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CHILD AND MAN

A MAGAZINE FOR
THE EDUCATION FOUNDED BY
RUDOLF STEINER

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NUMBER 2

EDITORIAL

I am glad to have one of the major articles in this number from the pen of Dr. Moffat, the founder of the Edinburgh Rudolf Steiner School. His vigorous exposition of an important subject will be valued by readers. I would like to say a word also about Mr. Roy Wilkinson, who writes about his courageous venture in Leeds, where he has founded Michael Lodge, the youngest of the Rudolf Steiner Schools in this country. He has been connected with Rudolf Steiner's work for 25 years and spent six of them at the Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland, where he gained particular qualifications in speech and drama. He taught at two other Rudolf Steiner schools, before opening the new venture in Yorkshire.

Readers will have noticed the new series entitled "Questions and Answers." I am always glad to receive questions from readers and these will be answered in due course on this page.

THE EDUCATION OF THE WILL

Pelham S. Moffat.

The Will is at once the most pervading and yet the most elusive of the attributes of Man. We cannot be comfortably intellectual about it, nor see it neatly pigeon-holed. It shows itself in our bodily movements, in our thinking—as in the act of mental concentration—in our sense-perception—as in attentive looking or listening—and it is inextricably a part of our feelings and emotions. It penetrates all our human life, and yet it cannot be caught, examined and defined. For these reasons, the education of the will is not only one of the main objectives of present-day education, but is probably the one most consistently unattained. Our English Public School system is above all an attempt to educate the will. It is felt that in order to attain decent standards of social behaviour, the will must be educated; and the word "Discipline" ranks high as a means to this end. And certainly there must be discipline. But this is a word which is almost as wide and vague in its meaning as the term "education" itself.

If we think of Will as simply that surging human energy which is so large a part of the being of the young child, and which, for our adult peace, has to be somehow shaped and controlled, we may well imagine that, by means of external injunction, command and punishment, we shall get what we want. And we do—if this is all that we want. But the whole question really is, whether we think we are training puppy-dogs or actively social human beings. In other words, shall we subdue the will into a convenient pattern of behaviour, or elevate it to a moral force? In the latter case, the primitive up-surging forces of will must be brought into a real harmony with the thinking and feeling in the human being, so that will-impulses shall not over-ride the thinking, and that thinking may use the will-force as the instrument of freely-born moral ideals,—rather than become the servant to the reactions of a superimposed behaviour-pattern.

In achieving this, there must of course be discipline, but we have to consider what *kind* of discipline. And we have also to realise that much else beside discipline is called-for. In short, this cannot be done through any “system” or by means of “tradition.” Still less can one rush to the opposite pole and achieve it by means of “free expression,” since expression of this kind is not usually free in any case, but dominated by successive impulses. The true harmonising of the human being—the task of gradually bringing the chaotic forces of will into the service of the human individuality—is an educational activity requiring years of individual care.

The “Main Lesson”

This is the task which the class-teachers in a Rudolf Steiner school set themselves; and, as they go up the school with their classes from the ages of 6 to 14, they are in a position to give their attention to it over a period of eight years. It is during this period, between the change of teeth and puberty, that the harmonising of thought feeling and will must be brought about. In the two-hour “main lesson” which the class-teacher takes with his class each morning—presenting each subject in turn for a period of four or five weeks—lies the possibility to weave together these three elements of the child’s being. What the teacher brings to the children—whether it be history, geography, animal or plant-study, or the physical sciences,—he presents in such a way that the imagination and feelings of the children are stimulated, and the thoughts which are aroused are thus warm and lively. This thinking-feeling is then led over into a corresponding will-activity—such as the description in writing, drawing or modelling of what they have heard,—or in acting, as may be appropriate. And so thought and feeling are gradually led into harmony with the will.

It is these warm, interested, sympathetic thoughts, kindled in the children by the teacher, which make connection with the will., For the bridge from thinking to willing is the feelings. Which of us—unless driven by necessity—has ever roused himself to do anything about which he has no feeling? Even what we do “merely from a sense of duty” lest we should feel ourselves selfish or negligent, is done on account of that very anticipated feeling. Feeling, then, is the royal road to the will; and no amount of factual statements in text-books will stimulate the will into activity,—in spite of the fact that text-books today are very much more human than they were some years ago. The best text-book is the teacher, who alone,—because he is a human being,—can clothe the subject-matter with real warmth. For this reason,—because we wish to educate the will,—we use teachers instead of text-books in the years between 6 and 14. Neither do we introduce wireless, the cinema, or television into the classrooms for the same reason. Far better that the teacher—devoid of all the equipment of moving-pictures and sound-effects—should arouse the imagination of the children (for if you are sitting looking at cinema-pictures you don’t need to use your imagination), and so touch their heart and will. Such a teacher, standing before his class with a real love for his task, and for his children, will by these very qualities lead the human thinking into harmony with the will, in a way which no amount of mechanical devices can possibly do. For the B.B.C. in all its glory is not arrayed like one of these.

It is of course intended that these visual and other “aids” are there to assist the teacher and not to supplant him. But the fact remains that, whenever he turns them on, they do supplant him. He sets up a machine in his place. For the broadcasters who tell the travel story, or act the historical play, are not there in the flesh in the classroom. It is the living, actually present, human beings who makes an impression on the children. You cannot educate by machinery. At best, you may give entertainment. But that is not what we send our children to school for. It is the children themselves who should be acting the historical play. That might then be educative, if it were connected with the history stories being told at the time by the teacher.

The root of the matter is, that the educational thought current today—in spite of its many new ideals—cannot really tear itself away from the mediaeval notion that the aim of education is after all simply *Knowledge*. It is rather like a goat seeking new pasture, but tethered to a peg in the ground. So he goes round and round, and calls it progress. It is “progress” to bring wireless and the cinema into the classroom. But of course this is simply a new way of pumping in the old knowledge. Knowledge—mere knowledge—is useless as an educative force for the pre-adolescent child; for it

remains in the head and touches neither feelings nor will. Thus we leave undone the bringing of thinking into connection with the will and so help to produce one-sided intellectuals, and people of unstable emotions and uncontrolled or weak will,—swelling the queues for the psychological clinics. Knowledge, to be of value—like any food which is to benefit the human being,—must be digested. And it is not digested if it stays in the head and does not pass through the whole organism, nourishing the feelings and stimulating the will. It remains simply where we first put it, in the form of hard, undigested lumps, to be thrown up at a given date upon some convenient examination paper. Then perhaps the patient feels a little better. But this kind of thing is not education. It is simply a form of cruelty to children permitted by the police.

In a Rudolf Steiner School we use a large unruled book, sometimes as big as a drawing-book, in which is put all that the children write or draw in the course of a period of Main Lessons. It is called the "Main Lesson Book," and is under the special care of the child, containing his most careful work. Here are the history stories which he writes, with his drawings of events which have specially interested him. In a similar book are his maps which he has drawn, and his accounts of the countries concerned—frequently in the form of an imaginary journey through this or that land. In another are his animal or plant drawings, and his account of these, and so on. The children, in fact, in a simple way, make their own "text-books." It is a refreshing sight to see with what zest a class will turn to their Main Lesson books and attack this work immediately the teacher has ended his story or description. It is as if some hidden spring had suddenly been released. The children are now ready and anxious to put their will-activity into use, after the feeling-thinking part of the lesson is over.

The keynote of the Main Lesson book is care and beauty; and of course only the child's previously corrected work is transcribed into it. Then the teacher has to correct the Main Lesson book itself (for copying errors)—a big task in a large class, but important, if we are to complete this aspect of will-education. Then the book is finished, and is shown at the next "parents' evening." It is the child's completed work which—under the supervision of the teacher—he has had the responsibility of carrying through. The whole task is, in itself, an excellent Will-exercise. Thus the children are trained to enjoy and value good work, and the carrying through of a task to its end. This is important. They come naturally to accept this condition, and Main Lesson books are sometimes taken home "to finish" in the holidays—at the suggestion of the child. One boy of 10 in the writer's own class once spent the first few mornings of his Christmas holidays at school, re-drawing a map of Scotland, because he had been dissatisfied with his first effort. This was at his own request.

So the linking of thought, feeling and will begins to show already in the junior school. Such children, when they grow up, are not likely to be among those adults who work with their eye on the clock, or whose interests progress from one tea-interval to the next. Such people are of course the products also of their particular kind of education,—the tragic products—and is the country today not full of them?

Discipline.

Rudolf Steiner schools are frequently—but erroneously—classified among those who have "free discipline,"—which means sometimes "discipline" arranged by the children themselves, or none at all. This misconception arises because people today like to put everything into pigeon-holes, and there are only two pigeon-holes, apparently, available for education,—(a) the orthodox, and (b) the "free-discipline" school. So if you don't fit into the one it is assumed you belong to the other. One would have to make at least one more pigeon-hole for the mental docketing of Rudolf Steiner schools—for they belong to neither of these two categories; but this means taking trouble to find out just what a Rudolf Steiner school is, and to grasp new conceptions, and few people today are willing to take trouble of this sort,—all of which goes to show how urgent is the need for a new kind of education.

Fundamentally, children between the ages of 6 and 14 do not wish to "do as they like." They long for some adult authority to whom they can look up and whose judgment they can accept without question. At home, this is naturally the father and mother; at school it is the class-teacher. That is why we have a class-teacher who goes up through the junior school with his class. This continuity of authority is essential for the children's stability—just as it is at home;—and when the child has such an authority throughout his junior school life, we have here a natural source of discipline. This is something which the child fundamentally wants, however naughty he may be at times. But it is the discipline of a natural love and respect, not of fear. Such a discipline strengthens and consolidates the will. It helps to build moral backbone. A discipline enforced by physical fear, on the other hand,—while possibly better than no discipline at all—brings merely an external pressure to bear, and does not reach the moral nature of the child. At best, it induces a crust of habit to form round the human being, instead of developing an inner moral support. It is the difference between having a shell, and a backbone. But it is moral vertebrates we need in this world, not crustaceans.

The main purpose of punishment is to awaken the child to a realisation of what he has done,—not to frighten him. If your aim

is to frighten him, then your methods will have least effect on those who have most spirit and courage,—*i.e.*, on the most promising personalities. Punishment should in each case be adjusted to suit the "crime." It is not always easy to find the appropriate punishment, but the nearer one approaches it, the more effective it is.

Other methods of stimulating the will-activity of the child, such as competition and the offering of rewards, are morally harmful. The one promotes egotism and anti-social feelings, and the other emphasises the "pay-pocket" motive for work. Competition and emulation have their rightful places in the world, but they should not be used in education as a means of prodding the will. Such methods will not help the child, in later life, to love work for its own sake. They act merely as an external stimulant, not as an inner strengthening.

During the class-teacher years in Rudolf Steiner schools, the ultimate motive for all work—apart from a natural enjoyment of what is being done—is the wish to please and satisfy the class-teacher because he is the children's final criterion of judgement; and a child of this age who learns to work for the sake of a person whom he respects, will be best able to take over responsibility for his own work when he reaches adolescence. It is for the class-teacher therefore to demand as high a standard as possible from each child, according to his ability, and to reject all careless work. It may even be necessary—and the writer has done it more than once—to demand the re-writing of a whole Main Lesson book. Only in this way will the child in later life adopt a high standard of his own.

Thus, while thought and feeling are gradually being led into a harmonious union with the will, so that they, and they alone, may ultimately control it,—the will itself is being disciplined and controlled by the teacher in preparation for that time. He is like a regent in charge of a kingdom until the young prince shall be old enough to rule by himself. It will now be fairly obvious how harmful it is to allow a child to "do as he likes." If his still unco-ordinated will-impulses are allowed to lead him hither and thither, just as they happen to arise, there will be no hope of co-ordinating them with his thinking. They will become the true masters of the situation; and it will be a rebellious and a chaotic kingdom to which the young prince will succeed when at length he comes into his own.

Sport.

And what of Sport? No treatment of this subject can be complete without reference to sport, since the will enters strongly into such activity, and present-day education lays great stress on the value of games as a means of moral training. In Rudolf Steiner schools, it will be gathered, we reckon to do all our moral training in the classroom; and there seems something strange about any system of education which purports to depend on play as a train-

ing for work. Perhaps that is why, however, after some generations of this attitude, a Cup Tie is now regarded as an event of nationwide importance, and men in their thousands will leave their tools to watch a mid-week football match. Truly our educators have their reward. It may be true, of course, that Waterloo was won on the playing-fields of Eton, but the statement seems unkind to those non-Etonians among the ranks.

But—it is argued—it is the cultivation of the "team-spirit" that is of such value in games. Well, if you have no "team-spirit" in your classroom,—if, on the contrary, you run your education on the stimulus of individual competition, and do little to cultivate feeling, which is the true socialising medium,—because your eye has to be fixed upon the terminal examinations and all the accumulation of knowledge which these entail—the one sad place where social co-operation might have room to flower, is perhaps on the sports-field. But is this not tragic? How far, if at all, this "team-spirit" on the sports-field really overflows into other spheres of social life, is a matter of doubt. One would imagine, if it did so, that after all these years of frantic team-playing this country should be a social paradise and New Jerusalem be already built in England's green and pleasant land. However, it is not so, and we may safely conclude that a considerable amount of nonsense has been spoken about the pedagogical value of games, and that we may have to fall back, after all, upon education in the classroom. This is not in any way to disparage games, but rather to see them in a truer perspective.

The truth of the matter is, that the playing of games cannot educate the will in the sense described here. There is no connection whatsoever between what is done in the classroom in the realm of thinking, and what is done on the sports-field in the sphere of will-activity. There can therefore be no leading-over of the one human capability into the other. A purely intellectual education in school, side by side with a physical one on the field, merely tends to split the human being in two. It does not co-ordinate. But, if we have already done our best to link thinking and willing in the classroom and now let our children go out and play games, we shall see how this interweaving of thought, feeling and will—which begets the quality we call enthusiasm—shows itself in their play.

We both play and enjoy games in Rudolf Steiner schools in this country, because they are part of our national life. People who speak of the "value" of games are usually looking for an excuse for playing them. There is no need for an excuse. You play a game because you enjoy it, and that is all. Hence "compulsory" games are nonsense. You cannot compel a child to enjoy a game. If he does not enjoy it, it is no longer a game for him, but a piece of forced labour. So in our schools games are voluntary. But this does not mean that the children do not play them seriously. On the contrary, the keenness with which they play is the outstanding feature.

Rudolf Steiner, at the time when Michael Hall was being founded, said that children in such a school in this country should be taught to play the usual games, for this is part of the social environment into which they will enter. This, together with the fact that most of the children enjoy one or other of these games, is the reason for our playing them. And our children play them well. The writer can speak with first-hand knowledge only of games in the Edinburgh school, which now include cricket, hockey, rugby and netball, and for which the children have the benefit of coaches experienced in these games. He has been able to make the following observations :

The team-spirit is quickly there, because the children are accustomed to working together. They are adaptable, and learn a game quickly. (For example,—with great effrontery—after no more than nine practise games of Rugby, a team of 12—13 year olds took on another Edinburgh school, and won). They bring tremendous keenness and will into all their play. They show a natural courage. And they are good sportsmen. In short, they seem to bring with them the fundamental qualities needed for games. In return, they gain great enjoyment in the developing of the particular skill required by each game, in matching that skill against that of others, and in the outlet which it affords for their boundless energies.

But these children, who know nothing of the whys and wherefores of their education, and yet who have to suffer so much on its behalf from a misinformed and often hostile world, become its unconscious ambassadors when, meeting their contemporaries in this realm of sport—by which so much is judged today—they show their keenness, skill and courage. In this respect, another kind of battle may be won on the playing-fields,—which only the children themselves can fight for us.

THE DIRECTION OF ACTIVITY IN THE CLASSROOM

Eileen Hutchins.

Dr. Steiner has often spoken of the will as the soul activity which must never be directly worked upon by the educator. Whatever methods we use, the power of the will is sacred and to interfere with it is to enter unbidden into a holy place. We do not try to master the forces which give the body its structure or which model the countenance and bring expression to the face, neither should we seek to divert the deep hidden currents which lead each personality to find his way through the world. The sources of the will spring from realms where our consciousness is unable to penetrate ; nevertheless as teachers we are confronted with the problem : "How can we bring the children in our care to behave in a way which is desirable both for their own wellbeing and for that of others ?"

We see the tiny child full of that "surging human energy" which Dr. Moffat has described and "which for our adult peace has somehow to be shaped and controlled." We see him giving chaotic expression to this energy, but as yet unable to master or understand the rhythms and stern necessities of earthly life. It is our task to lead him into relationship with earth existence. Anyone who has watched a young child giving full vent to his impulses in free play, feels sorrow that so much joyous enthusiasm becomes dulled with the passage of time. If only we could preserve undimmed the strength of will shown by the tiny child and yet lead it into spheres of action which have sense for human life.

In the last century the stern parent strove to "break" the child's will so that he might become a worthy representative of the family tradition. The modern father or mother tends to say, "My child knows better than I do what he needs so I let him do what he likes" In the first place the will powers are bound to the treadmill of convention, in the second they become as variable and unstable as the weathercock.

The most important steps towards harmonising the will are taken during the child's first seven years of life when these forces are most active and most readily guided. It is my task in this article to write of the activities of the classroom and thus little can be said here of the earlier period, but as a class teacher may have to compensate for what has been done amiss, a few words are necessary. One of the greatest aids to the strengthening and bringing into order of the will is the establishing of good habits—not habits cultivated for the sake of convenience, but the repetition of acts because they are in themselves good and right. There should be a rhythmic constancy in the acts of waking and falling asleep, of taking food and of holding intercourse with the divine worlds. It is helpful if in the morning and evening and at meal times a prayer or grace is spoken, but the words must come from the heart of the parent or teacher, empty conventional phrases are better left unspoken. Then the child can experience himself as a being of divine origin in a world created by divine powers. Rudolf Steiner has spoken of the strength of will acquired by man in past times through the daily repetition of the Lord's Prayer. Through regular intercourse with spirit being, a nourishment of the forces of the soul takes place.

The second aid in the early years of life is the child's love of imitation. But children need to imitate tasks which are done out of enthusiasm and to look up to personalities who have acquired goodness and peace of heart. It is sad that today they rarely have much to imitate except the sounds and movements of machinery, and from grown-up people they too often acquire anxiety and doubt.

We often admit pupils into our lower classes who show certain definite characteristics. They appear bright and intelligent and seem to understand all they are taught but they cannot retain what

they learn and have very little interest in expressing themselves in writing or colour. They are often unable to move rhythmically or to march in step. They are restless and unconcentrated and very often manage to break or spoil the materials they are given to use. Everything mechanical fascinates them and when they are given free rein to draw or paint what they like they will cover whole sheets of paper with aeroplanes, tanks and bombs. The tragedy is that they are in every way normal and healthy children but they have been waked up too early into a kind of nervous excitability without having formed any regular habits or developed any reverence for the world.

To such children the curriculum of our schools is in itself a source of healing. There are very few who do not respond with interest to the content of their lessons and no subject is ever presented to the intellect alone ; feeling and activity are regularly called forth. Nevertheless the type of children I have described are a cause of concern to the teacher and if they are left to their own resources in illustrating or writing about what they have learned the results are only too often deeply disappointing. The teacher has always to be wary that he himself is not pouring forth too much upon an inactive class. In these children there is an attitude of mind that on the one hand nothing really matters and on the other that their own powers are not adequate to perform any task well. We need to arouse in them the feeling that effort brings unexpected discovery, and that activity can call to light hitherto hidden secrets. Certain subjects are specially suitable to awaken this feeling. In the first classes children can be given studies in colour and line, starting from a design so simple that everyone can make some attempt and evolving into a final form which is both beautiful and surprising. In the later classes the development of geometrical figures nearly always captures the interest and absorbs the attention of pupils who find difficulty in concentrating or of uniting themselves with their tasks. In their early years many children today show little interest in reading or writing. They are regularly entertained with cinema and television and have lost the capacity to be active. They often listen attentively to stories and copy from the board but show no desire to master spelling or punctuation or to tell a story for the joy of telling it. Here too they need to feel that effort brings discovery. They can be helped to read the opening passages of a story and given the task of finishing it by themselves. They can be told the first half of a little fable and asked how they would like it to end. Conversations in class should be arranged so that the inactive are drawn to contribute at least some comments about the subject matter of their lessons. Once with my own class (then Class IV) after rather a barren period I gave the children two descriptions, one of a wild romantic castle and the other of an old-world country cottage and asked them to describe what kinds of characters they would imagine inhabiting these scenes. After spending some while building up character and scene in conversation many of them became fired with the idea not only to create their

own scenes and characters but also the action which should take place in such settings and the result was a number of most interesting and beautiful stories.

The feeling of discovery should also be brought where possible into the lessons with numbers. It is wonderful to see children experiencing for the first time that 3×4 is the same as 4×3 . Sums can be arranged so that the answers bring an element of surprise and later children can be led to find rhythms in series of numbers as for instance the increasing measure between the squares of numbers, 1×1 , 2×2 , 3×3 , and so on. Those who have found their early reckoning a kind of adventure will bring energy and enthusiasm when they need to approach the more difficult branches of mathematics.

In all Arithmetic lessons physical activity plays a large part. Children learn to count in patterns, they move, clap or skip to rhythms and tables. But here too the teacher has to watch that all are really taking part. Among the crowd there is often a child who gives stress and rhythm to his words but who is reciting meaningless numbers. An attentive ear can catch, "Twice one is two ; twice two are three ; twice three are eight ;" or something equally inaccurate. If change is brought into the movement and recitation by variations in speed, or if the children are led to contribute in turns, each learning to find pleasure in the way another moves or recites, this laziness can often be overcome. If it really results from slow wittedness then a little extra tuition should be given before the child is too far up the school. The teacher needs to watch the children who give up the race because they feel they have already been left too far behind. A little understanding help at the right time can re-awaken confidence.

Many hindrances are caused when a child's sense of rhythm has been disturbed. Children often read badly because they cannot let their feelings flow into the movement of the sentence. They cannot learn by heart because they have no sense for the music of the poem. Such children very often dislike exercises in movement. When the others march or skip, they do not try to do the steps properly but take pleasure in being as bad as possible. This can generally be overcome by bringing a dramatic element into the exercises. Scenes can be chosen from the stories of their main lesson period. One child can be King and the others his soldiers who are ordered to march and counter march, or the whole group can form a procession bearing gifts to lay before the infant prince. Movements of joy and mourning can succeed one another in rhythmic interplay and it is very rarely that a child refuses to join in scenes from his favourite stories.

It is perhaps clear from these descriptions that children are led to be active because they themselves wish to be so and the only progress that is really worth while is that where the will of the child and

the will of the teacher flow together. Through the subject matter of the lesson this willing together can almost always be attained and the child who is happily active in his school hours will generally become more amenable at other times as well.

There are greater difficulties, however, than the one of how to make our pupils active in learning their lessons. We are always being asked, "What do you do when children are naughty or develop undesirable qualities?" Many of the troublesome faults of children, carelessness, lack of respect and disobedience, for example, are due to insufficient guidance in the first seven years. But although the best period for the development of good habits is already past, much can still be done. It can still work effectively into the child's life if a definite order is preserved in the conduct of the class. A reverent silence should be observed for the saying together of the morning verse. It is important that the classroom is kept beautifully, that pencils, paints and writing materials are treated with care and that at least certain periods of silence are insisted upon so that work can be done with quiet concentration. Lack of respect is like an illness. When there is no order or feeling for authority in the life of the class, the influence spreads out into the whole school. On the other hand if a careless disrespectful child is entrusted with the sacred task of guarding the class treasures—whatever these may be—it can work as effectively as a magic potion.

Obedience is important; but obedience must be won because the task asked is right and then the teacher can be absolutely firm. We should not say, "I order you to do this," but "I would like you to do it," and behind this request the child should feel, "It would please my teacher because it is right and beautiful to act in this way." If obedience is won through fear of punishment and the child is resentful, the teacher has really lost. If children deliberately disobey or wilfully hurt others, corporal punishment may be right, but the all important factor is the understanding between teacher and child. Children really wish for authority and are ready to accept reproof or punishment when their acts disturb the tradition of school life.

The most difficult problems still remain. There are many children today who have no sense for truth. They spin fantasies and lie, they help themselves to the possessions of their classmates and it does not seem to trouble them if they cause inconvenience or even serious pain and difficulty to others. What does our education do for these children?

Here above all the teacher has to be a healer. But in every illness the chief part is played by the patient himself for he must collaborate with his doctor in having 'the will to recover,' 'the will to live.' It is the same in the case of the delinquent child. We do not seek to turn him into a pattern of correct behaviour but to call forth the longing and striving to be a noble human being. In cases of unsatisfactory conduct we need to ask: "What drives this child

to lie or to steal?" Perhaps certain gifts are not given sufficient outlet. Let the child who spins untrue stories about his own life and deeds, create romances to entertain his classmates. I have heard of a boy, given to thieving, who overcame this tendency when he was set the task of collecting and being responsible for specimens to illustrate lessons in Natural Science. Sometimes the cause of delinquency is lack of love and appreciation in the home life. The class teacher can do a great deal to bring sympathetic understanding among the children of the class, and the solitary difficult child who finds a friend will immediately begin to make progress. In cases of lying and stealing due to fear, everything must be done to develop courage and confidence.

A moral behaviour is often found in children where a quick and precocious intelligence has been developed too quickly and thus divorced from the life of feeling. This is more difficult to heal. But such children can through their intelligence be brought to realise the results they bring back upon themselves through their deceit. In these cases everything must also be done to strengthen their feeling life. The Old Testament Stories and the Norse Myths give many examples of the tragic results of evil doing. If a whole class is brought to feel deep grief for the death of Baldur and to see how it came to pass through the net-work of lying and falsehood spun by Loki, a very powerful impression can be made upon the untruthful child. If such a child can be led to learn and act the part of Loki in a class play the effect will be lasting.

In most cases there can be no immediate cure, but as the whole course of lessons and the conduct of the class through the class teacher period strengthen and harmonise the powers of thinking, feeling and willing, dangerous symptoms will gradually disappear. A teacher cannot demand from the future any guarantee that his pupils will turn out as he hopes; but if with love and understanding he has done all within his power, then at least he can send them forth more strongly and fully equipped to meet the difficulties of life.

MICHAELMAS.

H. L. Hetherington.

Those who have experienced the Michaelmas Festival at a Rudolf Steiner School, falling as it does on September 29th, soon after the opening of the new school year, inevitably link it with a time of new beginnings and fresh resolves. And this is a right feeling. As the children assemble after the drowsy interval of their long summer holidays, they find a refurbished school and companions grown perceptibly older in the meantime. The school is familiar, yet unfamiliar and the classrooms smell of wax from the cleaning.

The mornings are often misty and the trees rise silently and forlornly out of the opaque air, which contains a hint of frost. The children think of the more vigorous games of the winter terms and look, a trifle nostalgically, at the silent and unbroken surface of the swimming pool. But before them they have the wide prospect of the year's work, the succession of varied experiences in store for them, the enjoyment of lessons in their new class, about which they have heard from older school friends.

The teachers, too, enter upon the new school year at Michaelmas with a renewed enthusiasm and a firmer step. They bring with them a deeper understanding of this festival of the Archangel Michael, which they will endeavour to convey to the children during their lessons.

The Michaelmas Festival, standing three months before Christmas, is the preparer of it, just as Michael is the preparer of the way for Christ. As the days shorten and the dreaming communion of earth and sky fades away, as the flower stems and leaves blacken and decay, as the seeds fall to the ground and the dry leaves whirl through the air for little children to chase and catch, the earth must be prepared to receive the Christ Child in the rockbound grotto at Bethlehem. This can only be done if the dragon is cast out; and Michael fights this battle anew every autumn, so that Christmas may be celebrated in December. The flying meteors in the skies of late autumn are witnesses to Michael's working, to his call that we shall be awake and active after our summer dream and go forward to Christmas with inner awareness and devotion.

RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOLS AT HOME AND ABROAD

No. 5. Michael Lodge School, Leeds.

Roy Wilkinson.

Michael Lodge School is the youngest of the Rudolf Steiner Schools in Great Britain. It owes its existence to an impulse to introduce this type of education into new territory. Before 1948 there was no Rudolf Steiner School in any of the towns or cities of the industrial North. A pioneering effort has been made in Leeds, a city of half a million inhabitants, and the metropolis of the busy industrial West Riding of Yorkshire.

It was felt, on the one hand, that the artistic and ethical education which such a school brings would be of especial benefit to children who perforce must live in the smoky, depressing and ugly surroundings of an industrial city; and, on the other hand, it was thought that in a thickly populated area there would be sufficient people of understanding and insight to support it. It was hoped to make the education available to middle-class purses and the fees were fixed at the minimum compatible with existence. Michael Lodge has no grants, subscriptions or endowments. It is entirely self-supporting and independent.

To open the school at all was a great step into the unknown. Among Rudolf Steiner educationalists many eyebrows were raised at the prospect. However, the founder's anticipations, calculations and estimates proved correct. Children came, parents were satisfied and even enthusiastic, teachers offered their services, the school flourished. Lest that glib statement be misinterpreted to mean that it had an easy passage, let it be said at once that this is written in retrospect, when the Rubicons are crossed and the first mountains overcome.

The School opened in September 1948, in a rented property in the Kirkstall district of Leeds, with five children. There had been no opportunity to do any preparatory work. The name of Rudolf Steiner was practically unknown and contacts were few. The first few children came in response to newspaper advertisements and the notice board. It was intended to build from the bottom upwards and accordingly only children in the four to five age group were admitted. As these grew older, contemporaries and younger children (but not older) were admitted. The numbers grew slowly and it became possible to organise a Nursery and a Class I. It was obvious that the accommodation, which was only temporary in any case, would not last for very long and a search for suitable premises was begun. With the housing shortage, very limited means and the complications of the Town and Country Planning Act, this proved a major problem. Happily, things resolved themselves at the last minute and the present property was acquired. It is a large Victorian house, with spacious rooms and a large garden, situated in a mixed residential district (Cardigan Road, Headingley) about two miles from the city centre. The property had been an hotel and was used by the army during the war. This meant that a fair amount of renovation was necessary. Reams of forms had to be filled in, armies of officials and inspectors had to be interviewed and contractors engaged. This took place during the summer of 1950. In spite of strenuous efforts the opening day of the new term had to be postponed a few days; even so the classrooms were only just ready to receive the children. Quietly the school took up its new abode. In the move a few dropped out, but more came in, so that it re-opened with twenty-five pupils.

The problem of the name had already arisen. The School had been known as "Monkswood" the name of the previous house. It did not seem right to transfer the name and a new one had to be sought. This proved almost as difficult as finding a new property. The suggestions received were many and varied. The name of the new property was "Sunnyside," but while Sunnyside might be an apt name for a nursery it hardly seemed dignified enough for an eventual upper school. When a strip in one of the children's comics, featuring "The Boys of Sunnyside School" was discovered the idea was hastily abandoned. Finally it was decided to invoke the

Archangel Michael and the school became known as Michael Lodge. A badge was designed and a motto to accompany it,—“Lux in tenebris splendet,”—“May the light shine in the darkness.”

Although well situated with regard to transport, the school was not quite accessible to some children and a private conveyance was arranged. This idea has developed to a coach serving one direction and a large taxi another.

No sooner had the school started to function again than an adjoining property became vacant. This was originally the stables and coach house belonging to the new school building and obviously belonged to the estate. The search for means to buy it was extensive and in vain until certain agents offered to advance the whole of the purchase price on mortgage, purely as a business risk.

The new acquisition has provided extra accommodation, a teacher's cottage, garages, stables and a loft capable of conversion. The stables are being made into a small hall at the present time.

In the meantime, the number of children has increased and now stands at approximately sixty-five. They are divided into three groups: Nursery, Class I and Class III. The present Class III has grown from one pupil to twenty. In the autumn (1952) it will be necessary to form a new class, probably a Transition Class, containing all the children of about five who have been in the Nursery.

With regard to staff, besides the writer, there are two full-time teachers, one part-time and one occasional assistant. The School owes much to the present Nursery Class teacher, who has worked with unceasing interest and devotion in building up the Nursery from about 6 children to the present 30. When the time came to open a new Class I, the school was fortunate in being able to obtain the services of a highly qualified and experienced teacher, who is devoted to the work. Further assistance will be available in the autumn and so far no difficulty has been experienced in staffing.

A report of Michael Lodge would not be complete without mention of two outside activities.

One is the Puppet Theatre. A few puppets of the glove variety were originally made for the sake of the children in the School. The response was so overwhelming that the idea was extended and a repertoire of plays was built up. This came to the notice of the authorities and for the third season in succession, the puppets are a feature of the Leeds Parks. Plays based on Fairy Tales and Folk Stories are given throughout the summer on behalf of the Civic Entertainment Committee. Both committee and public have expressed their appreciation. A limited number of private engagements are also undertaken. Plays produced so far have included “Rumpelstiltskin,” “The Frog Prince,” “Travelling Musicians,” “The Owl,” “St. George and the Dragon,” “Billy Goats Gruff,” “The Table, the Donkey and the Stick.”

The other activity is connected with the widening circle of interest which has been aroused. The writer receives repeated invitations to lecture in Leeds and in neighbouring towns on Rudolf Steiner education or allied themes.

Looking toward the future, there would appear to be great possibilities of development. It would be very advantageous to have branch Nursery Classes in different parts of the city and possibly a hostel for boarders on the outskirts. These are awaiting financial manna.

Looking backward over the past four years, one is grateful to have survived the hard road with so few grey hairs. It should be said, however, that the path is smoothed by the love and trust which the children themselves bring; also the knowledge that one is following a worthy vocation. A Rudolf Steiner education gives the child something vital for its whole existence. It gives not only a comprehensive understanding of the world but also a strengthening of the spiritual and moral forces to meet life's tasks and difficulties.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

2. *Why is my six year old child backward in reading and writing at his Rudolf Steiner School?*

This is a perennial question in the Rudolf Steiner Schools in England, especially in the newer ones. On the continent and in America it does not arise because children start school at a later age.

Naturally, all parents are anxious about their own children. Perhaps they notice a neighbour's child apparently learning faster at another school and doubts as to the wisdom of their own choice may come into their minds.

The short answer is that our children are only *apparently* behind. There are many other things in the world besides the three R's.

The Rudolf Steiner education is built upon a philosophy of life and an understanding of the human being which sees the human individuality coming step by step into the physical world. Birth is one stage, being able to stand upright is another, using the expression “I” is a further step. It is a fallacy to look upon the child as a small edition of the adult. He is an altogether different being.

At the age of six come the second teeth, which mark an important point in physical development. Until this stage has been reached the child should be left essentially to “grow.” Of course, he can be helped to unfold his own powers by artistic activities such as are

given in the nursery. The child is prepared and cultivated to receive the knowledge which comes later. Even when we do begin with reading and writing, we do not deal with them in an abstract way, but in an artistic one. (See former articles in "Child and Man"). This takes time but it is thorough, interesting to the children, and usually produces pleasing and visible results in the form of good handwriting.

The process of learning is slow in the beginning. It gathers momentum as the years go by and a Class VI curriculum looks positively overwhelming.

It should be remembered that the children at the Rudolf Steiner Schools *enjoy* their lessons. To force children to do things for which they are not yet ready, or to call upon faculties which they have not yet properly developed, can only mean a loss of interest and a loss of vitality which is detrimental to their whole future.

This question of "being behind" only occurs in the first few classes. Then the tables are turned. Parents bringing children into Rudolf Steiner Schools from about the third class onward are usually surprised at the wide range of subjects taught and at the achievements of the children in many and varied directions.

ANECDOTES FROM SCHOOL LIFE No. I.

A little boy of eight who had spent several years at a boarding school, was recently admitted to one of our schools. He settled down very quietly but after a time plucked up courage to indulge in a little conversation. He opened with a non-committal enquiry as to the subject of the next lesson. "It's Religion," his teacher told him. Immediately his face grew very puzzled and worried. "Oh dear," he sighed; "I can't do Religion."

MICHAEL HOUSE.

We had been doing a period of grammar. A child was questioned by his parents about his school work. He was asked to give examples of nouns.

"God, heaven and earth" came the reply, much to the astonishment and delight of the parents who had expected more mundane matters, like table and chair.

MICHAEL LODGE.

Over a period of half an hour I had been drumming it into the children that a verb meant activity. We had jumped, skipped, hopped, run, clapped, stamped and shouted.

"Now" I said, "it is your turn to tell me some verbs."

The hand of a melancholic drooped into the air: "I am sitting still."

MICHAEL LODGE.

(Farming and Gardening period—Class III).

After a lengthy expostulation on the dependence of man on the soil for his bodily needs—food and clothing—I asked the children to give examples of foodstuffs and clothing so that we could trace them back to their origins in the soil.

First answer: Fish.

MICHAEL LODGE.

A five-year old girl and six-year old boy were discussing trams. *Boy*: But I've seen trams made of wood.

Girl: Oh, they are much much better than tin trams, aren't they? Men make tin, but God makes wood.

Boy: Yes, but you know God really makes the things that men make. God's inside you like you are inside your coat.

MICHAEL HALL.

In the Third Class, during a lesson on farming:

Teacher: And now, what other kind of carthorses are there besides the Suffolk Punch?

Nine-year-old Boy: The Norfolk Judy.

MICHAEL HALL.

Five-year-old girl, studying the bathroom plumbing:
Daddy, how is it I can see three pipes and I've only got two eyes?

MICHAEL HALL.

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