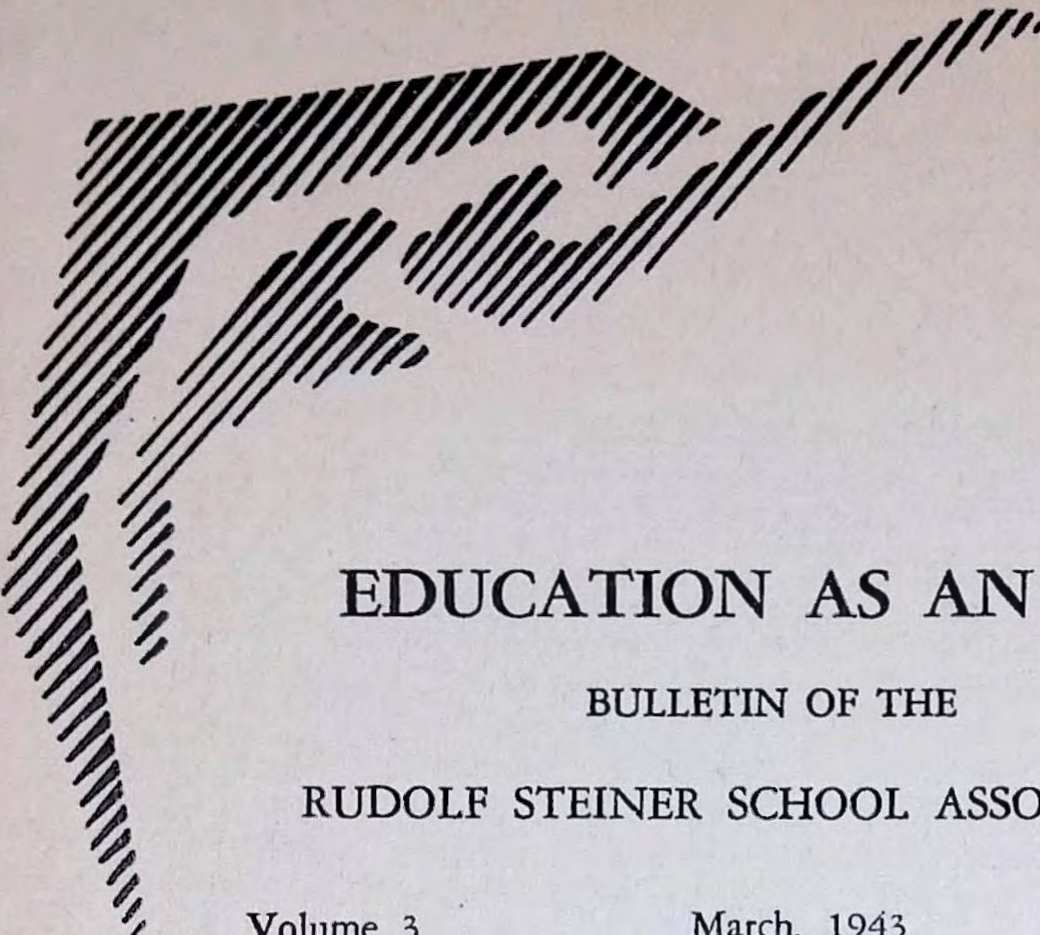




EDUCATION AS AN ART

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ANIMALS IN POETRY

"Animals in Poetry" is the foreword to a collection of verses about animals, which has been made for the purpose of being of service to teachers and children in their study of "Man and Animal".

The poet, living in the beauty of language, has in poetry a means of expression much more adequate for the characterization of the animal-being, its habits, moods, or activity, than the scientist who applies his analytical methods. Unless the zoologist acquires certain poetical qualities, which after all seems quite proper, he will miss certain points in his characterization. The descriptions of animals by the famous zoologist, A. E. Brehm, are so pleasurable just because they are poetic, in spite of being scientific and in prose. Indeed, he did not hesitate to include poems in his scientific works whenever he found one that suited his purpose.

No scientific description or explanation could adequately bring out the quality, the beauty, the horror, that lies imbedded in William Blake's poem, "The Tiger":

*Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forest of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?*

This most ferocious of creatures, this great prowling cat, is apt to slow up our breathing or make our heart beat faster, when the intuition of the poet awakens our imagination, and we see and feel this flaming striped terror prowl through "the forest of the night".

*And, when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? And what dread feet?*

Listening to the rhythm of these words, does one not hear the dreadful beast sneak through the underbrush of the jungle? What a contrast to William Blake's "The Lamb":

*Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?*

How different this language is! How tender! How lamb-like! In a few words the poet says all that is of importance to characterize the lamb, our symbol of gentleness.

The short poem, "The Eagle", by Alfred, Lord Tennyson is as characteristic as it is brief. It takes one up into the azure world of lonely lands. Close to the sun, one breathes the air of freedom in this world-wide kingdom of the eagle. Without saying so, Tennyson indicates the keen watchful eye of the king of the air, searching for his prey in the wrinkled sea beneath him; and when he has found it, he falls like a thunderbolt.

Looking for a poem which is in contrast to "The Eagle", we have an excellent one in R. L. Stevenson's "The Cow". His cow is as friendly as friendly can be. Phlegmatic by nature, she minds little when "blown by all the winds that pass, and wet with all the showers". Absent-minded, dreamy, with big eyes popping out of her heavy head,

*She walks among the meadow grass
And eats the meadow flowers.*

She is earthbound, heavy and slow. All she cares for is the green, juicy grass to fill her huge stomach, and to produce milk and cream "with all her might".

The lion has inspired many a poet. Mary Britton Miller expresses her deep sympathy for the captured king of the beasts. He is "too sorrowful to even roar", and the poet advises him to "sleep a little more". Victor Hugo, in his poem, "The Sleeping Lion", takes us into the desolate desert, at noon, when the dreadful beast is asleep. In a rather long poem, "The Lay of the Lion", Victor Hugo characterizes the kingly animal magnificently. Hilaire Belloc and Vachel Lindsay describe the beast more from the humorous point of view.

The horse, man's closest friend and most faithful servant in the kingdom of the animals, seems not to have received his deserved consideration on the part of poets. Many books have been written about horses, but unfortunately I have not been able, so far, to find the poem I was looking for. Of the horse's close relative, the donkey, man always delights in making a perfect fool.

That animal which has received the lion's share of praise and consideration is by no means the lion himself, but man's closest animal companion, the dog. Cats and mice have also received due recognition, especially in poetry for little children. Is there anything more cat-like than M. B. Miller's "Cat"?

*Shifting herself
On her delicate toes,
She arches her back
As high as it goes.
She lets herself down
With particular care,
And pads away
With her tail in the air.*

Whether one likes or dislikes mice, one cannot help but feel sympathy with E. Coatsworth's timid little mouse which complains bitterly,

*In a crack of moonlight
Aslant on the floor,*

that there are so "few crumbs in this world anymore". Also R. Fyleman thinks "mice are nice" in spite of their nibbling things which

*They should not touch,
And no one seems
To like them much.*

In his simple and delightful poem, "The Mole", James S. Tippet gives an excellent example of how animals are guided and taught by their organs. The animal which develops certain organs (in this case nose and paws) to extreme perfection in order to do one definite thing (dig holes) loses, on the other hand, the perfection of other organs.

*But perhaps with a nose
And paws like a mole's
I wouldn't need eyes
To see how to dig holes.*

A great deal of wisdom is hidden in this verse.

Finally, "Unstooping" by Walter de la Mare shows in a particularly fine way the differentiation between man and animal. "Uplifted o'er the four-foot beast", man walks unstooping through the world. As all these poems are written by man himself, they are bound to show in one way or another the relationship of man to the animals. One poem expresses sympathy with the burdens or shortcomings of the animals, another describes fright and horror, or again another idealizes an animal by making him the symbol of a virtue. How man distinguishes himself from all other beings is beautifully expressed in Goethe's poem:

*Noble be man
Helpful and good
For this alone
Distinguishes him
From all other beings
Unto us known.*

This poem is best suited to serve as the motto of this collection.

William Harrer

MAN AND ANIMAL

This title standing alone will convey little to one not yet acquainted with Rudolf Steiner's pedagogy. One might expect the animal kingdom to be studied in a course by itself, but, as in the world all things are related to each other, we feel that in school, where we are fitting children to live in this world, we must not let them lose sight of the whole while studying details. For this reason we start each course by relating the particular subject to a larger whole. The reasons for relating animal to man will be indicated in the following pages.

To the children starting their fourth year at school the title "Man and Animal" is one of delightful significance as a goal finally reached. The first steps leading upward to this goal are taken unconsciously in the first grade when the children listen to fairy stories. On the very first day of "real" school, the small first-graders listen trustingly to the teacher as they are told that they are to begin to learn those things which grown people know and do in the big world. As we talk to these six and seven year old children, we see that their eagerly parted lips reveal half-formed second teeth, or toothless gaps, indicating that the hardest, most material part of their organism is not yet quite finished, and that for this reason they still live to a certain extent in the dreamy, fairy-tale world of their kindergarten days.

Now, in these tales there are many animals with animal natures which are just as important to the children as the human characters and, for them, are not really differentiated from the world of man. In the story of Snow-white and Rose-red, for instance, the children love the kind bear, who, not strangely at all, is a prince; or, in the tale of the Golden Bird, they expect the fox to be a friend and guide to the youngest son; and I am sure that no one can feel that the cruel wolf in Red Riding-Hood is not an important character. Thus the animals become a living part of the child's world at this age.

As the first year draws to a close the teacher grows more and more aware of an unfolding and widening of the children's interests and powers of comprehension. After the summer vacation they return to the school definitely more grown-up and alert. The love of fairy stories has not yet vanished, but the teacher can feel that the transition to Aesop's Fables, suggested in the curriculum, is now possible and actually required by their developing consciousness. It is an accepted fact that the fables are a part of the cultural heritage of humanity, yet it is not so clearly realized that they are needed at just this stage of a child's development. The teacher must now use them with care as the perfect food for the child's growing appetite for learning. It is not the right approach to tell a fable and then analyze it in a tiresomely dry and intellectual way. Instead, the appetite is first stimulated by a thorough, pictorial description of people, animals and their ways, all in connection with the particular fable; then, as a climax, one might almost say as "dessert", the fable itself is told with its brief and witty characterizations. Now, with their interest thoroughly aroused and thoughts active, sometimes even stirred further by acting out the fable, the children are ready to do some very childlike analysis of their own. Such analysis is based on observation and comparison, as science is. And here it is good for them to consciously describe the difference between the woolly covering of the innocent lamb and the shaggy hide of the wolf, between the cruel, meat-tearing teeth of the wolf and the grass-munching ones of the lamb. These animals are so different, yet they both move parallel with the earth, have four supporting legs and feet, a tail, etc. Such observations can be made at this time when the quality of dreaming is gradually falling away from them like a discarded cloak, and the animals are no longer looked upon as being just the same as human beings and thus too close to be studied objectively.

The next step in preparation for a conscious understanding of the animals comes in the third grade with the study of farming and the farm animals in their relation to the earth and to man, as his willing servants. The children are now two steps removed from fairy-tale dreams, and are ready to feel a

conscious love and gratitude toward the animals, who not only serve them but are also dependent upon them. These steps, which are only visible to the teacher, finally bring them to the fourth year and its goal.

Having heard many hints from older children in the school about the importance and interest of the study of "Man and Animal", the children are now full of wonder and anticipation, with an eagerness to begin to learn, which proves the truth of Aristotle's saying that "wonder implies the desire to learn". The teacher, who has spent a thoroughly enjoyable and stimulating period of study, preparing the best possible presentation of the subject, is guided by the school curriculum, which says, "first an elementary study of man will be presented to the child in an artistic and reverent manner and then the animal world will be observed, always in its particular relation to man. In this way one teaches the child to perceive the manifold variations of the animal world, and to see how these are united in fixed order and harmony in human beings."

Each teacher who has taught this period of "Man and Animal" stands ready to help the next teacher whose class reaches the fourth grade; but no two teachers approach the subject in just the same way, though the fundamentals are of course the same. To this year's Fourth Grade teacher, it seemed good to relate the first lesson to the Bible stories taught during the previous year. We talked over the stories of Creation, and I recalled to the children the verse which says, "And God said: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth". In this way, out of their earlier experience, it was natural to the children to start with the idea of the dignity of man made in God's image, which does not imply any concrete physical picture, but rather a sense of the moral character of man, which distinguishes him from the beasts.

Continuing to develop the curriculum plan of presenting man in "an artistic and reverent manner" in order to reveal in him "the variations of the animal world in fixed order and harmony", I turned to a book on zoology which definitely presents man's qualifications as exercising dominion over the animal world, due to certain potentialities. First, it points out that we ought "to define the hand as belonging exclusively to man," and continues, "there is in him, what we observe in none of the Mammalia that approach him in other respects,—a complete distinction between the functions of his two pairs of extremities; the upper being adapted to prehension alone, the lower to support only." This naturally leads to—"Man is further distinguished from all other animals by his erect attitude." The zoologist also emphasizes that man's slow growth and dependence upon parents is "closely connected with his ultimate superiority". And he concludes with two important statements: one, that man's power to "articulate sounds, or language," is another of man's unique abilities; the other, that "above all, it would seem that the mind of man is distinguished from theirs (animals) by the faculty of conceiving of a Superior Being, enjoying a purely spiritual existence". Implied in this last statement is man's moral character which enables him to distinguish between good and evil. These above indications, and much more physiological data, were studied by the teacher and presented in a manner suited to nine year old children.

Man's spiritual as well as potential superiority to animals having been thus indicated, we can now point out man's physical inferiority by showing that each type of animal has some physical part of its organism which is carried very close to perfection, though at the expense of other advances in development. It is easy to show the superiority in speed of the horse's one-toe hoof over man's delicate foot; or how much better adapted a lion's unsheathed claws are for rending food, than man's delicate fingers; and when it comes to the air it is obvious that the eagle's wings outstrip all man's limbs in flying. But here we turn back once more to man's superiority, for all that he lacks physically is made up by his potential capacities that work through his creative and imaginative thought. He invents all manner of vehicles which produce great speed, all kinds of tools for cutting and for eating food, and his airplanes of the present and the future carry not one, but many, through the air.

Having thus introduced man as a whole, the teacher goes on to lessons dealing with man's various physiological aspects, among them those which can be experienced directly by the children. The senses now become of conscious interest to them when they realize how unconnected with the world man's head might really be were it not for these doors and windows through which he goes out to the world and lets it in. Compressing their own ribs with their hands and then feeling how the air pushes them out again; letting the air in through the nose and out through the mouth while speaking; feeling the throbbing pulse; observing the color of veins; and recalling the red of arterial blood often seen; all such observations make these daily occurrences a stimulating study. Digestion may also be followed in a simple fashion from experience. With this foundation, the study advances to a comparison of man's functions with those of the animals.

To the surprised interest of the children, man's head is shown as having its counterpart in such primitive creatures as squids and octopuses, (cephalopoda) whose outreaching tentacles do the work done by man's senses. As a simple example of a counterpart of the human trunk in the animal world, the mouse was chosen. This animal the children were able to study at first hand, as a pair of white mice live in our classroom. In these tiny creatures one is aware of a short body carried swiftly and lightly by slim legs and feet. At one end the pointed head is attached to supply the body with food and to protect it from danger with the bright watchful eyes, the keen smelling nose, the shell-like alert ears and the sensitive whiskers. At the other end the long tail serves the trunk by helping to balance it like a fifth leg when the small creature reaches up for a berry on a vine, or cake on a shelf. But when we come to the human limbs, we can find no representative for them in the animal world, for man's limbs with their divided duties are unique. This brought us to the end of our first period of the study of animals in relation to man.

When the fourth grade later resumed this study of "Man and Animal" in a second period, their interest and enthusiasm were unabated throughout a brief oral review. Now began a closer and more exact study of physical characteristics of various groups of animals, starting in the ocean with the cephalopoda. These spineless feeler-equipped creatures were followed in the course of development by fish which breathe through gills, like the gold-fish in the bowl on our shelf, and having spinal bones like those which we can

observe on our plates after fish dinners. Though to outer inspection fish seem undivided, they mark an advance in development. The next surprise came to the children when they learned that a whale is not a fish, but a warm-blooded mammal, "loving" its young, not cold-bloodedly deserting its eggs to hatch and be devoured wholesale. Another surprise was the fact that mother whales nurse their "calves" with milk. One little girl looked at the picture of a whale with its great ugly mouth and remarked disappointedly, "She doesn't look like a mother!" Though some individual animals were studied thoroughly, only a general survey of the animal kingdom is made in the fourth year, giving a foundation for later studies.

Thus we continued our survey and stepped ashore to find other mammals, among whom we visited some small familiar rodents in field and wood, particularly the beavers as they cut down trees without saws and engineered their dams to protect their well-made houses. One child wrote in her book "beavers have lovely homes". And the same child, with great naiveté, ended her description by writing, "beavers are relations of whales". When she read this aloud her classmates were greatly entertained and one said, with a twinkle in her eye, "Perhaps they are cousins because they are both mammals."

To round out the course, we ended with a study of ruminants, especially the cow; the cat family, centering on the lion, the King of Beasts; and the eagle, as King of Birds.

This fourth year course about animals in their relation to man lays the foundation for a more mature study of zoology in a higher class. It is on a childlike level, yet has a depth of meaning which forms a true basis for future learning. It wakens in the children an energetic interest for further knowledge and gives them accurate information in an artistic and living way.

Margaret Peckham

HIGH MOWING SCHOOL IN THE SECOND HALF OF ITS FIRST SCHOOL YEAR

At present High Mowing School finds itself faced with the problem of how to provide additional space for its growing student body. The School has now an enrollment of fifty-five boys and girls, the greater part of them boarders. The three boarding departments, for High School girls, High School boys and the Elementary School, respectively, are filled to capacity. Despite projects of further expansion, planned for the summer, it will not be possible to take care of all the demands for September, 1943.

The aims of the school seem to coincide with needs felt in wide circles. As such circles also include teachers and heads of schools, it can be hoped that in the not too far future these aims and methods will spread and that other schools will then take care of the demands.

Characteristic features of the school are connected with the fact that it is in the country. It forms a complete community of its own. The hill-top where it is situated has become a center not only for its own 450 acres but also for a region around it. From school assemblies impulses of work and thought emanate. One example is the farm work done by students and faculty. Farm work takes the place of sports and gymnastics in the school curriculum during both the harvesting and the planting seasons, leaving the winter term

for skiing, sledding and skating. All tasks for the harvest at High Mowing Farm, faced with the general labor shortage, were taken care of by the school, and similar plans for the spring have been made. One member of the faculty will attend the biodynamic gardening week at Kimberton Farms in March and bring back expert advice for the instruction of the students.

There were a number of surprises during the school year. The school community showed considerable assimilating power. Students from varied environments, some of them not used to living in close contact with others, entered whole-heartedly into all of the school life and egoistic handicaps vanished. Particular surprises came from the art departments both of the musical and formative arts. The first drawings and paintings, for instance, merely reflected various artificial techniques or even sub-conscious difficulties, then a period of transition followed and now something so original and creative has come forth that one could hardly realize that it came from the same students. Experiences of this kind, are only possible when there is an integration in the school work as a whole, such as is provided in the Waldorf School Plan. (See the publication "The Waldorf School Plan.") These results would not have been possible within a system which has a split curriculum or in school work relying on the stimuli of marks and credits instead of those which are inherent in the subjects of learning themselves.

Hopes which we shared on September 20th, 1942, have become true, and much earlier than we anticipated. We look gratefully back to that Sunday afternoon in the fall when the dedication of High Mowing School was enclosed within its threshold stone:

"We sink this granite stone in the earth before the doors of a new structure, framed to house youth. May they find here health of the body, trained to skills and techniques, wisdom of the heart opened to an understanding of their fellow men, strength of the mind and freedom through richer opening vistas and high goals. To these things we who have built it, who will teach in it, and we who have come to learn dedicate this building."

Dr. Hermann von Baravalle

AN EXHIBITION OF THE ART WORK OF THE RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL

A representative exhibition of all phases of the art work of the school will be held at the Bonestell Gallery, 18 East 57th Street, New York City from April 12th through April 24th. The exhibition will include watercolor paintings, charcoal drawings, geometrical drawings, modelling, wood carving, handwork and a selection from the children's own illustrated notebooks. Several talks will be given by teachers of the school at the Gallery during the exhibition.

Membership in the Rudolf Steiner School Association, including the quarterly Bulletin, is \$2.00 per year. Single copies of the Bulletin, 10c each; for more than 10 copies 8c each, postpaid.

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