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Child and Man

MIDSUMMER
1957

CHILD AND MAN

Published by

The Rudolf Steiner Educational Association

at

Michael House, Ilkeston, Derbys.

CHILD AND MAN is a magazine for the education founded by Rudolf Steiner for children who are able to pursue a normal curriculum. It seeks to form a link with all those who are interested in this education, by giving an up-to-date and authoritative commentary on the development of the work in the member schools of the Rudolf Steiner Schools Fellowship Ltd.

SUBSCRIPTIONS (6/8d. per annum) should be sent to :

**Rudolf Steiner Bookshop,
35, Park Road, N.W.1.**

or

**Rudolf Steiner Bookcentre,
54, Bloomsbury Street, W.C.1.**

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VOLUME V (New Series) Midsummer 1957

Number 5

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“We are the Hollow Men”

No doubt the public is growing tired of hearing about Teddy Boys and Teddy Girls. The illustrated magazines and the Sunday papers have considered the problem of the adolescent in the big town in a variety of ways and indeed the whole affair has been somewhat glamorized. The B.B.C. have also had a hand in the discussion and several excellent books have been written from first hand experience in youth clubs and the like.

The interesting fact emerges that by and large the young hooligan is not to be utterly condemned, he has aroused a certain measure of sympathy, as if the outbreaks of rowdyism are not entirely without justification. Yet what is wrong, either with us, or them or their surroundings, that such senseless outbreaks of destructiveness and barbaric cruelty can occur? It would be foolish to attempt to give a complete answer – and indeed much has been written already which throws light on the question.

In the light of the psychology, which is studied by those working in the Rudolf Steiner educational movement, however, other things can be said, which may further illuminate the question.

It has been customary to think of the human being as composed of mind and body, as a spiritual and physical entity, a duality which forms at times an uneasy partnership. Conventional English education, mindful of the Roman dictum “mens sana in corpore sano”, seeks to develop these two sides of the human being to an equal extent, paying rather more attention perhaps to the corpus sanum. But Rudolf Steiner speaks, not of a *duality*, but of a *trinity* of body, soul and spirit. The full implications of this far reaching division cannot be gone into now, but it is linked closely with a similar division in the body itself, the division into head, breast and limb or head, heart and hand. For our immediate purpose the division can be described as follows: the body is the seat of the *will*, from it rise the organic needs, the animal desires, instincts, passions and also the impulses to action, which are not immediately grasped by the understanding. The task of education is to bring these into a true expression of *morality*, to make them *good*. The spirit is the source of *thinking*, ideation, its tendency in our day is to be abstract, coldly rational and without compassion. The task of education here is to make the spirit a true expression of *truth*, an intuitive and loving insight into the purely spiritual. The soul is the neglected, the little understood member of man's being, it should be the mediator between body and spirit, it is the home of the *feelings*. The task of education is to make it the true expression of *beauty*, the creator of a healthy art.

If we begin to understand this trinity of man's being, we can realise what has happened to the Teddy Boy and Girl in our large cities. *In them the element of soul has been eroded away.* In the past centuries, the element of soul was always present, often wild and un-

tamed, but vital and active, and capable of a marvellous fashioning by the right teachers; but in our age, for the first time in human history, we have to deal, not with a wild soul nature, but with *the absence of soul nature altogether.*

Thus abstract, intellectualised thoughts, devoid of life or nourishment, crackle and spark over an empty void, which was once the soul, and out of the depths of the bodily nature, dark impulses and compulsions arise, and finding no resistance, no taming or ennobling force, howl and roar in the empty spaces.

There is no soul left to warm and enliven thoughts or to tame and harmonise instincts. The very barrenness and poverty of our ideation only serves to call up stronger and more irrational, more bemusing impulses from below. This is why we cannot find it in our hearts to blame the young folk who turn to rock 'n roll, for there is nothing elsewhere that can nourish. The very vitality of their youthful impulses serves to throw into strong relief the utter disparity between the untamed body and the dessicated head. Small wonder, with such a choice, that they turn to the heady blood-rhythms of the dance hall.

When we speak of culture, we speak of something which appeals, through art, to the soul of man; when a civilisation is without culture, the soul starves. But not only is our age without culture, it also fosters those very influences which attack the soul without mercy. Every kind of over-powerful sensation, every undigested impact through the senses, every mechanical or electronic reproduction of the real thing, all these things destroy that body of feeling and judgment, that central response, that eager and enquiring awareness, which we have called the soul in this editorial.

The influences of our age dull and atrophy and an education which is fitted to our age must direct its attention primarily to the true nurture and cultivation of the soul powers. This above all the Rudolf Steiner education seeks to do. When it is successful, and the struggle is often a hard one, the child enters puberty with a strengthened and harmonious life of soul, fitted to meet the awakening powers of thought from the one side and the liberated powers of will from the other. With a real richness, where there is so often emptiness and apathy, the adolescent can meet his further development and the enormous challenge and perils of this century with confidence and courage.

THE EDITOR.

Midsummer

The sun, his flowered lands forsaking,
Yields now his rule to the encroaching night ;
Our world endures a slow awaking
From painted warmth to frosty black-and-white.
*So must it seem,
Unless the heart discerns a vaster theme :*

The spheres but heed the Helmsman's voice,
Matching their motion to a god's descent
In majesty, Who by His choice
Will share man's winter of imprisonment.
*So must it be,
Yet whose the will and strength to set Him free ?*

Who finds, in darkness, light above
And dares among the stars to soar alone,
Who melts the cruel cold with love—
He for his King shall make of Earth the Throne,
*So must we pray,
Till dawns eternal that Midsummer Day !*

C.S.D.

Important Announcements to all Readers and Subscribers

IT has already been announced the 'Child and Man' together with the three other magazines on Rudolf Steiner education (*Erziehungskunst*, Germany; *Menschenschule*, Switzerland; *Vrije Opvoedkunst*, Holland), were to unite this year in producing a special number on the theme, EDUCATION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. All agreed to publish one another's articles in the language of their own country, so that readers might have a truly comprehensive European view of what is being thought. This has already been done in the other countries. Our own contribution has yet to appear.

Owing to difficulties in editorial work and the great amount of translation involved this has not been possible. Moreover, the special booklet in which we hoped to incorporate this work, has proved financially impossible. So we have decided to combine our Michaelmas and Christmas numbers of 'Child and Man' this year into one special number entirely devoted to the articles mentioned above. It will replace the usual issues which appear at those times. Subscribers need make no special arrangements to obtain this number. It will be distributed in the usual way to all who normally take 'Child and Man'.

As, however, it is a special and unique number, containing material of vital importance to all those interested in our education, we shall be printing extra copies for wider distribution. These will sell at 3/-. Anything readers can do to draw the attention of the general public to this number will be greatly appreciated.

What have Parents got to do with it?

Alan Howard

THERE has been some trouble at Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire and at Chadderton in Lancs because the local parents in these parts want their new grammar schools to be co-educational, and the authorities want them to be single-sexed schools. The TIMES EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT commenting on this, said:

"There is no call to satisfy parental wishes. All the local authorities have to do is to make some show of having considered their wishes and then they can do what they like. Lord Hailsham, in his letter to Sir Spencer Summers about the Aylesbury case, put an argument that rules out parents altogether. He said he was sure that the act gave local authorities the ultimate responsibility for saying, what makes educational sense – 'and not existing parents at any given moment. In other words, parents who really and presently exist cannot be listened to because they do not adequately represent parents past and parents future. This is a perfect means of disfranchising parents altogether'."

It is immaterial for the present purpose whether co-educational schools are better than single-sexed ones. The point is that the parents in these areas strongly desire the former; and an Act of Parliament for education which took into account such desires, and made provision for such requests, is interpreted over their heads for them by local authority and the ministry.

How far this treatment is to be taken as an isolated case, or as a symptom of what is happening generally it would perhaps be presumptuous to affirm; but it is one that is very disturbing. It can however, be generally concluded that one of the most insidious dangers to human freedom and dignity is bureaucracy – the means by which the wealth and woe of large numbers of people are determined by officials often far removed from the circumstances they administer. During the last hundred and fifty years we have achieved a far higher standard of material living through the application of democratic methods, but the organisation involved in administering those benefits have brought a proportionate increase in bureaucrats with all that implies. Like Essau, if we haven't already sold our birthright for a mess of pottage, we are dangerously near concluding the bargain.

How far this increase in officialdom threatens real human freedom and becomes a portent of ultimate subjection – "disfranchising parents altogether" – is something which those of us in the Rudolf Steiner schools are very concerned about. That we are able to enjoy the freedom we already do is perhaps due more to authority's preoccupation with its vast legitimate offspring and their problems, than from any concern over that 'love-child' of education – the independent school. But when authority gets its own problems sorted out, and 'bulges' and 'building projects' have all been properly accounted for, will it then start saying what shall be done with – or to – us, or shall we be able to go on as we are?

It is not sufficiently known, nor can it be too often repeated, that Rudolf Steiner education involves more than a new pedagogical method. It envisages the growth of a new social attitude to education. It involves the revolutionary idea that it is not the province of government to administer education, put to *protect* the rights of those who do *administer* it; for education is something which belongs to the free spiritual activity of those who make it their life-work – that is, parents and teachers. It also looks – though rather forlornly just now – to the emergence of a sufficiently enlightened general public to maintain its schools by other means than by an obligatory tax. It is just because in our time the government and local authority administer education, and that it is paid for out of the revenue from universal taxation that – in spite of all the advantages it brings – the wishes of the parents of Chadderton and Aylesbury can be so easily disregarded. Were these schools part of these districts in every sense of the word, and were their administrators those who had made education their primary task in life, then these parents would have been treated far more differently – if only that they would have known more intimately those with whom they had to deal.

But it is not our wish just to inveigh against the present situation. That is all too easy. But we do wish to point out by contrast what is envisaged in the educational ideals of Rudolf Steiner, and how the real problem of educational organisation of the future lies in welding the kind of independence which our schools enjoy with nation-wide educational opportunity. How long such schools as ours will be able to continue in the modern set-up is a matter for conjecture only. It may be that they will have to suffer complete eclipse before even a handful of people really understand the contributions they have to make to social life by the very nature of their organisation. They are all at the very moment in danger of being squeezed out of existence by the many branches of that vast educational combine controlled by the Ministry, which can afford to give away what they have to ask fees for.

It is naturally hoped that the Rudolf Steiner educational movement will go from strength to strength. There are already, far beyond the schools themselves, those who see in it that which can be a tremendous power of good in modern civilisation. But we dare not be too sanguine of the immediate future. Ours is a day to day existence only; but none the less one which is fortified by two great facts which also belong to that sphere from which Rudolf Steiner drew the knowledge which it was his life work to impart. One is, that what is ultimately for the good of humanity must eventually find its way into human existence; the other, that the utter shipwreck of all one has planned and indeed built is not the calamity it first appears to be. All the striving that went into it will re-emerge somewhere, sometime in circumstances more propitious for its further development. It is on this basis that we work; and it is in this mood that we await with equanimity what destiny will bring forth.

But we should be untrue to the cause we have taken up if we observed what was going on in the world without comment. There is far too much pressure today on education from sources that simply wish it to subserve material standards of living only, and far too much interference from officialdom that is chiefly concerned with carrying out the letter of byelaws and regulations. Parents are coming to be regarded more and more as just the biological pre-requisites for children; children as the rearguard of technological advance; and teachers as the instruments for carrying out the benevolent despotism of the Welfare State. It may be that the anomalies in this condition can right themselves 'in time', and that once we have won that perfection of material living toward which our civilisation strains, we can turn to the ideals and values of human freedom and culture - which is the proper sphere of education. If so, there is nothing to worry about. But it could happen that the whole amazing edifice has to crack first before sufficient people are interested enough to consider a cultural value at least as important for civilisation as a washing machine. Without education we learn only by trial and error - and trial and error on the present world wide scale could be a very expensive business. Through education we could learn to avoid the grossest errors; but education has to have a chance first. The chance it needs more than anything now is more freedom for those who have its ideals sincerely at heart, and more help from those whose vision of its task is not dimmed by the glitter of material progress.

PAYING THEIR WAY

By a decree of 31st August, 1956, Columbia has set up a National Bank of Education with the principal task of financing public and private school authorities to build and equip schools.

I.B.E.

A substantial part of the resources of the University of Iceland (1,600,000 kronur in 1956) is derived from the proceeds of a lottery in which the prizes are exempt from income and municipal taxes, which permits recovery of capital outlay. The university also operates a cinema from whose profits it can meet its own running expenses.

from International Bureau of Education

A Note of Despair

R. Lissau

Under the heading *Education and the Social Climate* the following letter was published in the *Manchester Guardian* of March 13th, 1957. The authors, two assistant grammar school masters, had obviously to remain anonymous. It is reprinted here without any alterations, but the first paragraph and the two concluding sentences are omitted, as they refer to matters discussed at that time in the *Manchester Guardian*, one of them Hoggart's study on *The Uses of Literacy*.

The general public ought to be disabused at once of the idea that the young grammar school master is facing his task hopefully. We are both teachers of some experience, both teaching sixth-form pupils in what is described on speech days as a 'great school', both having now established ourselves, one might say, in the profession. Yet we are united in finding our work depressing. In the transmission of ideas, beliefs and values, which is surely the basis of the teaching vocation, our efforts are being stultified by the social climate of to-day.

Culture resistance has gained such ground that even the 'better boy', whose success was for many the justification of teaching, has had his judgment warped as much by over-rejection of the plebeian as by subjection to it. The deadening uniformity produced by popular culture has perhaps been a greater enemy than its lasciviousness, though one is often at a loss whether to confiscate the fifth-former's weekly paper or not. What chance have we of arousing dormant sensibilities to the wonder of Sophocles, Shakespeare or Mozart in minds exposed for a longer time each day to ITV, 'Reveille', or Radio Luxembourg?

As for behaviour, smaller grammar schools may retain some semblance of 'tone' where the strength of local community life is holding out against mass vulgarity, but in our classrooms and assembly hall the manners are often those of the mob.

There will be few responsible teachers who desire to question this indictment. The difficulties confronting the teacher have increased very much during the last ten years. The reasons are deep-seated: indifference to religion, the break-up of family life, the lack of hope. In a world without convictions illusions have grown, and ideals have given place to an attitude, which is content and satisfied to accept human nature as it is. In consequence it is widely held that everything has its price, that the best advertisement is the one based on sex, that business will flourish of a determined attack is made on man's subconsciousness and if his dreams and desires are stimulated to an unhealthy pitch, and that culture is a line which does not pay.

Against this attack our traditional culture has been unable to hold out. The subsequent devastation is perhaps greatest in the sphere of education. For it was caught at a time of transition and crisis. Education had been based on a medieval outlook. In essence, it was the training of a 'dominant minority' out of touch with the rest of the people, and the very training was built on a language not understood outside this closed circle. It was - at least in its medieval origins - a one-sided intellectual activity. Inside the church

a body of thinkers of unsurpassed subtlety, outside grossest ignorance. Inside a closed circle moving in a rarified atmosphere, outside life in all its fulness and rawness.

This 'dominant minority' has undergone all sorts of changes, but to-day it is disappearing fast. We believe in equality of opportunity and for the first time education has become universal and compulsory. Yet it has not been all pure gain for those who formerly had been uneducated. True, a great number of outstanding men have with greatest success availed themselves of the new opportunities. But the fulness and vitality of life of the formerly illiterate classes has vanished. This is the burden of Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* to which the writers of our letter refer. To take one example only, and this is not from Mr. Hoggart's book. Stephen Spender, the poet, worked during the war in the London Fire Service. He was appalled by the inability of his colleagues to give a clear description of any incident which they had witnessed. Their oral reports were always clothed in the same stereotyped phrases which came straight from the cheaper papers and magazines. There was, however, one young man whose descriptions were graphic and brimful of acute observation. He was illiterate, and thus protected from the daily trash doled out in the press.

It is clear that we have failed. But in the opinion of the present writer it is not the principle of universal education which is at fault. It is our methods. As long as our education remains one-sided and over-intellectual it is bound to fail. Readers of this journal are familiar with our contention that education ought to appeal to the whole man, not only to his dead. But our subject here is the social climate, and in the following paragraphs we shall discuss what can be done by all schools, and what by Rudolf Steiner schools in particular.

If the social climate of the day is inimical to the 'transmission of ideas, beliefs and values, which is surely the basis of the teaching vocation', then it is for the school to create a different climate within its walls. There can be no doubt that this is possible. By its use of form and colour, by the care given to the formroom, hall and grounds, by the tone of voice of the teacher in the classroom and outside, through the way school festivals and parents evenings are held a climate can be built up to provide the background for what the teacher has to say.

Few people will disagree that a school can establish a cultural climate of its own, but many will doubt whether it has any chance against the 'deadening uniformity produced by popular culture'. Experience shows that this need not be so, provided that impact of the school is consistent, non-commercial and topical. Consistent means that whatever impression is made by one teacher should not be cancelled by another, that the religion teacher should not make any claims which another member of the staff can easily explode or that science masters do not preach the universal validity of their

particular method. Only a staff which in certain ways is united can build up a cultural climate. Failing this each teacher is left to his own devices and his own limitations.

Non-commercial is our second condition. For a generation where everything has its monetary value, where the newspapers tell us how much the job of a cabinet minister, film star or tycoon is 'worth', the effort of many a padre has been completely frustrated by the simple word 'bible basher'. Apart from the ridicule it entails it implies that this is a job like many others, reasonably well paid, comparatively free from exertion and danger, and so forth. The same applies to school. The teacher in the eyes of the typical product of our civilisation is paid to instruct and to 'peddle cultural values'. It is one job like many others: it may not be too well paid, but where else do you get such holidays? The teacher will only break through this barrier if without talking about it he can convince his pupils of his complete devotion to his task. It has been seen that men whose previous experience or outstanding capacities enable them to fill many and lucrative positions enjoy great standing as teachers. For pupils realise that to them teaching is not just 'a job'. This non-commercial attitude together with their consistency has given the teaching orders of the church a great advantage over their secular colleagues.

If we are successful, our efforts must lead to a rejection of contemporary culture, unless we are topical. This means speaking to our more mature pupils about Stravinski, and not only about Mozart, about Edith Sitwell and not only about Emily Brontë. There ought to be a constant reference to what is best in our own time so that no feeling of isolation is allowed to arise in the pupils. If the school stands completely apart from its contemporary setting it can at best achieve some freak results. Most of the pupils will receive a shock when leaving school and will feel that its teaching has no application to 'real life'.

So far all schools have the same possibilities. Rudolf Steiner schools can, however, go further than that. As Mr. Alan Howard pointed out in the first of the four articles 'In a Nutshell' teachers at these schools are convinced of the supreme importance of the individual and of its pre-existence. In a time which is overcome and fascinated by the revelation of evil in all its manifestations we look to the creative individual as a source of good. We are therefore not only concerned with the 'transmission of ideas, beliefs and values', but even more with fostering the power for good which lies in every healthy human being. In trying to evoke in our pupils initiative, responsibility, imagination and social awareness as well as to sharpen their appreciation of what is beautiful, we are concerned with the creation of a future civilisation, and not only with 'transmission'. This gives us a sense of purpose.

What about success? I believe that every Rudolf Steiner school in this country will be glad to be judged by its 'fruits', its old scholars.

It is not claimed that any method of education can change a person and alter his destiny, nor indeed that it ought to do so. But the distinct cultural and social climate built up for our scholars gives them a standard by which to judge what they find in the larger world which they enter on leaving school. Some indentify themselves with this way of shaping life, others choose a different way, others leave the matter in abeyance, but very few reject or despise the standards of their former school.

The Adolescent's Approach to Literature III

(This is the final article of the series. ED.)

H. L. Hetherington.

It remains to us now to describe in greater detail the English Literature lesson for Class 10, a class composed, as we have said, of sixteen year olds. It is at this stage that children have achieved the first separation of outer and inner experience which begins to mark them as adults. They are aware of a new possession, which brings with it embarrassments as well as a wealth of new and precious experiences. It is at this age that the young person can begin to form a real love for poetry, and awake to its subtlety and intimacy.

The literature period for this age can be called "The Birth of Literature out of Mythology". Texts will have to be studied in translation to some extent, but this is unavoidable. Now the choice of works to illustrate the birth of literature proper out of the old epics and sagas is obviously very wide and will vary very considerably from teacher to teacher. In the main the writer can only refer to what he has taken in the classroom, but even these examples are not regularly used.

Comparisons can well be made between an epic of a people at the Homeric level of culture, an epic or romance of medieval times and a post-renaissance narrative poem, for example the Volsunga Saga, the Nibelungenlied and perhaps one of Tennyson's Idylls of the King. The young people are able to trace in such a comparison how in the ancient epics mythological incidents were interwoven with everyday occurrences. In Homer this is very striking, we have most convincing details presented in close relationship with events of a frankly legendary nature. Polyphemus' cave or Circe's palace is as circumstantially described as the scenes where the arrogant suitors jostle and crowd into Odysseus' court in Ithaca. There is no distinction in Homer between what a modern experiences as the inner, and what as the outer world. Similarly Sigurd rides on from the slaying of Fafnir up Hinderfell to the flame-encircled Brynhild; no indication is given by the sagaman as to whether the experiences of the hero are to be considered as spiritual or physical ones. Indeed the question would have been utterly pointless in that age, only in our own do we ask, "Did it really happen?" Such questions - and they can appear prematurely in children in our age - can only arise where a sharp distinction is made between "fact" and "fancy"!

In the medieval romances we find that much of the breadth of the old mythological imagination has gone, a comparison between the Volsunga Saga and the Nibelungenlied illustrates that; but a more human element has entered. The sanctity of the old family blood-tie which made Gudrun kill her husband in revenge for her brothers, in the Volsunga Saga, is replaced by the bond of marriage in the

Nibelungenlied, where Kriemhild kills her brothers in revenge for the death of her husband. And yet there is still no firm distinction in the medieval romance between outer and inner experience, each is considered important and no indication is given as to when the one or the other is meant.

Only in works of the renaissance do we find emerging on the one hand a clear-sighted factual appraisal of the world of matter (the age of discovery was born of this) and on the other a blossoming of poetry which was frankly expressive of an individual striving, and inner personal struggle. The Eumenides who haunted Orestes from *without* in the Greek drama, become the *inner* voices which whisper to Macbeth. The sonnets of Shakespeare, revealing as they do the tremendous suffering of a separated individual torn between the good and evil influences, which can have power over a man, are possible in that form only after the renaissance.

All this can begin to be appreciated by children who themselves have made this step into our own age. By seeing the historical background to their own development, they find themselves established in the history of man, they know that their own struggles are after all part of a wider development in the spiritual history of mankind.

The opportunity of a closer study, combined this time with the reading of original texts, is provided by the works of William Langland and Geoffrey Chaucer. As contemporaries, living in the latter part of the fourteenth century, they show very interestingly how modern literature emerged from the medieval. Chaucer has been justly called the father of modern English literature. This title could never be given to Langland. The *Piers Plowman* is frankly impossible reading for anybody except the specialist. The author is guided in his train of thought by his own emotions, and in no way by the desire to tell a logically constructed story, he follows the medieval practice of presenting allegorical figures and they appear alongside real characters of history. The poem itself is a dream, a vision of the world. And yet there are many vivid little scenes, as realistic as Chaucer's, etched as it were on to the legendary canvas of the whole.

Chaucer, once the initial and not very difficult linguistic obstacles are surmounted, is immediately intelligible and speaks like a modern. He invites us to see real people in a real setting, he is outward-looking and reaches the character of a contemporary by means of outer observation. We know what we do of the miller, for example, because we see so clearly what he was like physically, wart and all! Chaucer has arrived; what he experiences is going to lead to the conquest of the physical globe from one end to the other. And yet the religious fervour of Langland is lacking, there is a brightness and clarity about Chaucer, which we admire wholeheartedly, but something of the older brooding depths we find in Langland has gone.

This comparison is an especially valuable one for English children and can give the opportunity for the deeper study of an actual text,

so necessary as an adjunct to the general background of human spiritual development afforded by the other works mentioned, or their equivalent.

The lesson as a whole meets the actual psychological situation of the sixteen year old. He, too, has "arrived"; he is able to begin to judge, to discriminate between outer fact and the illumination of that "fact" by thought, which arises from "within". He is conscious that a distinction must be made in this age between the two worlds and that literature in its modern sense is the child of this consciousness. In the following year, other problems arise from the very nature of this consciousness, especially the problem of doubt and scepticism, and the problem of the illumination of the outer world by the inner, referred to a moment ago. Then the theme is that of the Holy Grail, where, in the original Eschenbach version, innocence is superseded by doubt and only by a long struggle is the agony of scepticism and despair resolved. I have found Hamlet a useful play to study at this point, although almost any of the major Shakespearean tragedies are excellent material.

But in the tenth class the way must be prepared for this future development in the eleventh, and the way can be prepared by showing the historical development which leads to the consciousness of our own age; a consciousness which sees the material fact as such – or seeks to do so – and also experiences an inner world as initially a separate realm. The problem of forming a bridge between the two will arise naturally as a consequence, and is dealt with in the literature studied in the following year by the seventeen year old.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

Explain the meaning of the phrase "Gallic navies" occurring in the passage set

Answer : French roadworkers.

Speech Tracing in Germany

W. Glas

AN interesting report on the introduction of a group of phonetic symbols called "Sprachspur" (speech-tracing) into many German Schools appeared in the Times Educational Supplement on February the 22nd. Felix Kunowski designed this phonetic notation in the nineteen twenties, and he planned it with world-wide usage in mind. Since nineteen twenty seven his system has gained much ground. (It cuts writing time by two thirds, is clearer than shorthand – and does away with bad spelling). Now some educationists and members of the Phonetic Alphabet Association feel it should be introduced into British Schools. Presumably along similar lines to those adopted in West Phalia where thousands of five year old children are taught "speech tracing" every year before they are led to the Latin Alphabet.

Not all the members of the Phonetic Alphabet Association are convinced that the same thing should happen in Britain, but those who hesitate do not do so for any educational reason. They have fixed "their eyes on the possibility of a phonetic script eventually superseding the old alphabet altogether (as the Arabic numerals gradually superseded the less convenient Roman ones)." They feel the matter is so important that an authoritative committee should first study Kunowski's alphabet to make certain that it is the most convenient.

At this point the article closes – but not before the Times Correspondent expresses his opinion: "Whatever alphabet was chosen by that committee might be destined to serve the whole of humanity for thousands of years. The acid test of it will not be merely its technical efficiency but *the extent to which, like eurhythmy, it can reflect and express the living realities of speech.*" *

This is a timely warning. One hopes that the Times will still follow it up by an article on Dr. Steiner's new art of movement as such a statement must have been puzzling to many of its readers.

Yet, while one can find it pleasant to see such a reference to the nature and importance of eurhythmy one can be somewhat downcast at the superficiality of an educational thinking based on utility and experiment alone. "Sprachspur" enthusiasts seem to have given but little consideration to the effect of abstract symbolism – even if the symbols denote phonemes – on the child nature of small children.

At the age of five children are still much at one with the world. Sounds are not effects which reach them from outside but are experienced, often very intensely, as part of their being.

* *my italics*

William Wordsworth, a very subtle psychologist, has left us memories of this state of consciousness both in poetry and in prose. "I was often unable" he said many years later, "to think of external things as having external existence and I communed with all I saw as something not apart from but inherent in my own immaterial nature." Perhaps it was one of his rare gifts to preserve this state longer than children usually do. It enabled him to experience an organic pleasure when "every icy crag tinkled like iron," or when he listened to the words of the cottagers and pedlars. Reflecting on these things he could write:

"my blood appeared to flow

With its own pleasure and I breathed with joy."

Rudolf Steiner liked to make a careful distinction between an experience and an analysis or definition of an experience. The more clearly a sound is experienced the more power it will have to enrich and grow with the soul. Every adult, however, can test that while experiences can become meaningful they do not remain static. Time makes interesting qualitative differences in our memories which help us to deepen our values. A definition, or symbol, on the other hand, remains fixed. Moreover the process of definition and abstraction is alien to the state of unity with the world which should be a characteristic feature of this age; indeed, when it is introduced too early it can hasten a child through this time, to the detriment of maturer faculties which develop much later. The antithesis of experience and the activity of defining it may be a matter of psyche for the adult; for the child before seven it is a matter which also concerns physical development. Dr. Steiner has shown how all that is active at this time in the soul realm also becomes active in the organic processes of growth and formation.

It follows that to make small children symbolise their experiences of the content of words is as fettering as putting bands round a growing tree.

The critical reader might ask whether this makes a case against the introduction of speech-tracing or one against the teaching of any form of writing to five year old children. Is the phonetic script more harmful than the highly developed, artificial and abstract characters which have become so conventionalized that they bear little or no essential relationship to what they are intended to represent? In other words, is there any difference in quality between the abstract symbols of our alphabet and Kunowski's signs?

If there is no difference the latter might well be taught alongside the traditional letters – as long as this happened at the right time.

This is a complex question with historical roots, and it should be viewed in a historical perspective. Only a mere indication of such a perspective can be given within the scope of a short article.

Already in ancient times there were two different kinds of writing. Characters of one type were related to experiences of the ear. (The Cuniform Alphabet or the seventy odd phonograms used in Egypt at

the time of the first Dynasty belong to this category). Another group, namely those hieroglyphics composed of pictograms and ideograms, were originally related to the power of vision. Thus, in a Californian Rock-temple "sorrow" is represented by a figure from whose eyes drop tears. The Objiwa Indians use the same symbol abbreviated to an eye with tears falling from it, and a similar eye is to be found among Egyptian hieroglyphics. Such drawings represent not sounds; not even pictures in nature (pictograms); but are pictures of ideas (ideographs).

Our alphabet has developed out of pictograms and ideograms — each letter containing a slumbering vision within it.

To the child the roman letters are only abstract when this pictorial quality is not awakened. That is why a teacher in a Rudolf Steiner School will attempt to reawaken a picture in each letter when he introduces the A B C. He might shade a fish on the blackboard, and in several further drawings lead over the form of the fish into the letter F. Only then will he draw the child's attention to the relationship between the form of the fish, the form of the letter, and lastly its phonetic value. This method will appeal to the child's power of imagination and it will be historically grounded. In a sense he will have recapitulated the actual development of the alphabet. A phonetic alphabet could not be treated in this manner as the sound-symbols have not arisen out of any corresponding pictures in nature.

However, if educationalists wish to emphasise the phonetic experience in children so that they later show more linguistic sensibility, they might be able to do so by introducing foreign languages, by the direct method, at an early age. Then the child's hearing faculty might become more acute as for some time he would have to deal more with the sound than the sense of words.

Notes and Comments

By Our Special Correspondent.

Nursery Rhymes.

WE have recently had an interesting correspondence with a grandmother, who has been pondering with a lively imagination on the meaning and significance of nursery rhymes. She believes that several of them portray in pictorial form the facts of birth and incarnation. We quote below a convincing exposition of her belief in respect of the old favourites *Hush a Bye Baby* and *Ring a Ring of Roses*.

It may be some comfort to conscientious parents confronted by some Authority with the dictum that they should instruct their child as to 'How it began', to feel with me, that they have already done so in the most essential points, by singing the old nursery rhymes to him.

Probably there are other theories about the ideas, woven into these old songs which have enlivened so many a child, but these ones, made possible from 'pointers' given by Dr. Steiner, delight me, and other parents may like to picture them in this way too.

Rock a bye baby on the tree (*of life's*) top
When the wind (*of the spirit*) blows
The cradle will rock (*rib-formation like a cradle*)
When the bough breaks (*of the paradise tree*)
The cradle will fall (*birth*)
Down will come baby
Cradle and all. (*The last lines could be a picture of the human spirit, resting in its physical form*)

Ring a ring of roses
A pocket full of of posies (*A charming description of pregnancy?*)
A-tish-oo, a-tish-oo, we all stand still. (*Thoughtfully prepare ourselves for the coming plunge*)
The king has sent his daughter
To fetch a pail of water (*liquid is the essential concomitant of all growth, the embryo floats in water*)
A-tish-oo, a-tish-oo, we all bow down (*Come nearer to the earth*)

The bird upon the steeple
Sits high above the people (*the approach of the individuality to the body being formed?*)
A-tish-oo, a-tish-oo, we all kneel down (*Further approach to the earth*)
The wedding bells are ringing
And boys and girls are singing (*Joyful union of the soul and body at birth*)
A-tish-oo, a-tish-oo, we all fall down (*Birth is completed*)
The A-tish-oo refrain may point to the important first intake of breath at birth

A Matter of Status.

Members of the teaching profession show understandable touchiness with regard to the status which they are accorded in society. The standing of the teacher has of course enormously improved over the last century or so, but teachers still feel that the importance of the work they have undertaken is not sufficiently recognised. Unfortunately the National Union of Teachers, or rather, certain vociferous members of it, tend to see the question of status only in terms of remuneration. The outward and visible sign of respect in their eyes is a fat pay packet. It seems to us that a healthy outlook in these matters will only be formed when the doctor, priest, scientist, farmer and teacher see their work primarily as a vocation. The question of their status in society will be linked with the quality of work that they do and not in the first place with the salary that they are able to demand from an unwilling state authority. We should even go so far as to whisper, perhaps rather fearfully, that the organisation of teachers into a trade union has done more than most things to prevent the profession's receiving the respect that is so much desired by its members.

Specialization.

The old familiar and unhappy arguments and dilemmas persist. One of the last great all-rounders in the fullest sense was Goethe, who died 125 years or so ago. With the complexity of our knowledge today it is well-nigh impossible to be moderately knowledgeable in more than a few branches of study. Only quite unusually outstanding people can approach this ideal. In recent years Rudolf Steiner was such a person, as anyone who cares to inform himself of the breadth of his knowledge can discover for himself.

Anyone less outstanding will be hard put to it to gain even a smattering of the field of learning and information open to him.

This fact however does *not* mean that it is impossible to avoid specialization in schools. It only means that the principle of economy must be more carefully employed and representative experiences chosen for representation in the classroom. The ideal of an all round education has never been more vital than today. If we abandon this we abandon our humanity and enter into the civilization of the ant-heap.

Letters to the Editor.

Dear Editor, Last year you asked to hear from readers, here are a few comments from a parent who is also a (not very good) ex-teacher.

Of course we want to send our children to a Rudolf Steiner school, but even if there were one available for day attendance, we couldn't possibly afford the necessary fees! There must be many others like us. Have you any helpful advice as to what we can do to help to counteract the excessively analytical and materialistic and examination dominated curriculum of state provided education?

We are all in sympathy with not pigeon-holing children to fit into particular educational types—but if the orthodoxly accepted examinations are thus side-tracked by a greater number of children, don't you find you have a number of pupils who just don't "fit-in"? Isn't it difficult for them to get jobs? Most of us just have to earn our livelihood as well as be worth-while human beings!

Then, too, the class teacher and main lesson method have a wonderful theory behind them—however, we have great misgiving when we recollect those not infrequent occasions when "Tommy Blank" and "Miss So & So" just can't work harmoniously. How disastrous to the whole class if such a friction arises. What do you do about this eventuality? (We're sure that even R.S. teachers aren't all adepts.) One can explain it away as "Karmic debt", but I'm sure that most educators would try to give "Tommy", *more* than he "deserved".

As parents to two pre-school children we are interested in Rudolf Steiner's comments upon toys. That the innumerable realistic and mechanical toys available, (many chiefly of adult-purchaser appeal) are stifling to imagination we have long believed. Should toys then always be contrived by parents or children themselves? Could you give an article on this subject some time? This is a "sticky" problem to parents whose children are showered with numerous unsuitable (and often ugly) toys by well intended and generous friends.

As a matter of interest—I like making rag-dolls, and have often found that the children to whom they are given, frequently prefer them to the more elaborately finished shop-product.

We hope these points may be of help and interest and possibly suggest new lines of interest for future articles.

We do look forward to "Child and Man", and only wish we had time to study the subjects introduced more closely.

Yours sincerely,
Isobel Grant Whittle.

91, Longton Lane,
Rainhill, Liverpool.

(A number of interesting points have been raised here by Mrs. Whittle. The Editor will bear them in mind in choosing subjects for future articles in the magazine. Ed.)

Continental Journey

The "Grand Tour" used to be the climax of a gentleman's education. We can hardly claim to have emulated this but some of our children have certainly had a tour which they will remember for the rest of their lives. A group of our older children (13 year olds) travelled, by brake, this summer with camping equipment some two thousand miles through Europe. The journey included Belgium, Holland, Germany, Luxemburg and France.

To describe all experiences and adventures would be to write a book. Here can only be recorded a few of the highlights, with a particular bearing on educational aspects.

To the open mind everything is of interest and at the age of thirteen there is very much that is new. Thrill followed thrill and experiences crowded one after another. The simplest things were interesting; the loading of the ferry-boat, the drive-on-the-right, the different views, the foreign money, the shopping expeditions.

For the first night we turned up a side track on the French coast and found a grassy dune by the water's edge. Up went the tent, the brake was converted into a sleeping apartment, spirit stoves were distributed, out came the bacon and sausage and eggs. Everyone was his own cook, and never have so many spoiled broths been consumed with such relish.

The first few days were perfect and our route took us into Belgium where we visited and viewed the historic cities of Bruges, Ghent and Antwerp. One night the heavens opened and a deluge washed the inhabitants of the tent out of it. Antwerp is a city to be remembered for its magnificent water front and endless docks.

Some days were spent in Holland, taking in the Island of Walcheren, Rotterdam the Hague, Haarlem, Amsterdam. Walcheren was the scene of the great floods some two or three years back: in Rotterdam we saw the new city coming into existence. In the north we travelled on the great 20 mile dyke which now encloses the Zuider Zee. The flat country, the canals, the quaint buildings, the rich farms made a great impression. It was all so very different from our smoky home town of Leeds. Part of the time we were camping but owing to a bad patch of rain, some friends offered to house us in a large garage. Near Utrecht we were treated to the inordinate luxury of a proper bed and a meal at a table. We also looked in at all the Rudolf Steiner schools that we could find.

From Holland to Germany we passed through historic Arnhem, visiting both the battleground and the war cemetery. We came into Germany and noticed that town after town, village after village still showed scars of war. The auto-bahn took us swiftly, directly and yet pleasantly to Cologne and Bonn and the beginning of the romantic Rhineland. Here we had perfect weather again. We camped by the water's edge, climbed the Drachenfels, bathed in the Rhine, admired the Lorelei rock, explored the castles, climbed the

vine-covered hills, took a trip by overhead cable railway and settled for a dish of Sauerkaute in one of Rudesheim's famous restaurants.

"This", I said to the children, "is our furthest point away from home. From now on we are on the way back". There was rather a strange reaction. There had been little thought of home the whole of the journey, now they all wanted to get back as quickly as possible.

Travelling now via the Moselle valley, we spent one night in a magnificent Youth Hostel, crossed Luxemburg, and then seemed to go in and out of Belgium and France for a good many miles. A further (wet) night was spent at a French village school and our last on the continent on the beach at Dunkirk.

We came home in a howling gale when only one of the French channel ports was in action.

In retrospect memories crowd the mind, but as it was for the children's sake, one might well ask concerning the effect on them. That they have seen and learned much of general interest goes without saying, but perhaps they have also developed a much broader outlook through contact with other peoples, perhaps a greater tolerance. They have fended for themselves and learned a certain amount of self reliance. They have had some valuable arithmetic practice in juggling with the different currencies. Possibly the most valuable, but least tangible, lesson was the living together at very close quarters for three weeks, sometimes in discomfort, sometimes tired and hungry, and yet having mutually to tolerate one another. This was a real social education.

Roy Wilkinson.

Some facts and ideas concerning an exchange of classes

by Herr Lange of the Freie Waldorfschule, Heidenheim.

These six years there has been an exchange between the New School, King's Langley, and the Freie Waldorfschule Heidenheim; an exchange of classes, not of single pupils. The teachers of the New School wrote to some smaller schools in Germany and suggested such an exchange of the upper classes, and out the answering schools they selected the Heidenheimer school; perhaps our answer was the most enthusiastic, perhaps the number of students in our classes concerned was quite the same (it only was in this first year). In 1951 the first English group, a X. grade, came to Heidenheim. It had been a long journey, across the Channel, through Belgium, up the Rhine and then across the country to Ulm where we met them and brought them to our town by bus. They were very tired, poor children, and very shy, and they did not know at all what would happen to them. They had followed Miss Vera Compton-Burnett, they had trusted in her, they and their parents, but to be in a foreign country, to go in foreign railways, to see towns very different from those at home, to live with strange people who took it for granted that these young Englishmen could speak German and would like to do, it was more than they could bear, and so when one of the girls, now a good and intelligent helper in the New School, came to her German foster-parents and was supposed to speak and understand German, she said: "I prefer my own language." This was not the only difficulty to be overcome, but we all tried to learn, and the following group, in 1952, already came in another attitude; the German parents knew better how to handle them; the time-table, the excursions, the periods, for instance surveying and book-binding, were better organized, and step by step the plan and hope of the sisters Compton-Burnett were shaped and realized according to their ideas, and we became so fond of that idea that in 1953, when the English friends had no class to send over, we came to England with a XII. grade, and our German parents willingly paid for the accommodation. To-day it is so well known in our school that once they will have the chance of staying in the other country, that the following story is really true: A small boy, 7 years old, at the New School, was saving some money he had got, and when his mother asked him what he should like to buy with this money, he replied: "But I must have some money when I am in class X and go over to Germany, mustn't I?"

What is it that made us overcome all obstacles up to now, and that makes students and parents look forward to the time when their class will be going to England? What do the parents see when their children come back from England? I shall try to give a short answer and to describe the feelings of the German parents. First of all, most German children are very keen on learning languages, and when they are in England, they are glad to find foster-parents who do not know a word of German, so that they, the pupils, are forced to speak English and some of them always want to be corrected. Then: they like to see the country. They do not observe all that is going on, they want to know. What Dr. Steiner calls the "Consciousness Soul" develops in these young souls in this way, that they are not shy and dumb like Perceval coming up to the Castle of the Holy Grail for the first time and not finding the right question: they want to know, they are active and try to explore the mysteries of the Castle, i.e. of the country. Last years, when I had the chance again to be in England with a Class XII, they asked at half-term whether they might be allowed to have the whole week off in order to travel round the country; they promised to work the following Saturdays. Indeed, no big sacrifice from their part, because in Germany there is school every Saturday morning. The English friends thought it a good idea, and off they went in groups, some going up to Scotland, some to Cornwall: they wanted to see the end, the coast in the North and in the West. They all were back in time and worked on Saturdays to the end of the term. They had seen and experienced a lot, spoken to various people and learnt about the soil, the plants, the men; they had taken many photographs, even coloured ones, and brought them back to Germany. Here they tried to tell their parents

and friends and although they could not, of course, talk like adults and bring their experiences into a system, we all felt that these young people had widened their outlook, that they had got a new understanding for another nation, that they never will be satisfied with superficial notes and remarks, that they really know the other people and love it. Some of our pupils went back to England as soon as they had left school, to live in families and improve in the language or to have their apprenticeship in this country. There was not a single one who did not say: I want to go back to England and live there for a couple of years. And what do they like? The gardens and parks, and that life is still an outdoor life, certainly, but the way people behave, too. In Germany life is - may we say so? - somewhat rude and full of hurry, nobody cares for the others, the Government look after them. (There are other examples, I know, and very remarkable ones, but on the average life is working, working, working, as the Suebians put it: *schaffen, schaffen*). And they feel the gentleness of the drivers, who pick them up, they feel that people have time for each other, that the private activity for helping and organising help is much greater than it can be at home. Of course they find houses, furniture, habits, quite strange to them, but more and more they respect them and try to understand them. They get a new feeling for their own country, for its advantages and its weaknesses, and we believe that out of this feeling there will develop, in time, the knowledge of each nation's particular part and task in the world. What Dr. Steiner gave us in the "Volkseelen" - course and what the teachers of the Rudolf-Steiner-Schools try to perceive and to act according to these ideas and facts, we hope that our pupils will learn a bit of it by this exchange.

So it is more than learning another language. In fact, this point is not so important. Sure, they are able to follow a discourse and to speak English almost fluently, but their spelling or the faculty of translating does not increase, so that it becomes evident in the examination where grammar and translation is more appreciated than speaking. What the parents always mention, what impresses them most, is the shaping of the character, the growing of their openness for the world. They go to England as children, and they go back as grown-ups.

And a last word about the exchange of teachers. I must confess that my sojourns in England and among the English teachers are among my happiest times in life, and that the English colleagues were sometimes nearer to me and in their decisions more understandable than problems and solutions were over here. I think I may say that we became friends. And it was quite an affirmation to me that, when we started a trip to Greece from Heidenheim last summer, among all the German friends and teachers there was one of the teachers of the New School, and she belonged to the group, nobody could have done better.

This year we shall have no exchange the New School having no class X. We are sure that this will be a creative interval and that we shall continue the following year with a new impulse and an even better success.

Books

GREEK FOR BEGINNERS: L. A. Wilding; Faber & Faber: 9/6d. It is interesting that in the same month that sees the passing of our greatest Greek scholar, Sir Gilbert Murray, a new book on Greek for beginners makes its appearance. This might not be so remarkable were it not that the whole tendency nowadays is away from classical education, and such books are therefore rare. This book, however, may well foreshadow others and a reviving interest in the classics. That certainly is its aim; and, written for the lower forms of secondary schools and preparatory schools the writer's confessed intention is to help the pupil to *enjoy* Greek. By the end of chapter eight he is already introducing Greek stories. From that chapter on the book is to be used in conjunction with a grammar, and the various grammatical points are introduced with that in mind, and attention directed to exercises in Greek and English with interesting narratives suitable to the stage reached accompanying each step. Revision exercises are introduced periodically, and full Greek-English, English-Greek vocabularies included.



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