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CHILD AND MAN

A MAGAZINE FOR
THE EDUCATION FOUNDED BY
RUDOLF STEINER

CONTENTS

"As a man thinketh in his heart so is he" *Editor*

How 'General' is the General Certificate

of Education - - - - *Alan Howard*

The Nine Year Old Child - - - *A. E. McAllen*

Practical Activities in Class III - *Roy Wilkinson*

The Midsummer Festival of St. John - *J. Darrell*

Questions and Answers.

4. Is it right to tell children fairy tales
which are always untrue and often
frightening?

Words for a Midsummer Song - - - *H. L. H.*

The Conference of Educational

Associations - - - - *L. F. Edmunds*

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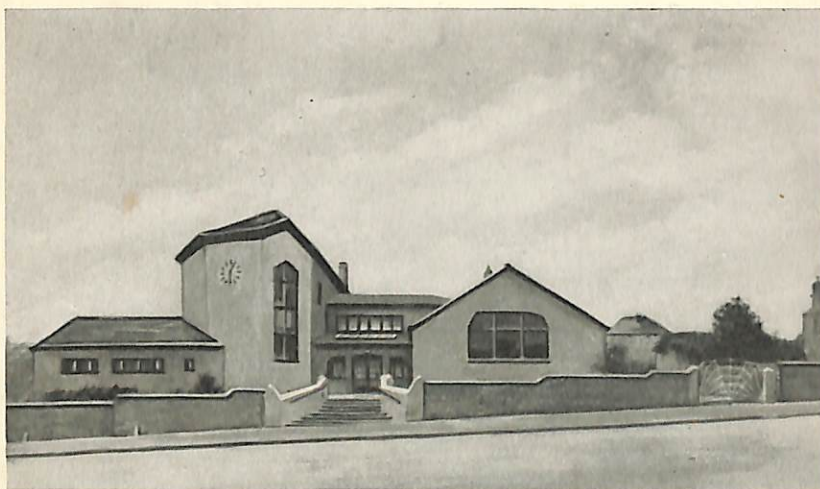
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CHILD AND MAN

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Editor : H. L. HETHERINGTON, B.A., Michael Hall, Forest Row, Sussex.

CHILD AND MAN is a magazine for the education founded by Rudolf Steiner. It seeks to form a link between all those who are in any way interested in this education, and to provide an up-to-date and authoritative commentary on the development of the work in the schools. Its contributors write out of a knowledge of Rudolf Steiner's methods, combined with their own day to day experience in working them out with the children.

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“As a man thinketh in his heart so is he”

ONE of the most baffling and also inspiring things about education is that one is continually being brought face to face with most searching and fundamental questions about the very nature and character of man himself. Once one begins to question the whys and wherefores of education, one quite naturally and swiftly finds oneself asking: “Whom am I educating? What is his nature? What does he need?” Such questions are of course the most far-reaching and solemn that we can ask. And there is a certain distrust, especially in England, of those people who attempt to answer the question entirely theoretically and who build up an intellectual system, which is at best a dangerous experiment involving the destiny of many young lives. So the Englishman prefers to put his trust in the well tried traditional forms of education, hallowed and mellowed by time and which have largely achieved what they set out to do. The Englishman is content to ignore the anomalies, the inconsistencies, the childishnesses even, of traditional education, so long as the final result is up to standard. He distrusts establishments where new ideas are tried out, where modernity seems to be the only quality which is admired.

HOW 'GENERAL' IS THE GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION

Alan Howard

JUST at this time of the year some thousands of boys and girls all over the country are taking their examination for the General Certificate of Education. This represents, from two distinct points of view, a certain climax of our modern education life. On the one hand, it means to each one of those boys and girls the attainment of a certain objective which, in turn, becomes the jumping-off ground for other objectives; and on the other hand, if we take all these individual results together, it represents from the more general point of view an examination of our whole system of education itself. Yes, once a year at this time our educational system virtually submits itself to an examination of the standard of proficiency it has attained, and its value for social life.

Let us enquire a little more closely into this interesting fact, in order to see something of what it implies.

And in order to do so free from any discursive side-issues, let us take for granted what is so often subject to dispute: that is, whether it is good for young people to take exams at all, and whether they do provide an impartial basis for placing them into industrial and commercial life. Let us take it for granted that they are, and that they do; and let us only enquire within what limits they do this, and whether any alteration that is implicit in the facts themselves be made to bring them more into line with modern conditions as they exist.

This being so, three questions claim immediate consideration: From how many of our children do we demand the kind of information about them which this certificate pretends to supply? In so far as we make demands upon our children at all in this way, what is it that we most want to know about their scholastic attainments? Who is best fitted to obtain this information for us?

In reply to the first we must bear in mind that the present school-leaving age is 15, and that no child can take this examination unless he becomes 16 years of age on or before the 1st September following the exam. This means that a large number of our children leave school and enter industrial and commercial life from whom no certificated standard of attainment is, presumably, either expected or desired. In 1951 the figures were as follows: 386,679 children left school at or before the statutory age of 15; 133,792 children took the General Certificate of Education in anything from 1 to 12 subjects. Bearing in mind that the children who took the General Certificate in this year did not belong to the same age group as those who left,

*From "Education in 1951"; the official report of the Ministry of Education—H.M. Stationery Office. It should be noted that these figures only apply to schools in England and Wales under the Ministry's jurisdiction. Figures for 1952 were not available at the time of going to press.

Considering the difficulties of finding one's bearings in educational thought, and considering the successes of English education (that is, the English Public School achieves what it sets out to do), one has some sympathy with the English parent, who prefers the comparatively calm waters of tradition to the restless questioning of experiment. And yet there is an increasing number of parents, who are thinking hard and anxiously about the problems of education and are beginning to see that the traditional forms of education in this country lack many desirable qualities. They are willing to find themselves face to face with those far-reaching problems involving the innermost nature of man, of which we spoke earlier in this editorial. They are willing to face the dangers and eager to solve the immense problems of a fresh advance in education.

We have said that the question: "What is education?" presupposes the age-old question: "What is Man?" and therefore we cannot ever get away from the view we hold of man's origin, nature and destiny when we appear as educators before children. Even our agnosticism is a point of view and must have its own devastating effect on children. Let there be no mistake, what you believe, what you know, what you hold as a precious ideal, all these things are impressed upon children as surely as a seal impresses its own imprint upon wax. What the teacher thinks reveals itself in a thousand tones of voice, a thousand inflections, whether the subject he is teaching be English, mathematics, physics or history. The real education of children arises not so much from what the teacher knows as from what the teacher *is*; from our own schooldays we remember much more vividly the personality of a teacher than what he actually taught.

We have brought these thoughts forward in this editorial, because we believe that we have to revise our scale of values when judging an education. We have to ask ourselves, what picture of man has this group of teachers, what are the wider ideals that inspire them to do their work? What lives as vital experience in them (not merely book knowledge) of the world, of child development, of an understanding of the next advances of mankind? Technical efficiency is vital also, but only as part of a much wider whole, as the result of a deep respect for material, for the significance of physical action, a respect which experiences inefficiency almost as physical pain, as an intolerable falling short of a sacred ideal. We must be courageous enough to allow the deeper questions of human existence to arise in our educational thinking, as rise they will, as rise they must, if we are not to evade the vital issues concerning the bringing up of our children.

THE EDITOR.

we have none the less a striking indication of the proportions that obtain, namely, that our General Certificate caters approximately for only 25% of our school leavers.

Now if, as it is conceded, such an examination is worthwhile in that it gives our children something to strive for, and in that it helps us to distinguish between one child and another when we have to find a job for them, why is it that this is unnecessary in the case of the large majority? Obviously, this examination as it stands at present is far too advanced for all our children; but that only throws into bolder relief the limited value of the examination itself—of which, more anon. If examinations fulfil the valuable purposes claimed for them, why do the children who, presumably, go into the less responsible jobs, not need the benefits of such an incentive? Do *their* employers not need the guidance that a certificate can give in choosing and placing applicants? If it is assumed that the schoolmaster's report is sufficient in such cases, then why is it insufficient in the others? Is a schoolmaster less able to report reliably on a pupil's knowledge of French, say, than he is of his ability at adding and spelling?

Here we have the first anomaly lying behind the whole conception of this General Certificate of Education, namely, that whatever else it is, it isn't 'general'. It is a specialized form of procedure which only applies to about 25% of our children; and it would appear that all we want to know about our children's attainments is how many of them can reach this standard. Our children then fall into two classes: the certificated, and the uncertificated, with only a small minority belonging to the former. How far this will ultimately tend to permeate our industrial and commercial life with a caste-system founded on academic ability, is a question we will not go into here, but which is one not without relevance.

If it is argued that what exists at the moment is only a beginning, that ultimately it is hoped that all children will stay at school until after 16, that they will all prepare for this certificate, and that there will be sufficient schools and specialist teachers to achieve this, it only makes such an enquiry as this all the more urgent. For the present certificate of education is one that could not be applied to all the children who leave our schools, even if those conditions obtained; first, because it is too hard; second, because the results are assessed in a manner which does not arise from real conditions; and third, because it is extremely doubtful whether employers 'in general' want to know the kind of things that are asked in this exam.

Which brings us immediately to the second of the three questions: What do we most want to know about our children's proficiency on leaving school?

One frequently reads in the press, and hears everywhere in public meetings and private conversations, complaints about our young people's scholastic ability. They can't spell; their handwriting is illegible; they don't know how to put a sentence together; they

can't make the most elementary calculation; and so on. Rarely or never do we hear public complaints about their French irregular verbs, their knowledge of Roman history or their ability to classify the various orders of the plant kingdom—and this, not because they all attain a high standard in these things, but simply because they are not 'generally' required. But their ability with the basic skills, their facility with the "Three R's"—this concerns everyone. And it is not surprising, for a standard of proficiency in these is something of primary importance to everyone who employs a boy or girl. In spite of the repeated assertion that a young man can 'get nowhere' these days unless he has four or five subjects at General Certificate level, the majority of employers (and they are by no means confined to those in a small way of business) seem only too happy if their young people can read, write, spell, use the four rules of arithmetic and exhibit a normal amount of commonsense and initiative. Indeed, it is probable that the more exacting employer who insists on a General Certificate, only does so because at least it guarantees him a certain standard in these fundamental things. Certainly no employer expects or wants his young employee to bring with him a specialized knowledge of the business he is going into. He expects, and prefers, to teach him that himself; and many of the bigger concerns keep up large educational establishments for this purpose.

Therefore the basic demands of employers in general seem on the whole quite elementary; and it would seem that to give some satisfaction on these points about *all* children should be the first task of any certificate that calls itself 'general'. Who for instance does not want and need to know whether a young person can: read; write legibly; spell accurately; express himself orally and in writing in clear grammatical sentences; draft a letter; carry out written or spoken instructions; calculate in simple figures or money; take simple measurements and weights; sketch the important details of an object; give directions in writing or by word of mouth; consult reference books, maps, timetables, directories etc.; in short, show a certain familiarity and facility with the more general *modus operandi* of our modern civilisation. Only a test based on such matters could really have the right to provide a 'general' certificate of education for all children—in so far as education means no more in this connection than its usefulness for practical life. *(No one should conclude that the spiritual and cultural values in education are being pushed into the background here in favour of a strict utilitarianism. They are not immediately under consideration (and certainly not verifiable by examination); but neither are they entirely ignored. Anything that promotes our usefulness in practical life is not unconnected with spiritual and moral values of the deepest import. Rudolf Steiner himself, than whom perhaps no one did more to point to the spiritual basis of all education, declared that it was far better that a child should leave school able to write a clear straightforward business letter, than a formal essay on the beauties of a summer evening or idealism in art.)*

Moreover, such a test as is indicated here (which, to be really 'general', of course would have to be applied at school leaving age to all children in all schools) could be taken without demanding changes in curricula, or interfering in any way with what other educational pursuits were fostered. Indeed, it is conceivable that such a demand on all young people, to submit themselves at 15 to a public test in those things without which they enter life socially handicapped, could only have a salutary effect in developing in them a sense of responsibility to society.

Before passing on to attempt an answer to the third question: Who could best set such a test? a word should be said on how it should be assessed. It clearly should not be competitive—in the present sense whereby a line is drawn across the scale at a certain point, and all who fall below it are failures. That could serve no 'general' purpose at all, seeing that the 'failures' have to take their place in society anyhow—and often do so remarkably well. It is most unfortunate that this concept of 'failure' has persisted into our modern educational practice, and that we apply it at the climax of their school life to so many of our children. (In this respect the oft-derided custom of the Indian student who describes himself as 'Fail B.A.' shows a better sense of reality). As if any child is a failure. Compared with others he will certainly stand in varying degrees of ability. Out of the total possibilities of work in the world there will certainly be a more or less limited field for him to enter. But in so far as he can do anything at all, however humble; and has any ability whatsoever, however small, he is certainly not a failure, and should not be described as such.

The results of such a test should, instead, be graded by the individual employers themselves. One would want one standard; another something else. There could be the utmost flexibility in such things, as there should be. Moreover, the results as a whole would have a value for the educationalist and the sociologist such as should set at rest for ever all speculative and recriminatory statements on our national literacy. It would be seen at a glance each year just what our young people could do; and the cause could be investigated and remedies applied on a basis of statistical fact.

But who would set such a test? Clearly not the universities; and certainly not a government department. The best administrators of such a test could only be a representative panel composed of teachers and employers. From the one side would come an intimate and expert knowledge of the child himself and the work of the schools; from the other an equally expert knowledge of the requirements of industrial and commercial life. Such a panel could be constructed either on a regional or national basis; and in either case would work directly out of the reality of the situation as it existed at the time.

No criticism is implied here either of the universities or the Ministry of Education. In this sphere, as in all others, facts alone are decisive; and it seems according to the facts that only those who

teach the children know what they can do, and only those who are going to employ them can tell what is wanted.

It should not be overlooked that the present General Certificate of Education has grown out of something that had far other origins and purposes, to wit, the requirements demanded by the universities of those presenting themselves for matriculation. Moreover, in spite of its having been adapted to other needs it is still used for that purpose, and still to a large degree directed and controlled by the universities. But how many of our school-leaving population in any year enter the universities? In 1951 the figures were as follows: 476,427 children of all age groups left school in 1951; 22,223** students, men and women, entered universities in 1951. That is, approximately only 5% of the children who go through our schools eventually enter a university. That the universities and no other body should decide who should enter their colleges, and under what conditions, goes without saying. Only whether they are best able to examine the vast majority who go into industrial and commercial life is all that is called into question here.

And so, once again, many of our young people are preparing to enter life through the doorway of our General Certificate. That is a fact of our modern life which we must accept. But it should not be forgotten that only 25% of them go this way; and yet the demands and preparation for this examination are something that set the pace and give the pattern to our whole educational system from the age of 11 onwards, if not before. And that is another fact—and one which needs a most careful looking into.

THE NINE YEAR OLD CHILD

A. McAllen

WITH the approach of a child's ninth birthday the teacher becomes sensitive to changes in his response to the material which he brings in the lessons. So gradual is the change that it is almost imperceptible until some chance remark, some unexpected question throws it into relief and he realises that the change has come to which Rudolf Steiner points. Up to his ninth year the child has been living strongly in his will. So far he has found his way into life through copying all that surrounds him, for he is endowed with the power to imitate every movement, every gesture right into his bodily organism. This power applies itself not only to that which is physical but even to the soul mood and content of his surroundings. He imitates the "atmosphere" into which he has come. How often does a child, for no apparent reason become restless and obstinate if he comes into a room where adults have been disagreeing? This imitative faculty belonging to the will is carried into the child's relationship with lifeless material. A child's fingers seem to know

**Central Statistical Office figures.

how to manipulate the mechanical devices which surround him. How often does a father say that his small son can do as much around the car as he! But with the change of teeth education of the will through the deed, that is the giving of something worthy of imitation, is not sufficient, a new power is coming into the child's soul in addition to the will. Even so, action is still the element he desires; beautiful descriptions, word pictures, only hold his attention for a few moments. It is action which makes his cheeks glow and presents to the teacher the task of gathering this aroused will and directing it into channels of activity for work and learning.

The will though is not now the purely imitative faculty of the pre-school child which has just been described. With the change of teeth the power of feeling has been added to the striving will. The will is now rightly aroused when the characters speak and act out of the element of feeling; when in stories the animal speaks and acts out of the soul qualities which live in it and impel it to action. Desire to kill drives the wolf to act. The gentleness and innocence of the lamb leads to its submissiveness in the face of an enemy. The child can unite his new born feeling life with the will that is aroused through feeling. Thus in stories the manifold expression of feeling leads to deeds and the children live in the rhythmic element of the alternation between Good and Evil; the rush of sympathy for the wounded hero, the repulsion for the deed of treachery. Before the change of teeth the child experiences only the Good around him, he imitates the Bad with the same devotion as the Good, these are not differentiated in his soul. With the birth of feeling this power of differentiation is born. At first it is an objective seeing of the Good and Evil. "I wouldn't do that", says a child about the villain, but with the ninth year a further change comes. Comments are not so spontaneous, faces become more serious when the story turns on the hero making the right decision. The teacher realizes that the child is now able to identify himself more strongly and inwardly with the characters in the story. He begins to know from out of himself which is the Right and which the Wrong.

This awaking inwardly to the polarities of Right and Wrong, Good and evil, is a culminating point of another process which has been taking place during the time the soul power of feeling has been born.

In the two years previous to nine, this feeling element wants to find its relationship to the outer world as the child is still connected with his surroundings for he brings over into this later phase those forces which live between one to seven years, *i.e.*, before the teeth change. In this time he was content to hear of one event happening after another, simple tales of daily life were sufficient. But now in the first school years he wants to find the richness of the outer world expressed in connection with his soul nature. The teacher can speak to a child of seven of the stars' progress across the heavens, of their constancy in keeping the divine order; how with the planets a harmonious pattern is woven in the heavens. He can point to the

multitude of human beings on the earth; a whole conversation can then take place and perhaps it can come about that the idea arises that human beings must try and live together in harmony like the stars, and that a man can by his deeds weave a pattern on the earth as the stars do in the heaven. This could be put into a verse for the child as for example:

"Sun, moon and stars above me weave
Within the heavens blue.
May I on earth a pattern leave
Of words and deeds as true".

With such feelings aroused in the child it gives a basis for another teacher, who finds a class pushing and shoving when getting into a line or circle, to say, "What can you see at night? Yes, the stars, look what order they keep, your star is in the heavens keeping its place, but look at you down here, what a mess you're making of it!" Earlier such a remark might not have the desired effect. A pre-school child is linked so closely to the dynamic of movement in the physical body that he needs to enjoy the experience of bumping together with others. He only becomes aware of his own separateness through physical contact. After the change of teeth, the dawning soul power of feeling helps the child to lift itself out of the whole towards a feeling for its own individuality. This awareness of himself as a separate entity marks the crisis of the ninth year. The child begins to grow into a greater awareness of his own person. He begins to dwell more and more strongly within the 'house' of his physical body. His body is not so strongly the sense organ which tells him when he comes into contact with objects, but has now become that which separates him from the external world. He now comes into contact and lives in them only through his feelings.

This is the moment when space and time begin to glimmer into his consciousness in relation to himself. A teacher tells how he was taking his class of seven-and-a-half to eight year olds out for a walk when a mist came down. Immediately the children came huddling round, saying "We're lost, we're lost". They were completely enveloped in the experience of the blanketing mist and lost all relationship to direction. It so happened that a year later when the children were passing through their ninth year that the same thing happened. Their reaction was totally different, they were quite unperturbed and enjoyed pointing out that over there lay home. At the same time as the change in relationship to space comes that of time. On another occasion a child whose father went to sea said to her mother, "I'm not going to cry any more when Daddy goes away". "Why", asks the surprised mother. "Because I know now that he will come back". This is typical of the change which takes place at nine years. Examples are manifold. Another common one is that a child will suddenly decide not to have a light at night any more.

The feeling of individuality within the class is also marked. Earlier in Handwork, for example, all the children want to do the same thing, if something new is given to one, all the rest want to change as well.

With the ninth year this is altered, no one wants to make the same article as the other, if he does have to because he'd thought of the same thing, then it must certainly be made in the opposite colour! Eagerness for work comes in a different way, there is a delight in doing "sums" for their own sake; to see how many they can do. The children begin to make comparisons, they begin to look out upon the world from within. The children's drawings show a great change, their trees and houses become more naturalistic, mountains are solid, the figures walk along on the earth, the sun grows smaller. In pictures of the Holy Family, the angels are not so much in the foreground, instead of a host, there is only one. The presence of the spiritual beings within the objects of sense perceptions is fast retreating leaving only the things of the sense world. Thus a great loneliness often possesses the child at this time, he can become secretive, loving to creep away on his own, the world begins to question him, present him with new problems. It is as if he experiences once more that moment of Adam when his eyes were opened. He begins to see parents and teacher in a new light, he is on the alert for their mistakes, questions well up, which he cannot form into utterances and so he waits watching. Hence it is of utmost importance for the teacher to have established his authority in the class by this age and that he should have a reserve of capacity within him, that the child can discover, just at this point, something which he did not previously know of or experience in the teacher. He wants to feel in the teacher that he too grows and changes, and that he stands firmly in the world and knows its problems and can deal with them. When the ideal can shine forth from the teacher then the child will again accept his authority and follow him trustingly. So it can be seen that the addition of feeling as a new soul power in the child after the change of teeth results in two processes: a deepening of soul experience, and a retreat from experiencing himself within the totality of the world, to looking upon the world from within outwards.

How can we meet in our teaching these soul experiences through which the child passes at this time?

Out of this knowledge of the inner soul process of the ninth year which Rudolf Steiner has shown we can see the great wisdom which lies behind the subjects he has given for the curriculum of the child between eight-and-a-half and nine-and-a-half.

Just at this point where the child begins to experience his body as his own, separating him from others; where the forces coming from the pre-school years, whose task it was to form and shape the physical body, are finally playing themselves out, just in this year the children are told and shown the building of a house.

The normal child having established a healthy relationship to his physical body now feels himself standing against the world, he feels himself as "I" and the things standing over against him, and when he experiences this the first teachings of grammar can be given. Even here is reflected to him again his own development and experience if the teacher brings the verb, adjective, noun in that order as suggested by Dr. Steiner. The verb reminds him unconsciously of the time when he felt united with all around him; the adjective helps him to feel his connection with the outer objects and strengthen his own feeling powers, while the noun points to the future experience of conceptual thinking and satisfies that first experience of self-consciousness which is being born.

And what of the world of nature from which he finds himself separated? The cosmic forces with which he was united are now shown to him as the nourisher of the earth and man. Man not only takes and receives life and nourishment from the outer cosmos and earth, but he must work with them and share their fruits with his fellow men. The child needs to see man, not only as one who receives, but as one standing as "Giver" towards the earth itself.

Lastly, together with these Main lesson subjects and continuing throughout the school year the child is shown in the mighty pictures of the stories of the Old Testament mankind's own development to the birth of the true ego. In the account of the Creation the listening child experiences in his feeling his unity with the cosmos; in the story of the Fall, the separation from the Godhead; in the wandering of the children of Israel the schooling of feeling, the development of judgment between right and wrong. When he hears of the revelation of God to Moses out of the elements on Mount Sinai, and the later picture of Elijah on Mount Horeb, finding the revelation of God not without in the wind, earthquake or fire as was the experience of the leaders previously, but revealing Himself now as the still small voice within; when the child learns of the preparation for the incarnating Christ just at this time when the first awakening of his own self-consciousness begins to stir, then he finds the path of his own soul development shining out to him from mankind's history itself, and this brings to him nourishment for the growth of his soul, and the teacher experiences the subject matter not as a method, but that he is working with the laws of soul hygiene in education itself.

Gratitude.

The class had been on a visit to a farm; and were writing a little note of thanks. One of them got as far as saying—

"Dear Mrs.—

I hope you, Mr.— and all the other animals are well".

PRACTICAL ACTIVITIES IN CLASS III

Roy Wilkinson

THE third year of school life is a particularly happy one for all concerned, pupils, teachers and parents.

For the children life is unfolding at a rapid pace and it is a very interesting and exciting world which is being discovered. The teachers begin to see something tangible and,—balm unto their souls,—they have something to show. Parents, (I refer to Rudolf Steiner schools) who may possibly have been a little doubtful during the earlier years as to whether their children were really learning anything, now see results, appreciate the careful preparation which has been made and are delighted with their children's progress. Parents entering their children at this age are a little taken aback at the extent of the ground covered.

In education we are always concerned with furthering the natural development. At the age of nine the child is beginning to plant his feet more firmly on the earth; his outlook is changing; he wants to understand the world in a new way. He is more conscious of himself as something separate from the rest of creation. Self-assertiveness, aggressiveness, and cheekiness are symptoms of the change. He begins to take more interest in details of the outer world. This is the reason why lessons dealing with practical activities are offered at this age and why other subjects can be dealt with in a more practical way.

Thus the child, having been introduced to English via poetry and stories, now begins to study the laws of construction such as grammar and punctuation. Oral Composition has already been practised, now written work is added. Work of a more practical nature in Arithmetic is introduced. Singing and Recorder-Playing have been taken as artistic activities, now the child begins to learn how to write and read music. This is the time to pay particular attention to well-formed writing and clear articulation. When the child is looking more consciously at the world, weights and measures have some significance. The growing feeling of "self" in contrast to the rest of the world, can and does lead to conflicts between the two. This stage is helped in Rudolf Steiner's pedagogy by definite social exercises which are practised in the Eurhythmy lesson. Gymnastics are begun. Two special subjects of great importance to the development of children at the age of nine, are taken, namely 'House-building' and 'Farming and Gardening'.

I propose to write a short description of the way in which we have tackled these two subjects here in Leeds, and also to add something on weights and measures and Grammar.

One of Dr. Steiner's suggestions to teachers was that when teaching factual things, one might be able to use them as symbols or allegories in order to illustrate laws of nature or secrets of the world. It seemed right therefore to begin a housebuilding period by calling the children's

attention to their own individual house,—their physical body. We soon discovered that it stood or sat up when we were awake and that we then knew of its existence, but that during sleep this was different. So we came to the idea that the human spirit uses the body as a sort of house, leaving it at night for a time, and leaving it altogether at death. We learnt a saying from the ancient Indian writings:

It is as when one layeth
His worn-out robes away
And taking new ones sayeth
These will I wear today
So putteth by the spirit
Lightly its garb of flesh
And passeth to inherit
A residence afresh.

Thus, incidentally, the useful and fruitful idea was implanted that death is not an end but a transmutation.

We then considered the sort of houses that men have made for themselves since earliest times. We talked about cave-dwellers, pit dwellings, lake villages, stone and wooden huts, daub and wattle, brick buildings, the development of windows and chimneys. We read several booklets on allied subjects. Having learnt something of the houses in which people lived in the past, we became architects and each child designed his own house. We then followed the growth of the house from the digging of the foundations to the last stroke of the paint brush. We visited houses in the course of erection and became familiar with the work of the labourer, bricklayer, joiner, plumber, electrician, plasterer and painter. We studied their various tools and operations. As this is a growing school there is usually work of some sort being done on the premises. As it happened some brickwork was being finished so the children learnt bonding at first hand and took part in mixing mortar. On another occasion I persuaded a plumber to bring his tackle into the classroom and explain it,—to his embarrassment and the children's delight.

It was soon quite obvious that a house came into existence only by the combined efforts of all concerned. But this was not all. The materials for the house did not just come from anywhere without effort. Clay had to be dug and made into bricks: coal had to be used for heating the furnaces. In order to get coal it was necessary for men to go down into the earth to fetch it; they needed tools for this so machinery had to be made. In this way one could trace an almost unending sequence of events showing human dependence and inter-dependence.

Timber has to come from the forests. Sometimes it has to be transported half way across the world. Metals and minerals have to be won from the earth to provide pipes and fittings. Rivers must be dammed for water supplies. Sewers must be laid to take away waste. Electricity and gas have a place in most homes. These must be produced and supplied.

We saw then that the whole world contributes to the homes we live in ; and the value of this particular period was greatly enhanced by the fact that it was also a social study.

As a countryman it was with great interest that I began a Farming and Gardening period. The difficulty was to know when to stop as I could quite cheerfully have carried on for several years. It was also a great day for the children when they became acquainted with Farmer Giles and Sunnyside Farm, both imaginary creations.

We began by looking at the things we eat, use and wear and made the discovery that earth is the great mother.

Hail to thee, earth, mother of men.

Grow and be great in Gods embrace,

Filled with fruit for the food of men.

We soon found that agriculture is the basic industry and that without agriculture there could be nothing else.

The foundation of good farming is healthy soil and with this in mind I told the story of Willy the Worm.

"Farmer Giles had noticed how the forest renewed its beautiful soil and he determined to do the same thing on his farm. He built heaps of manure and compost to spread on his ground later and in one of the heaps Willy was born. He was very happy there and had lots of company but one day he was tossed into a cart, and then on to the ground again. A plough came along and cut him in two. However he managed to join his two halves together and lived happily in the field where he found plenty of nourishment. He left "casts" behind him and these pleased the farmer so they were great friends. One day Willy met a poor, thin worm who had come from a neighbouring farm where they were spreading chemicals on the soil. He and his friends did not like them so they were all coming to live on Farmer Giles's ground where they would be properly looked after. Willy made them welcome and they all lived happily helping Farmer Giles to keep his soil alive".*

We next considered tools. Paws, feet and mouth of the animal are its tools but they have a strictly limited use. The hand of man has no particularly obvious function, but it can accomplish many and only the hand of man can hold and use a tool. Spades, forks, hoes, rakes are, so to speak, extensions of man's limbs in gardening, but to do things on a big scale he needs machinery and machine driven tools. We visited an agricultural engineer's and looked at all the farming implements on display. We studied the ploughs, discs and scuffles used in general cultivation and also the implements with special uses such as potato-diggers, hayrakes, and elevators.

Next we drew a map of Sunnyside Farm, an ideal holding such as probably can only exist in the imagination. It sloped gently southward towards a river and was protected on the north and east by hills and forests. It was a mixed farm with about fifteen different

*It has been demonstrated that more worms collect in organically manured ground than in that treated with artificial fertilisers.

fields, all of which had authentic-sounding names. It was amusing to hear the nine-year-olds discussing what yield they would get from Long Acre, or whether they would plant oats or barley in Millcroft. Farmer Giles grew most farm crops, several brassicas on a field scale, had an orchard, kept poultry, pigs, sheep and cows. For his own use he had a vegetable garden, so that we were able to gain a fairly complete picture of production and operations.

We now followed the work of the farm month by month through the changing seasons. Time is beginning to have significance for children at this age and they realised that the farmer must think and plan well into the future. They gained an understanding of the importance of working together with the elements. They realised the laborious nature of the task and also that only harmonious co-operation can have the desired result. I also hope that the lesson went home that for some things one has to wait, maturity does not come overnight. I pointed out how the soil needs the animal, the animal the plants, the plants the soil. In primeval conditions nature is self-supporting. When the human race take from nature, they must repay with intelligence, *i.e.*, cultivate.

In speaking of the animals the opportunity arose to talk about the facts of physical birth.

An outing to a farm on the Yorkshire Wolds was a culminating point and we ended the period with a little verse calling attention to the cycle of life and the necessity for balance.

Dr. Steiner termed the great mass of knowledge which he presented "Anthroposophy"—the knowledge of man. Everything is related to man and man to the whole world. This is a fact which can well be born in mind when presenting a new subject. If things are connected with the human being himself, they are of interest. Otherwise they are dull and become mere abstractions ; and how essential it is that children should feel some real connection with what they are learning. Let us look at weights and measures and Grammar in this light.

English weights and measures are both chaotic and fascinating. Here history is written, boldly and plainly. To learn mere tables is meaningless ; to learn them in relation to the human being is an education. Tell the children that a pint is as much as a thirsty man can drink at one draught, or that a pound is the weight a man can hold on his outstretched hand, and they will immediately have some connection with these things.

The oldest measurements were parts of the human body. The Biblical cubit was the length of a man's forearm from elbow to fingertips. An inch was the width of a man's thumb ; a foot was the length of a man's foot ; a yard was the length of a stick (yard means stick) used for measuring cloth, popularly supposed to have been determined by Henry I as the length of his outstretched arm from nose end to fingertips. The curious measurement of rod, pole or perch (5½ yards) is not so curious when one knows its history. The Anglo-Saxons used a team of eight oxen to pull their ploughs. It was necessary

for the driver to have in his hand a rod of sufficient length to reach the animal furthest away from him. He needed a stick of approximately $5\frac{1}{2}$ yards. During the sixteenth century, the rod was officially determined for the district by sixteen men having to place their left feet end to end on leaving church one certain Sunday morning.

The furlong was a "furrow-long",—the length of furrow that a team could plough without a breather. The mile is derived from the Roman measurement of distance, "mille passus", a thousand paces of the legionaries. They reckoned a pace as a double step, however, so that the mille passus even now approximates to our mile.

Only later, with increasing trade, were the measurements standardised and fitted into the patterns we know today.

The value of money was originally the value of the weight of the metal; many of our measurements of weight were originally capacity, and our present measurements of capacity appear to have been simply different sized vessels.

Presented in this way, weights and measures have a living quality which greatly appeals to the children and gives them intense pleasure.

Grammar again, need not be the dull, lifeless bones that it usually is. In Class III one begins to explain the parts of speech. The verb is the thing which lies nearest to the child. In the verb is activity and children readily grasp its significance. They have immediate sympathy with anything that is happening. The noun is something quite different. The name of a thing is merely its name; it is cold, detached; it does not strike the same vital chord as the verb. In the adjective is expressed something which relates the human being to the outer world. There is an interplay between the two.

In these three important parts of speech, therefore, there is a reflection of man's soul nature. In the verb there is a force related to will, in the noun, to thought, and in the adjective, to feeling. The threefold nature of the human being therefore, manifests itself in his language. Grammar is not something superimposed on language from outside but it is something which has grown with the language out of the laws which govern man himself. Obviously it cannot be the object of the lesson to teach these fundamental things at this age but a knowledge of them will greatly influence the teachers attitude towards the subject.

For all these subjects we have made a text book containing a summary of the matter and illustrations. Writing, composition, dictation, spelling, punctuation have been practised in conjunction with the particular matter in hand.

These then, are some of the practical activities of Class III. To complete the picture one must bear in mind the thread of the Old Testament stories which run right through the year and the continual artistic work.

The more one studies Rudolf Steiner's curriculum, the more is one astonished at the wisdom it contains. Experience shows that the suggestions are right and that they really lead to a free unfolding of the individuality.

THE MIDSUMMER FESTIVAL OF ST. JOHN

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J. Darrell

IN the course of the coming term, several Rudolf Steiner schools in Great Britain will once again be holding their Midsummer Festival, at the end of which, as in previous years, they will kindle the St. John's Fire.

This ancient custom has faded so completely out of general remembrance that it may help readers to enter more fully into the intentions regarding it, if in this article something is said about the St. John's Festival and its fire.

It was in very early Christian times that the old pagan festival of midsummer was transformed into the celebration of the birth of John the Baptist. This was not done, as some have suggested, as a practical concession to heathen usage, but out of the knowledge that John the Baptist had come before mankind with a new midsummer message, a new midsummer spirit.

For in olden times the seasons of the year did indeed bring a message to men, they bestowed experiences on them which profoundly affected their inmost life. It is not easy for us today to grasp how this could be. Wordsworth indeed could write:

"One impulse from a vernal wood
Can teach us more of man,
Of moral evil and of good
Than all the sages can".

Most of us today, however, can but dimly appreciate this. We have long since broken away from mother Earth's embraces; we no longer experience matter as *Materia*, the substance of the *Mater Magna*, the Great Mother, but see it as something utterly external to ourselves. This was not always so; there was a time when, to use Burns' phrase, 'Nature's social union' did exist, and men not only felt themselves as one with all who had the same blood as themselves, but when they also felt themselves one with the earth they lived in. Like twigs and branches on a great tree, they experienced the flow and ebb of nature's life surging majestically through them; the rhythmic sequence of the seasons was a planetary act of respiration, in which they and all earth creatures shared. Nature breathed forth her being in spring and summer, drawing her plants out of the soil, and uniting herself in warmth and light with the surrounding universe.

In autumn and winter she drew her breath inwards, retiring into herself as the flowers died down and the ground froze into a fortress wall.

Nor was this annual breath of nature experienced by men as a mere organic process, somehow modifying their own bodily life. In it worked the self-same breath as was breathed into Adam's nostrils, making of him, as Genesis says, a living soul. Nature-experiences were moral experiences for earlier humanity, as Wordsworth understood; it was the living soul-experience of nature that the human soul entered into, drawing both vitality and teaching from them. In the lighter, warmer part of the year it expanded with the plants towards the heavenly circumference; the light was a divine wisdom, and the warmth divine love, divine goodness. The soul experienced the self-hood of God, winning at once a knowledge of its own shortcomings and a renewal of power to transform them. In winter it felt drawn, as by an inward gravity, into the confines of the earth, impelled to take its stand against the fear and greed that sought to blot out the memory of the midsummer light.

The evolution of man is itself a grand universal year, and as time drew on it passed its summer solstice, bringing man ever nearer to that exile on the mineral earth which hitherto winter had only hinted at. His instinctive bond with the spirituality of nature weakened, and he was thrown back more upon himself. Nevertheless, in the great seasonal festivals he could still be brought, even if only momentarily, into closer communion with the divinity of the bodily world, and with this into a renewed sense of oneness with his fellow-men. The Midsummer Festival played a supreme role in this. The Midsummer Fire, just because kindled by man himself, could touch his now more conscious soul more nearly than that other myriad fold fire, the summer blossoming of nature. On wings of flame it could still take its flight upwards, and receive some measure of the ancient grace. Celtic legend adds a significant detail: at the end of the festival, as the fire died down, each family took embers from it and with them kindled anew the fire on the family hearthstone. Thus, as a younger child in our School once said, men were kept in mind of each other throughout the dark winter, for within their abodes each fire was like a continuing flame of the great common fire of midsummer: the fraternity of summer balanced the winter impulse towards that independence which could degenerate into selfishness.

The time at last came, however, when nature's revelation of God even when seen through the rites of the festivals, could no longer reach mankind; the veil of developing personality hid it ever more completely from view. At this point Christ entered earthly life; the revelation of God through nature was replaced by His revelation through man. It was of this new revelation that John the Baptist became herald; he whose birth-festival was to be celebrated at midsummer proclaimed Him whose advent was in midwinter.

John's festival was placed with great wisdom for he brought truly midsummer tidings, and accomplished a truly midsummer task. The union of man with the heights, with the kingdom of heaven, had always been closest at midsummer. Now John was again summoning men to this union, but with a radical difference. He was no longer to ascend to it in the lofty expanses of nature, but to seek within himself; for the kingdom of heaven was at hand, it had come down to earth. Its light was to be sought within until, as St. Peter said, "The day-star arise in your hearts". "He must increase, I must decrease" said John, in the spirit of utmost sacrifice, but this midsummer triumph of the heavenly over the earthly reaches its zenith at Christmas: the soul's midsummer takes place in nature's winter. Thus the stream of human life is to change its course completely, the human attitude is to be utterly transformed. Man is to rest no longer on what nature, on what ultimately his body can give him, but on what he can find within his own soul. The least in the kingdom of heaven within is more than the greatest of those born of woman; thus Christ himself describes this new situation. The change of heart, the repentance for which John called was itself to be like a consuming fire, destroying all dead wood within and setting free the will for the future. The old midsummer fire could be truly dedicated to St. John only when completed, by the fire of repentance within the human soul. Only by an inner rebirth could men be ready to play their part in the rebirth of the world.

Thus for Christian feeling an inner flame was to be kindled to complete the reality of the outer flame; it was as if nature, the great giver was now asking for a gift from men. Today she still calls for benefaction from him but we are so remote from her today that we have to learn to hear her call, we have to learn her language anew. Through his science and technique modern man has the future of the earth in his hands, and it is essential that those hands are warmed through and through with good will to the spirit. The repentance for which John the Baptist called as the only possible preparation for the coming of Christ must advance a step further today. Whoever seriously seeks to overcome prejudice in his thoughts and mere utilitarianism in his will knows how much he stands in need of inner fire. In the flame of reborn thinking, reborn willing, he may recognise the modern form of the fire of St. John, and in it he may rise once more to the divine, in himself, in his fellow-men, in great nature as well. Not as of old will the human being reach back to his spiritual origins with the help of nature, but nature will reach forward to her goal with the help of man. And when our children are educated out of this spirit, the fire of St. John in the festival night will not only call up wonder at a glorious sight of nature, but will become an expressive word, an actual parable, unforgettably inspiring, for the enthusiasm that can burn within themselves for the goodness that is in man and in the world.

WORDS FOR SONG IN SUMMERTIME

See, see the sun with mighty power,
Doth tread yon eastern hill,
He shoots his golden arrows far,
His foe, the night, to kill.

He draws the mists of morning up,
The plants of field and dell,
And bids the gathered calyx flower,
The ripening fruit to swell.

And stones and plants and beasts and men
Look sunward to the sky ;
They watch the flaming path aloft
He treads continually.

The light that streams from heavenly heights
Floods golden in our hearts,
And to the souls of dreaming men
The love of God imparts.

H. L. H.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

4. Is it right to tell children fairy tales, which are always untrue and often frightening ?

This question is a double one and must therefore be answered in two parts : firstly the question of the 'truth' of fairy tales and secondly the question of whether they frighten children or not.

The objection to fairy tales on the grounds that they represent characters and happenings that are never to be found in real life would apply to almost every great work of art. The essence of a great novel, picture or play is that it is *not* an exact reproduction of life as actually led ; in fact when drama, for instance, sinks to the level of a photographic reproduction of actual daily experience, we find the intolerably banal succession of popular 'drawing-room dramas', which earn money in what Agate has called the 'commercial theatre'. Great drama, great art, is great just because it takes nature further than she herself can go, and so reveals far more clearly than we ever see them in real life, the hidden laws which bring this world of ours into being.

So it is with all true fairy tales. They reveal in picture form the fundamental truths of human moral and spiritual development, they show the effects of 'enchantment', the means whereby deliverance may be achieved. It is important that the teller of fairy tales should be inwardly aware of the meaning of the pictures he is unfolding to

his listeners and then in an unconscious way this meaning enters more deeply into the children. One must avoid, on the other hand, too readily to rush into a glib, complete, and cut-and-dried analysis of the tale, so that a sort of wooden allegory emerges, devoid of life and colour. The important point to remember is that no true picture can be completely reduced to thought form, a true picture lives in its own right, as it were, and while it can be illuminated by thought, cannot be completely reduced into intellectual form. Dry, wooden allegory is the picturing of an intellectual content, where the pictures are entirely governed by the thoughts they are designed to represent. The pictures of the fairy tale *come first* and the thoughts of men *afterwards* to help the understanding of their content.

The objection to fairy tales on the grounds that they are often frightening is based on the erroneous belief that children are not frightened except through tales. If you kept bogies and goblins away from children, they would make them up for themselves.

As G. K. Chesterton says, in his essay, 'The Red Angel'— "Fairy tales, then, are not responsible for producing in children fear, or any of the shapes of fear ; fairy tales do not give the child the idea of the evil or the ugly ; that is in the child already, because it is in the world already. Fairy tales do not give a child his first idea of bogey. What fairy tales give the child is his first clear idea of the possible defeat of bogey. The baby has known the dragon intimately ever since he had an imagination. What the fairy tale provides for him is a St. George to kill the dragon.

"Exactly what the fairy tale does is this : it accustoms him by a series of clear pictures to the idea that these limitless terrors have a limit, that these shapeless enemies have enemies, that these infinite enemies of man have enemies in the knights of God, that there is something in the universe more mystical than darkness, and stronger than strong fear. When I was a child I have stared at the darkness until the whole bulk of it turned into one negro taller than heaven. If there was one star in the sky it only made him a Cyclops. But fairy tales restored my mental health. For next day I read an authentic account of how a negro giant with one eye, of quite equal dimensions, had been baffled by a little boy like myself (of similar inexperience and even lower social status) by means of a sword, some bad riddles, and a brave heart. Sometimes the sea at night seemed as dreadful as any dragon. But then I was acquainted with many youngest sons and little tailors to whom a dragon or two was as simple as the sea

"At the four corners of a child's bed stand Perseus and Roland, Sigurd and St. George. If you withdraw the guard of heroes you are not making him rational ; you are only leaving him to fight the devils alone".

H. L. H.

THE CONFERENCE OF EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

L. F. Edmunds

The Conference of Educational Associations held its 36th Conference at King's College, London, 29th December, 1952—6th January, 1953. The Affiliated Associations, numbering over 50 cover a wide range of educational activities. The Rudolf Steiner Educational Association was admitted to membership in 1952. The following is a reprint from the 36th Annual Report, by the kind permission of the Secretary, Mr. I. A. Hawliczek, B.Sc. Copies of the full report may be obtained from the Conference Office, King's College, Strand, London, W.C. 2. (3s. 9d. including postage). The Main Theme for the Conference was, "Moral Values and Social Progress".

Rudolf Steiner Educational Association.

Chairman : L. F. EDMUNDS

Headquarters : Michael Hall, Forest Row, Sussex.

MR. L. F. EDMUNDS, speaking in his capacity as Chairman of the Rudolf Steiner Educational Association, said that the four open lectures were planned to form a series. In the course of them the general plan of a Rudolf Steiner school became apparent: the pre-school age up to six, during which time formal instruction is not given; the middle period from six to fourteen when each successive group of children coming up into the School is taken over by a Class Teacher who has the main care and tutelage of that group for the whole of the eight years; the upper school, from fourteen to eighteen, where the work is conducted entirely by specialists. It became evident through the lectures that in the nursery or pre-school period education consists in example and in "doing", so that the imitative faculties of the early years have full play; that in the eight years of the class teacher period the artistic and pictorial method employed provides for a rich education of the life of feeling, building a bridge from the fantasy forces of the young child to the freeing of intellectual thought in the adolescent; that, through the previous training of will and feeling, of hand and heart, the thinking, when once awakened, carries in it greater qualities of initiative, imagination and social understanding.

The Moral Basis of Education.

by L. F. Edmunds

MR. L. F. EDMUNDS, confined himself to the approach to science in teaching. It was increasingly recognised today that natural science in its present form had nothing to contribute to the upbuilding of morality

in human nature. Quoting from American sources he spoke of the "depersonalification of man" which is taking place in our time due to the fact that man has come to be regarded more and more as a "thing" the resultant of external causes only. He sought to demonstrate that the materialistic interpretation of natural phenomena arose through a particular state of mind of man since the time of Galileo rather than through the facts of nature themselves. It was possible, for example, to teach human physiology in such a way that the differences between man and the ape were of far more account than the similarities, so that the visible, physical man was seen to be an image of those very powers that contained the roots of his moral being. This was not offered as a mystical statement but, following Rudolf Steiner's teaching, represented an impulse towards a new perception and understanding of nature and of man in nature. No less a person than Julian Huxley had expressed the view that further evolution was possible to man alone on this earth, but that unless man could arrive at a new and compelling set of ideas about his place in this universe, a new and truly universal religion, he was likely to relapse either into a state of mental laziness or of despairing fatalism. The kind of evolution implied was one of inner achievement. In Mr. Edmunds' view the time has come for the "secondary qualities" cast out by Galileo and his contemporaries, to be re-integrated into the scientific view of the world. Then the moral aspect of human nature would once more come into its own as a primary phenomenon of all existence, bringing new hope to man and new possibilities to human society.

The Meaning of History for Children.

by A. C. Harwood

Chairman : L. F. EDMUNDS

MR. EDMUNDS, introduced Mr. A. C. Harwood as one of the founders—twenty-eight years ago—of Michael Hall, and therefore as one of the first to introduce Rudolf Steiner methods of education into this country; he was also the author of a book *The Way of a Child*. MR. HARWOOD said it was a fundamental view of this form of education, that the child recapitulated, in the course of his development, the entire cultural experience of the race. History, therefore, was in the child. History however, could not be introduced as a subject before the "sense for time" has been born, round about the eleventh year. Previous to that, children might be given stories, legends, descriptions of personalities and events as single experiences but not in historic sequence. We might regard children, he said, not only as growing up but as "growing down". The feeling of descent from a spiritual

past lay at the origin of all great human cultures, the feeling also that man entered life out of a spiritual world. History in our schools began with studies of the ancient epochs and, by the time the children were fourteen, approached contemporary events. Thus, when the child reached puberty, he could feel himself within the stream of history, the bearer of the history of the future. It was only in the upper school that the causal aspects of history were studied and discussed. Mr. Harwood quoted examples from his own teaching whereby the sympathies of children might be strongly aroused for a particular character or point of view and then, perhaps some days later, for a totally opposite character or point of view. This appeal for appreciation of opposite qualities and virtues quickened the imagination, ripened the judgment, and strengthened the faculty of discriminating thought. History thus became an aid to development and not merely a matter for general interest and information.

The Religious Foundation of Subjects. in the Middle School.

by Miss Eileen Hutchins

Chairman: H. E. GODDARD.

Headmaster of Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham Boys' School.

Mr. GODDARD

said he had known about the Rudolf Steiner methods of education since the first days of Michael Hall and had always felt that they contained real answers to the problems that concerned us all.

MISS HUTCHINS

drew attention to the fact that we often spoke of the need for developing reverence, insight and vision without suggesting how this might be achieved; indeed these very qualities were often destroyed by the psychology of our times. If the average child were asked today why a man worked, the probable answer would be: to earn money. That this was not a true answer could easily be demonstrated even to quite young children. The man who made chairs made more chairs than he needed himself so that other people who needed chairs might also have them; the same applied to anything that man made and this view could be extended to all human occupations. Men worked in order to serve one another out of an understanding of one another's needs. The real motives were understanding and love. Similarly, nature could be approached out of an understanding of the divine creative forces at work in the world. Out of elementary exercises in geometrical forms one could make a transition to the universal geometrising that produced the crystals; she showed, with a series of drawings, how the simple geometrical forms that were more akin to the

mineral kingdom could be metamorphosed into plant forms—something was alive in plants changing mineral forms into growing plant forms. The animal form was closely allied to its life of instinct—in this instinctive life there lived a far greater intelligence than was possessed by man. In man that which was outwardly expressed in its finality in the different animals was largely restrained, so that the same forces, held back from outer manifestation, became metamorphosed into his spiritual faculty of thought whereby he could invent, create and extend himself into the life around him.

Miss Hutchins gave some forceful examples from Geography, History and Biography to show how understanding and love of men for one another could be demonstrated to children without preaching, so that a religious and Christian outlook might be fostered which was neither sectarian nor dogmatic. In her view, if Christian ethics were brought to children as direct statement, they might easily evoke the criticism that people did not live as they preached—for example, how many people were so advanced that they could actually "turn the other cheek?" By withholding the actual statement but building up examples drawn from life the children might, in course of time, discover for themselves that religious ideals, difficult though they might be to attain, did actually live in all things and circumstances, both natural and human. Then, too, one might be able to point to a Saint Francis as to one who was indeed so great that he could actually fulfil what was otherwise so difficult—one whom we might seek to emulate. Thus a religious element could pervade the whole of education without provoking obvious contradictions.

The Place of Art in a Rudolf Steiner School by A. W. Mann

Chairman: CHARLES DAVY, of the Sunday Observer.

MR. MANN

said that from the very fact that art was being so much more encouraged in schools, it might be inferred that education without it had been found lacking. It was a mistake to imagine that we could educate thinking by thinking. The task of the teacher was to educate through the soul force in the child most accessible to him. In the case of little children this was clearly the force of will, of action. In the middle years of childhood from seven to fourteen it was above all the force of feeling, and only later could we approach the thinking directly. The most direct approach to feeling was through the practice and appreciation of art. If we considered that in having children from the age of six to eighteen, by far the greater part of that time belonged to the middle phase of childhood, it should be evident that education

through art was perhaps the most essential part of all educational work, once it was recognized that a right education of feeling necessarily preceded that of thought. Human culture, through the myths and sagas, for example, provided us with almost endless resources for nourishing the life of feeling so that the art the children did might have real content.

All great art in the past was similarly nourished and was distinguished by its depth of content. In his opinion, the enthusiasm for self-expression in child art to-day was based on error; it exploited the child but did not educate him. First, we were called upon to nourish the child and only then could we expect him to have something real to express. That which merely surrounded the child, especially in a modern environment, offered him no such nourishment.

Mr. Mann illustrated his lecture with an impressive series of coloured lantern slides of work by children in crayoning, painting, and black and white drawing, and concluded by showing a few rare masterpieces from the History of Art Period given to children in their fourteenth and fifteenth years. This period had proved itself particularly inspiring and health-giving to young adolescents.

* * *

The contribution in this first year of membership of the Conference of Educational Associations also comprised an exhibition of children's work. The work was by children of Michael Hall. It included a range of colour exercises by children aged six to fourteen showing the gradual entry into the appreciation of colour and the ability to combine colours; some paintings by children aged ten to illustrate contrasting temperaments; a development series of paintings by a child of seven, described as a nervous sanguine type; imaginative charcoal drawings by children aged fourteen to fifteen; examples of painting by children aged seventeen. There were also geometrical drawings descriptive of the method used in Rudolf Steiner Schools, the aim being to lead to theory via experience of form and construction and to idea via pictorial representation. In addition, there were examples of wood carving from such simple exercises as darning eggs, spoons and forks to carved picture frames, candlesticks, bowls, trays, etc.: and handicrafts by boys and girls aged six to fifteen, including examples of animals and dolls up to such articles as tablecloths, slippers, shirts and samples of embroidery. There was also a selection of class notebooks by children of various ages, it being the practice in these schools for children to compile their own notebooks, text books being confined to purely examination work in the top classes.

The exhibition attracted not a little attention and brought some very interesting enquiries. It should be stated that the above Association includes only Rudolf Steiner Schools for normal children as distinct from schools and homes for retarded and maladjusted children.

Comment

One morning the Nursery Teacher came to school in a new hat she had just bought—it was quite a fashionable one, too. A little girl of five studied it for a long time in silence, and from every angle. Presently, she asked, "Miss—, did you really *buy* that hat?"

"In at one ear—"

"Did you hear me say what this doormat was for?"

"Yes".

"Then why didn't you wipe your shoes on it?"

"I didn't hear what you said".

"The play's the thing"

The youngest class of 6—7 years of age, as a very special privilege, were brought into the hall to see the last half hour of a performance of "Pride and Prejudice" by Jane Austen, which was being done by the upper school. Its appeal, as everyone knows, lies more in its witty dialogue, than in its action. Said one small boy, when it was over, "That's not *acting*; that's just *talking*".

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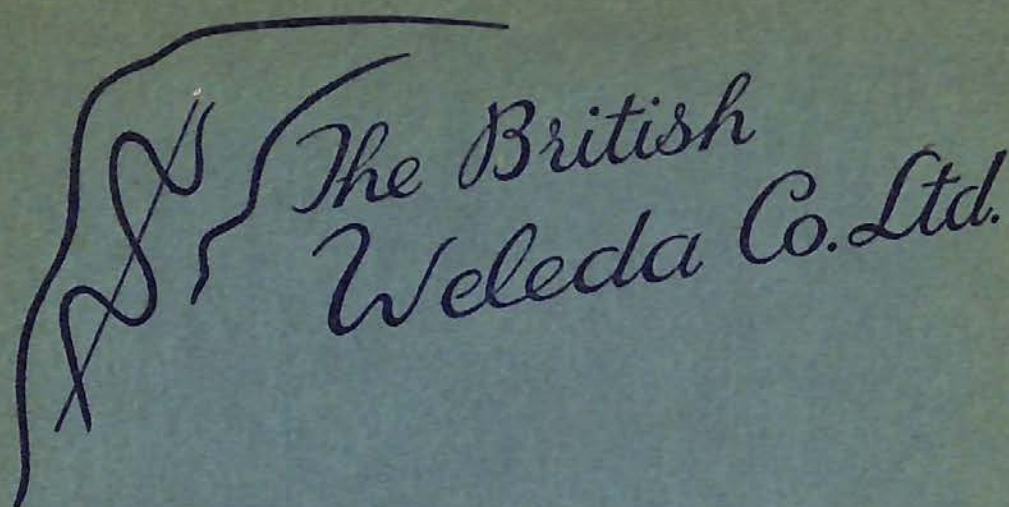
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