. Sir John Maud and Mr. Barnes are concerned with the same subject. I have already quoted Mr. Barnes' conception of "being sensitive." If we can only develop a "sensitive mind" we have prepared the child and the adolescent to take his place in life.

"To me the preservation of the eager, sensitive, enquiring, adventurous qualities of the mind are of first importance. Without this, all talk of mental training and the maintaining of our academic standards is a waste of time. . . . I want to ask . . . as I have to ask myself, whether we know what is the real basis and nature of intellectual discipline. Does ultimate brilliance in science, for instance, depend upon the attainment of a certain academic standard at the age of seventeen or eighteen? Do we know with any scientific certainty what qualities and training are necessary to make a good scientist? I suggest that we too often assume that what has been established by habit is right. It may be that sensitiveness and a keen all-round awareness, feeding a vigorous imagination—things easily destroyed by unimaginative teaching—count for far more than is generally believed."



Sir John Maud also believes in this sensitiveness which can transform itself into action guided by "conviction and moral courage":

"There is something that matters more than technical efficiency; and that is our attitude to our work. Of course different sorts of work vary enormously in the amount of enjoyment that can be got out of them. All the same, I believe there is something that makes a big difference in our attitude to any sort of job, just as it does to the way we spend our leisure. That is our attitude to life. The man who is really alive—who is living with gusto and is not afraid of anyone—that sort of man seems able to bring zest into his work even when the job is a pretty monotonous or dirty one. And that is also the sort of man who gets the best value from his leisure time."

Finally, I want to mention the three qualities which the Queen named last May at Queen's College, London, because they may sum up also what we try to foster in our pupils when they are at school, and want them to practise when they have left. They are discernment, the ability to distinguish between the good and the bad, the true and the false, the genuine and the fake, decision, a sense of purpose and a delight in action and design, the ability to give form and beauty to whatever you are doing.

The carrying out of education as seen by these men has met with one serious obstacle.

"In the struggle for scholarships, degrees and technical qualifications, education itself is being sacrificed,"

says Mr. Barnes, and Mr. Leeson puts it:

"Education at that stage may in very truth cease to be education at all and become no more than the acquisition of specialist knowledge in order to meet the cost of a university education."

If we do not wish to have those specialists of whom Mr. Barnes speaks, quite often nervous cases at that, we must tackle this problem now, and I believe this is being done. Mr. Barnes states that a good number of universities and colleges

"are straining their wits to find a better way of selecting entrants."

A committee set up by the British Medical Association in 1945 to report on the future training of doctors published its findings recently. *The Medical Curriculum* comes down strongly in favour of a wide general education before going to a university. Scholarships

"should be awarded on the basis of general cultural education instead of on premature knowledge of a few subjects."

A first practical step in the right direction seems to be the new school leaving examination which will come into force in 1951. It was strongly attacked in December 1948 in a broadcast by Mr. G. Crowther, the editor of the *Economist*, who fears it will have a levelling-down tendency. But Mr. Kendall and Mr. Dowling vigorously answered his arguments in *The Listener* of December 23, 1948. Mr. Barnes, too, believes the new regulations

"can provide great opportunities,"

and Professor Mottram rejoices:

"Thank goodness that poisonous phenomenon, the school certificate, is in process of being emasculated."

With this, I feel, teachers in Rudolf Steiner schools will agree.

I have quoted above only statements made during the last twelve months, and did therefore not consider the Proceedings of the British Association in Dundee, 1947, when the subject was the training of scientists. They provide many more relevant facts. The position of Rudolf Steiner schools in this country seems to be this: they are in close agreement with progressive educational thought. Their practical experience ought to give them the authority to make a definite contribution to the future of education in general.

R. Lissau.

# *The Education of the Will*
## *A Sketch*

Winifred was the next but youngest of five children. The parents were very poor. They were kind people, with a background of culture and good living. Though they loved one another and were devoted to their children, they were made sour and irritable by their continued ill-fortune. The father was a musician by profession, the mother had been an art mistress before her marriage. The family lived in crowded quarters in a drab neighbourhood. There was noise, squabbling, untidiness, and, with it all, a desperate attempt to keep up appearances.

Winifred was a sensitive child. When she first came to the school at six she was already prematurely thoughtful and subdued. Even at that age she was pale, with large questioning eyes. Her health was not good. She was tall and thin. By manner and build she was clearly a melancholic in her temperament.

As she grew older, something like resentment filled her being. Her imaginative nature felt robbed of the palaces of which she dreamed. The ninth year was a difficult one for her. She could be quite sullen, but she could also blaze out in angry aggressiveness. She was even known to bite a child. The other children reacted strongly to these outbursts. They could not understand her spitefulness. She became unpopular and more and more driven back into herself. Actually her nature was gentle, and she had much care in her heart for others. By an ill fatality she brought about conditions for herself which were the reverse of those she longed for.

Though Winifred was thoughtful, she was by no means an intellectual child. Yet she was one of the first in the class to learn to read fluently. She could read almost anything at sight, though for years she had great difficulty in spelling. Her reading was a necessity to her and an unending source of consolation. She would immerse herself in her books, fairy tales and other tales of imagination. (When she was much older she loved the French romances, but she was also a great



reader of Dickens.) This was her way of escape into an inner world where events and people were more to her liking. She imagined herself a beautiful princess, neglected, unrecognised, in Cinderella's clothes. She waited ardently for the prince that would discover and lead her away to sunny lands and beautiful gardens and glorious habitations. She saw her parents living in ease and comfort in a lovely corner of her kingdom. She saw her brothers and sisters as splendid knights in armour or beautiful court ladies.

Thus she was either brooding or dreaming and she was always lonely. About this time, something curious came to expression in her class work. She had a beautiful sense of colour. She lived much more in colour than in form. There was one form, however, which seemed to haunt her and which appeared again and again in her paintings and drawings. It was the form of a witch—or sometimes there was a company of witches, as often as not flying through the air. This witch form appeared with remarkable realism and always with a high hunch-back. One could not help feeling that such a creature must also be hollow-chested. It was as though Winifred were ridding herself of something that had possession of her, working in her strange and awkward moods. During this time Winifred was thinner than ever, round-backed, and she was herself hollow-chested. Indeed, there was anxiety about her health; a few years later she was threatened with tuberculosis.

There was a strange mixture in her of self-assertiveness and self-effacement. She came towards you with a sideways lilt as though with one part of her she wanted to embrace you, while with the other she shrank away. She was also flatfooted, and, but for her pretty face, had all the manner of an ugly duckling. Her general condition was reflected in her speech. It was indistinct, as though in the very act of speaking she was trying to conceal what she wanted to say. At ten or eleven she had reached the point where she longed to be noticed, and yet was afraid of showing herself. When roused or angered, her words would come with a vehement rush, but still rather muffled and incoherent. This grew worse. At twelve one had the feeling that life was really oppressing her. Sometimes, when she was really angry, she looked her noblest; her large eyes revealed a hidden fire; her pale face was suffused with colour; her stance became more erect; she would look quite beautiful, and the other children, even the noisiest, grew silent and eyed her with sudden respect. Then, as often as not, she would burst into tears, the mere wreck of the previous moment, and that was always pathetic.

At the age of twelve, thirteen, fourteen she became specially conscious of the attention the teacher paid to other children. She imagined she was being slighted and neglected. It was really quite a problem to know how to deal with her, how to rescue her from herself, and bring harmony to this hurt soul—hurt through no single person or event, but through her oversensitiveness, and the feeling gradually becoming more conscious in her that life had dealt hardly by her. The main task was to help her to believe in her own hidden powers, to strengthen in her the confidence that men can change their circumstances, to lead her sense of personal grief into a generous sorrowing for others, to lead her even to be angry on behalf of others rather than on her own account. Instead of imaginary wrongs she must confront real tasks and overcome real obstacles. Here was a case where education must essentially be a healing.

The first necessary step was for the teacher to see deeply into the soul of the child, to carry her in his daily thought, to make alive in himself what she needed as forces to bring the right balance to her nature. He had again and again to make vivid in his own soul the image of this child as she really appeared before him in the class room and to ask almost as a prayer: "What must I do as a teacher to help this child to incarnate her full powers and become more truly herself?" This appeal he addressed in his heart to the full individuality standing behind the growing child. It is the teacher's responsibility to see the child as accurately as possible and to unite what he thus sees outwardly with a constant striving to realise in himself the fullness of the being he must educate. It is a call to a selfless act of initiative repeated again and again; if practised faithfully, it passes over into sleep, and comes back as a force of inspiration for the work.

It is thus that the teacher gains the right authority over his children, an authority born of practical loving insight. This, too, is the answer to the question often asked: "Eight years is such a long time! What if a child should dislike his class teacher?" In my own experience of seventeen years at a Rudolf Steiner school I do not remember an instance of a child disliking his class teacher. Antipathy arises when the teacher is intellectual, pedantic, sentimental, indifferent, petty in his demands, subject to favouritism and to personal likes and dislikes. What I have described above is the antithesis of all these; it leads to a growing together in an intimate but objective manner with the being of the child. Something like a sense for the destiny of the child flashes up in him as intuition so that he will often do the right thing instinctively, realising the full value of his action later. This is the first condition of an education of the will. It builds confidence in the soul of the child, clears away inner obstacles and so frees the will.

The teacher creates a secret channel of understanding between himself and each single child in his class. There are countless moments when a glance, a look of encouragement or of appeal, a scarcely indicated sign of admonition, may avert a disaster, or bridge over an awkward situation; thus even outwardly life flows along more harmoniously. The unspoken language which the teacher can thus develop with each child may in the course of years work more powerfully for character-forming than the spoken word. Here is the unique opportunity of the Class Teacher who has his children with him for eight surprisingly short years!

It is usual for the Class Teacher to begin the two-hour main lesson each morning by calling on various children to do some specially chosen exercises in speaking, reciting, walking, moving, counting, drawing on the blackboard, or whatever the need may be.

In the case of Winifred, she was given a verse to recite each morning before the whole class. This she continued to do over a period of several months. Everyone in the class knew that the verse had been made specially for her and this thought gave her particular satisfaction. So as not to single her out too much, similar verses were made for several other children. The teacher introduced the verse with a little story somewhat as follows:

There was once a tiny plant growing in a deep crevice in the rocks. It was quite overshadowed by the tall rocks which hemmed it in. Down there it felt cold and lonely. Each day, however, as the sun rose in the sky, it sent its loving light and



warmth into the darkened crevice and each day the plant, filled with new courage, strove upward to the light. So it grew slowly. At length came the joyful day when it reached above the rocks and peeped out over a wide landscape with the whole glory of the sky above. It drew so much of the sun power into itself that it developed a wonderful golden crown. One day a stranger came that way. He was filled with delight at this beautiful flower whose like he had never seen. Most tenderly he freed it from the crevice, carried it away, and transplanted it to the centre of his own lovely garden. The flower could now grow more freely than ever. It was faithful to the sun it loved so much. Each year it blossomed anew when the sun was at its highest, and each year people came from far and wide, made glad by its bright beauty and the mood of happy devotion which rayed out from it.

The verse had a marked effect. When the time came for Winifred to give up reciting it, she was given another verse in the form of a bedtime prayer. This, too, she learned to love and she repeated it faithfully every night for several years.

In addition to these individual exercises there were also general exercises for the whole class, rhythmic walking, clapping, counting, reciting, mostly carried out in the middle part of each main lesson.

The teacher was able from time to time to introduce a special exercise intended for Winifred, though no one but himself knew it. In all such exercises, it is the daily repetition over a period of weeks or months or even years that is above all important. Very beneficial are exercises that involve rhythmic stepping backwards; the children must learn to move boldly, with their shoulders well back. This requires courage, confidence, and greater awareness. Such exercises were an especial help to Winifred though she found them difficult—also counting and saying the tables backwards. Another exercise which was a help at one time was running spirally inward rather quickly, but stepping spirally outward slowly and with firm deliberate steps; there were accompanying words as she did this. This came later when she was nine or ten years old.

Winifred's movements were awkward and unrhythmical; moreover, as already said, she was flatfooted and she dragged her feet along. She lacked confidence and was easily confused. This confusion was there also in her thought life, especially in number work. The following exercise she found hard, as did others in the class at the beginning. The children had to march stepping and clapping as follows: One, stop; one, two, stop; one, two, three, stop; and so on, up to seven; then backwards: one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, stop; one, two, three, four, five, six, stop; and so on back to one. In the first half of the exercise they moved forward, in the second half they moved backwards. Winifred never knew when to stop. In course of time this improved, and more difficult exercises followed where the stopping had to take place somewhere in the middle of the counting and not at the end. It was a case very often of accompanying her round the class room, doing the exercises with her; then leaving her for a time; then helping again, and so on. She literally had to find her own feet and so became more awake and dreamed less. Her lack of co-ordination was specially apparent in the eurhythmy lessons. If she tried to think about the movements she grew confused, and yet if she did not think she was quite lost. She would try to drive herself forward, but again and again fell hopelessly out of time and place. When she was older she

became self-conscious about this, and there was often a look of despair on her face. It was essential to begin with something very simple and to repeat it again and again. One could not hold up the class, but there had to be moments in each lesson when, with the teacher beside her, she was helped to do the correct movements. By slow degrees she was able to manage better, carried along by the swing of the whole class, and her self-confidence increased. The will to master her difficulties came more and more into evidence and brought its moments of happy triumph.

It was the same with the number work. Here a word of caution in general. Why is it that there are more tears shed over numbers than over anything else? There are always the clever children who rollick in numbers and who get all their sums right with an almost unholy glee. There are others for whom the simplest calculation is a distressing labour. Numbers can have not only a depressing, but even a frightening effect. They hit below the belt, and there are children who shrink away from them. Here the greatest sympathy and patience is called for. Impatience or irritability on the part of the teacher can have a devastating effect and become a nightmare to certain children. Let it be a golden rule that in work involving calculations, more credit is given to the slow child that manages to do something, than to the quick child that does a lot, merely riding his natural gift.

Great damage can be done to the will in this sphere—not only to the weak child, but to the quick child who can so easily grow conceited. What is important above all is that every child should grasp the *process* involved, be it the four rules, fractions, decimals, or anything else. How many sums each child can do is, compared with this, of secondary importance and should not be made too much of. The teacher should know what to expect from each child and praise, encourage, blame, accordingly. In this work each is a law unto himself, and all children should be treated with equal respect. Praise or blame should be proportional to the painstaking endeavour shown by each child and not merely to the results. We touch here on the difference between wisdom and cleverness. There can be wise children who are not clever, and clever children who are, in many respects, uncomprehending and even stupid. There can be fortunate children who are both wise and clever, and others who are simply asleep in both respects and who need a long time before they begin to wake up. Winifred was a deeply understanding child, but she was not clever. She was wise enough to feel her inabilities and to suffer deeply from failures. It was above all necessary to show her how much one appreciated the value of her small successes and to set her tasks that lay within her powers to carry out.

When she was about twelve her parents had to leave the district and she went to live with an aunt in the neighbourhood. This aunt was a kind, active person, a nurse by profession. She took a deep interest in Winifred and had often regretted her slovenly neglected appearance. Now with firm but gentle hands she had the opportunity of correcting this. Winifred began to appear in school with a fresh shine on her face, with dresses that smelled of the laundry and that showed the careful creases of the hot iron. Her hair was nicely brushed and tied with a clean bright ribbon. Her shoes were polished. All this had a quickening effect. She herself became brighter and more confident. It had a good effect on the whole class. The will is the most hidden and mysterious region of the human soul. The



surprising fact is that it can be reached so directly by simple physical facts, and by good healthy habits.

Winifred always loved stories. When she came to History and Biography, she was deeply moved by every description of men struggling with adversity. For example, the life of Columbus took powerful hold of her feelings and imagination; his heartbreaking struggle for years and years to gain the necessary help and support for his great venture; the voyage itself with its threats and vicissitudes; the unmerited harshness and tragedy of his later years; the unconquerable heroism of the man who could hold faith with himself and his God in the face of all the world. This was rich nourishment for Winifred's soul. One struggles not for oneself, and not for success, but for the sake of the task set by a higher destiny, so that adversity itself becomes a testing of one's worthiness to undertake the given task. This and similar narratives from life and literature were more than nourishment, they were balm to her.

Still later, the following incident from *The Light of Asia*, by Sir Edwin Arnold, moved her deeply. She was then at the beginning of her adolescence and had just left her class teacher.

Whom, when they came unto the river-side,
A woman-dove-eyed, young, with tearful face,
And lifted hands—saluted, bending low:
"Lord! thou art he," she said, who yesterday
Had pity on me in the fig-grove here,
Where I live lone and reared my child; but he
Straying amid the blossoms found a snake,
Which twined about his wrist, whilst he did laugh
And tease the quick forked tongue and opened mouth
Of that cold playmate. But, alas! 'ere long
He turned so pale and still, I could not think
Why he should cease to play and let my breast
Fall from his lips. And one said, "He is sick
Of poison'; and another, 'He will die.'
But I, who could not lose my precious boy,
Prayed of them physic, which might bring the light
Back to his eyes; it was so very small
That kiss-mark of the serpent, and I think
It could not hate him, gracious as he was,
Nor hurt him in his sport. And someone said,
'There is a holy man upon the hill—
Lo! now he passeth in the yellow robe—
Ask of the Rishi if there be a cure
For that which ails thy son.' Whereon I came
Trembling to thee, whose brow is like a god's,
And wept and drew the face cloth from my babe,
Praying thee tell what simples might be good.
And thou, great sir! didst spurn me not, but gaze
With gentle eyes and touch with patient hand;
Then draw the face-cloth back, saying to me,
'Yea! little sister, there is that might heal
Thee first, and him, if thou couldst fetch the thing;
For they who seek physicians bring to them
What is ordained. Therefore, I pray thee, find

Black mustard-seed, a tola; only mark
Thou take it not from any hand or house
Where father, mother, child, or slave hath died:
It shall be well if thou canst find such seed.'
Thus didst thou speak, my Lord!"
The Master smiled
Exceeding tenderly. "Yea! I spake thus,
Dear Kisogôtami! But didst thou find
The seed?"
"I went, Lord, clasping to my breast
The babe, grown colder, asking at each hut—
Here in the jungle and towards the town—
'I pray you, give me mustard, of your grace,
A tola—black'; and each who had it gave,
For all the poor are piteous to the poor;
But when I asked, 'In my friend's household here
Hath any peradventure ever died—
Husband or wife, or child, or slave?' they said:
'O Sister! what is this you ask? the dead
Are very many, and the living few!'
So with sad thanks I gave the mustard back,
And prayed of others; but the others said,
'Here is the seed, but we have lost our slave!'
'Here is the seed, but our good man is dead!'
'Here is some seed, but he that sowed it died
Between the rain-time and the harvesting!'
Ah, sir! I could not find a single house
Where there was mustard-seed and none had died!
Therefore I left my child—who would not suck
Nor smile—beneath the wild-vines by the stream,
To seek thy face and kiss thy feet, and pray
Where I might find this seed and find no death,
If now, indeed, my baby be not dead,
As I do fear, and as they said to me."

"My sister! thou has found," the Master said,
"Searching for what none finds—that bitter balm
I had to give thee. He thou lovedst slept
Dead on thy bosom yesterday: to-day
Thou know'st the whole wide world weeps with thy woe:
The grief which all hearts share grows less for one.
Lo! I would pour my blood if it could stay
Thy tears and win the secret of that curse
Which makes sweet love our anguish, and which drives—
O'er flowers and pastures to the sacrifice—
As these dumb beasts are driven—men their lords.
I seek that secret: bury thou thy child!"

Much, very much, had been building up in Winifred during the course of years. With every step forward in her inner life, her bitterness grew less; she had long overcome the difficulty between herself and the other children, her distrust and her jealousy. This story called to the power of compassion that had always lived in her. She had, indeed, learned to weep generous tears for the sorrows of others.

Shortly after this she fell very ill and might have been lamed for life. She bore



this with remarkable courage. By that time her classmates had fully accepted her and showed the most tender regard for her. Fortunately, the worst was averted. When at last she returned to school, still a convalescent, she was a changed being. A new generosity shone through her. Her gentleness, her care and appreciation of others won all hearts. She was never brilliant. She could not pass examinations, but she had learned not to mind that. She left school with a rich feeling for language and a deep connection with the arts.

There came the time when she who had been so lonely found one who loved her above all others and who was true in his love. This came as a crowning confirmation in her personal life and swept away the last shadows of her sad and thwarted early childhood. Through her education and through her destiny her will had been made whole—as far as this is commonly possible in human life. To-day she is forging her way through life slowly and bravely, labouring hard and quietly confident.

L. F. Edmunds.

# *On Learning how to tell Stories*

(From *Vrije Opvoedkunst*, June 1947, by kind permission)

Most subjects in a Rudolf Steiner school are taught by means of the spoken word. The subjects given in the curriculum for the various ages, such as fairy tales, fables, sagas and legends, mythology and history are *told* to the children by word of mouth. The way in which this is done is very important and demands great artistic ability on the part of the teacher. Some people are born story-tellers. Every description becomes new and alive on their lips. Young people as well as older ones are fascinated by the power of words and pictures. But there are also people who have to train themselves to be able to tell stories in a living way. Much attention is given to this in the training course for teachers at the Vrije School.

How the language he hears is spoken is very important for a child. It is of great moment whether it is used as an instrument, noble and subtle and capable of giving expression to everything that lives in man and in the world, or whether it is only an inadequate means, insufficiently expressing certain ideas. If we bring the world to the child in such a way that it rises before him as a new creation, we activate in his soul the artistic and creative forces, and he will be more capable after puberty of approaching with love and reverence the great works of art. Every story, no matter what the content, must become a recreated work of art through the teacher. If, for instance, we tell the children a fairy-tale, we are dealing with epic form. But we cannot tell it in the same way as it was written in the book. In the training course we practise the various ways of awakening new life in a

story. One, for instance, is by paying greater attention to dialogue. It is not easy to present a conversation in the direct form. The tendency is to fall back into indirect speech: "He said he would like to come . . ." and one notices that the attention of the children wanders when one does this repeatedly. It is as if such a way of talking places the happenings farther away from the listener. A dramatic and lively element enters into the story as soon as dialogue is introduced. If this is not done, the happenings are described only from the outside. The story becomes matter-of-fact, dry report.

We must first discover the style inherent in the story itself. We take this as a starting-point. When lectures are given in the training course on various subjects, such as legends, history and so on, the students are also trained to tell in a living way stories arising out of them. Often the students realise how easily they tell things in a dry, nondescript fashion. They have to learn to use picture language and figures of speech. The statement: "The giant was terribly tall" does not convey much to a small child. How tall he was becomes clear only through such a picture as: "The giant was so tall that his head touched the clouds." Through much practice in this way of story-telling, the whole style of the student is altered. Even the intonation changes. He alternates between a soft and a louder voice. In telling stories from the Edda, one talks about Thor and the Thunder God in quite a different way from the way one talks about the sly Loki. Thor demands short powerful sentences spoken in a deep voice, while Loki requires a high-pitched incisive voice. If the story should be about the Buddha the style should be flowing, rich in pictures and figures of speech. Talking about Mohammed, one almost involuntarily uses short, measured sentences and many nouns. But all this demands much practice. The telling must never appear forced or artificial. It must become an art, performed unconscious of its technique. It is good to read poets and great writers in order to enrich one's style of story-telling.

When the teacher talks about the customs of different peoples, in the higher classes, he will also mention the various foods and beverages like tea and coffee. The students are given the task of making up stories which illustrate the effect of coffee which makes one more awake and the effect of tea which tends to turn one's mind away from serious matters and thus forms an excellent basis for social conversation! In the case of coffee, it is necessary that there be a certain form and clarity, whereas in the case of tea everything should be lighter and more evanescent. Thus is developed the ability of expressing the essential idea of a subject through the use of language.

It is also of the utmost importance that the story-teller himself sees and experiences what he is relating. The story must not be a thing he merely unearths from his memory, but he must live in it in a creative way. The powers of fantasy must be awakened and strengthened. The training course has many other subjects such as modelling, drawing and painting, eurhythmy and speech training that go far towards exercising the imagination.

The tasks can sometimes indeed be difficult. Suppose a history subject, such as the conquest of Mexico by Cortez, is being discussed. This can be told in many ways: as a report of the bare facts, as a humorous account, as a dialogue, or one can make the aim of Cortez and his men the central theme, or again the experience



of Montezuma and his people. It is obvious that this theme can be approached from many different sides. It is very satisfying for the student to discover that new possibilities awaken in him, which will enable him to fulfil his future task better. He also sees that he can never say, as one never can in art; "This way is the only right one." He sees, that what comes to birth out of enthusiasm for the subject is so alive, that it can assume countless forms. One can also vary the same stories according to the disposition of a certain class or a certain child.

Quite a different sphere again is entered upon with stories about nature and the various moods in nature. There are many possibilities, moving from darkness to light, from minor to major. The four elements, earth, water, air, and fire can be starting-points. Stories can be told in which something hard and earthy lives, or something flowing and moving, or something light and airy, or fiery and consuming. The choice of words and the sentence construction will be quite different every time.

In stories concerning the earth, the noun, solid and unchangeable, will play a great part. In stories about water and air, subordinate clauses weave through the sentences. Stories about fire will have many verbs.

All this may seem difficult to achieve. But a constant training combined with a study of, and an exercise in the other subjects of the training course enable the student to achieve this art of story-telling. And it is of the utmost importance for a teacher in a Rudolf Steiner school to become actively creative.

M. B. A. LAFFREE.

# *A Midsummer Play for the Younger Children*

EVER and again fairy tales of different nations reveal their kinship and show us how an older humanity shared an imaginative knowledge, common to all, though the individual form and colour of the picture naturally varies.

The Irish tale of "Lushmore" bears a close resemblance to the mid-European tale retold in "Fingerhütchen," the delightful children's ballad by the Swiss poet, C. F. Meyer. "Little Foxglove" is the name of a little hunchback, a poor basket-maker, who knows the plants and their secret properties very well, and always wears a foxglove in his cap. Hence his name, which, indeed, in English, is derived from "Folk's Glove," the little folk's glove. It is just the little folk, the elves and fairies, which he encounters in the story. The tale has a summer mood. It relates how the little hunchback goes to sleep on a grassy knoll. Just as the moon rises, he hears the fairies singing as if in a dream, though he does not see them yet, for the earth or the moon seems still to enclose them for a while. It is an odd little song, or rather, the beginning of a song, that seems to get stuck and is repeated

over and over, waiting, as it were, for a continuation, an answer, a fulfilment, a rhyme. Foxglove takes pity on the singers. He listens carefully, and the next time, just before the song breaks off, he completes it. At this moment the fairies become visible to him. What joy! What singing and dancing! What thankfulness! This must have been just what they were longing for: the loving understanding and help from a human mind. Now they are ready to help in their turn. Such a shining spirit shall not be imprisoned in a crooked body, the cramping hunchback shall fall off, and Foxglove shall be straight.

This is magic that endures. What he has achieved spiritually can meet the bright sunlight. On awaking he finds himself free of his burden, and walks the earth light-footed, as if he had wings to carry him.

This tale was quickly turned into a short open-air scene, which contributed to the entertainment at a Midsummer Festival and Class V learnt it equally quickly. There was something to do for everyone: a country dance formed the introduction, a song at the beginning and end for the simple country folk, accompanied on flutes by others, and as many fairies as wished to appear from behind the bushes to help, and be helped by, poor Foxglove.

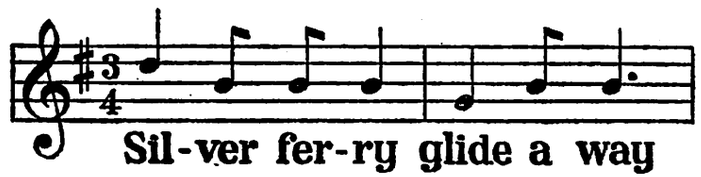
The practising and getting ready was as much fun and gave us as much pleasure as the actual performance.

## FOXGLOVE AND THE FAIRIES

The folk dance is to the well-known tune of "The Health"

| | |
|---|---|
| SONG: | We country folk are happy,<br>We country folk are gay,<br>And here we come a-dancing,<br>All on Midsummer's Day. |
| | Except for little Foxglove,<br>Alack, alack! alack!<br>Who, ever from his childhood,<br>Has had a crooked back. |
| FIRST COUNTRYMAN OR WOMAN: | He's a wizard; well he knows,<br>Where every herb and flower grows. |
| SECOND COUNTRYMAN: | Weaves baskets of rushes,<br>To you to be sold,<br>But witchcraft and magic,<br>They surely must hold. |
| THE OTHERS: | No, no, no, this is not true,<br>Foxglove is as good as you.<br>Working hard from morn till night<br>Patiently he bears his plight.<br>Trotting home when work is done,<br>Over Elfin hill,<br>Now to rest a little while,<br>Watch him sitting still. |
| SONG: | But now the moon is rising,<br>And we to bed must go,<br>To-morrow we'll be rising<br>When first the cocks do crow. (They go off.) |



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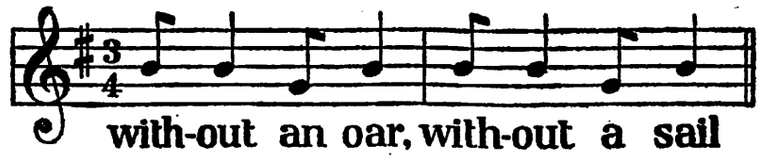
|---|---|
| FAIRIES SING BEHIND THE RUSHES: | Silver Ferry glide away . . . |
| FOXGLOVE: | What was this sound,<br>What did it say? |
| FAIRIES: | Silver Ferry glide away. . . . |
| FOXGLOVE: | It came again, but would not stay. |
| FAIRIES: | Silver Ferry glide away. . . . |
| FOXGLOVE: | What a lovely song,<br>Yet it is not very long. |
| FAIRIES: | Silver Ferry glide away. . . . |
| FOXGLOVE: | Wait, I know now what to do,<br>Hark I'll make a rhyme for you. |
| FAIRIES: | Silver Ferry glide away. . . . |
| FOXGLOVE CONTINUES: | Without an oar, without a sail. |

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|---|---|
| FAIRIES COME OUT: | Foxglove, Foxglove, Foxglove dear<br>Thank you for your song.<br>Mark it Fairies, learn it well,<br>Twice as nice and long. |
| FAIRIES SING AND DANCE: | Silver Ferry glide away,<br>Without an oar, without a sail. |
| COMING UP ROUND FOXGLOVE: | Show yourself, now, lovely man,<br>Full of charm and grace.<br>Let us see what you are like<br>Figure and your face.<br>Woe! O woe! Alas! Alack!<br>What a hunched and crooked back,<br>No, O no, this must not be,<br>When such music lives in thee<br>Full of shining thoughts your mind,<br>And your heart is good and kind.<br>Stretch your limbs,<br>Grow straight and tall,<br>Nasty hunchback pop and fall.<br>Foxglove, Foxglove, Hail to you!<br>Now your life begins anew.<br>Straight and upright like a king,<br>Since you sang in fairy's ring.<br>Foxglove free of fault and fail<br>All the fairies sing you hail. |

COUNTRY FOLK COME SINGING: The sun is now arising,
And all the cocks do crow
And we must all be rising
And to our work will go.

Now wake up little Foxglove
Arise, arise, arise
The sheep are all a-grazing
The sunshine's in your eyes.

FOXGLOVE: Ah, where am I?
Did I dream?
Oh! how lovely it did seem!
Am I straight?
Am I tall?
Did the nasty hunchback fall?
Yes, the fairies did speak true
I am just as straight as you.

COUNTRY FOLK SING AND DANCE: Now hail and cheer to Foxglove,
Now hail and cheer we sing.
Now come with us a-dancing
And join our fairy ring.
(*They walk off with* FOXGLOVE *still singing.*)

BRONJA HÜTTNER.

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