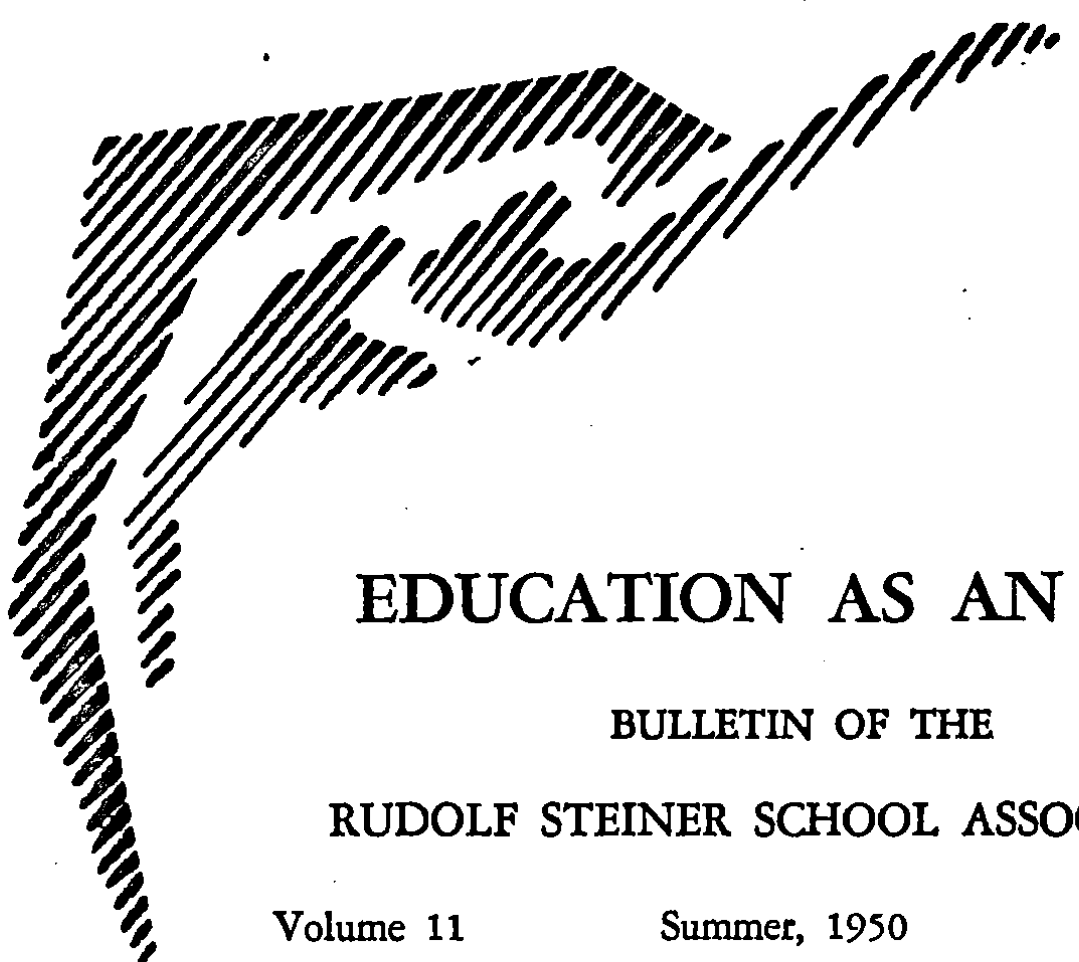




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FLOWER LESSON

by Albert Steffen

If we steep our thoughts in the nature of the plant world, our own childhood rises up before us. We relieve the moods which, like dreamers, we experienced during our growing-up. Memories that emerge into consciousness are like blossoms that open. These flower-stars, -bells, -crowns belong to angel countenances. Now, too, we understand why as children we inscribed within the lily a six-pointed star; in the rose, a pentagram; in the poppy, a cross. We were, without knowing it, divine mathematicians. With untiring interest we studied the stamens and pistils as though we passed from pillar to pillar in a tiny temple and gazed at base, capital, architrave, and in their midst the christening fount. When a bee dove into the blossoms and crept about, and the golden pouches on his little legs grew thicker, we did it all with him. We children were not only boys and girls, but nixes and gnomes with elf-shoes on our feet and dwarf caps on our heads. We set tiny golden plates on the table and hid violet goblets in the cupboard.

The violet was the first flower that we found each spring, and always it was by the same hedge that made its way through a meadow gulch between two field paths. We almost had to dig it up out of the ground. But tiny as it was, it tinged one's whole soul blue with its fragrance. We sensed it with our noses before our eyes discovered it. The whole earth kingdom smelled of it. Where it grew the dirt was light as though delicate fingers had sifted it. Between its great furled leaves dwelt tiny spirit-folk with gnomish faces. Suddenly they blinked at us out of their little eyes. Here the bud and stem were so short that we snapped them off close to the ground. At last there was a little bunch between thumb and pointer finger. It smelled like a holy altar cloth.

Later we found violets transformed in the fields to johnny-jump-ups, and finally to great-eyed pansies in the garden. Now we knew what a family was, and we learned to group correctly the flowers which belonged to each one—something like this: In the middle the crimson rose and round about moss and hedge roses; in ever-widening circles, the snowy strawberry and blackberry blossoms, then peach and cherry blow, the blossoms of apple and pear tree. And what in the spring time the soul drank in, the tongue could taste in summer and fall: red heart-cherries, blue-black thimble berries, golden-yellow apricots. What we saw and what we ate, we still feasted upon like dwellers of the heavens, for with it we took up into our small bodies the wisdom of the gods.

In our delight over the hyacinth, in our delicacy towards the tulip, was already inherent the enthusiasm from which later our first poem sprang to life; in counting the petals—our interest in a mathematical problem. Whosoever had watched us then could perhaps have prophesied our future profession. Why did the broad leaf lobes seem to us so familiar? We asked this ourselves, perhaps, decades later when gazing at a primitive ornament on an ancient earthen crock, or at the broad-cheeked face characteristic of an olden people.

We learned to lay hold of the stinging nettle so that the leaves did not burn us. And when we failed, the pain, which was sharp yet harmless, made us somehow brave, and this overcoming of ourselves stood us in good stead. From the white nettle we sucked out the mild honey to discover how it was that the wild bees felt. We lay on our backs on a sweet-scented thyme bank and let ourselves be soaked in sun and the sound of bees, and soon the soul that had been cramped in the school room was once more lithe and limber. How gently a sorrow lifts and leaves us when we learn from flower spirits in our childhood!

Melissa, mint and marjoram, with their kinship of fragrance, are physicians that make us ourselves into healers, if not into those of the body, then into those of the soul.

Enough for today of this flower lesson.

Translation by Christy Barnes

PAGES FROM A TEACHER'S NOTEBOOK

The following pages have been taken, practically without revision from the notebook in which a teacher has written up her preparation for the study of physics, taught in main lesson over a period of four weeks in the Sixth Grade. The material covered during this time was a study of acoustics, heat and optics. From this material the introductions to the work in acoustics and heat have been chosen.

Introduction to Acoustics

How do we find out what goes on in this world around us? What does the human being possess for this purpose? Ears to hear, eyes to see, hands to touch—nose, tongue. Through these the human being can find that what goes on around him has *order*, a meaning that makes *sense*, or rather he can himself *sense* the laws of the world. A human being's eyes or ears do not by themselves make sense. It is the person who has the eyes and ears who makes sense out of what they bring him.

In the study of physics we learn about those happenings in the physical world about which our physical senses can tell us something. Between us and the world of sound our ears are the opening, the doorway. Between us and the light and color of the world our eyes are the doorway. We begin our study of physics with that part of the world which *sounds out* and which we *hear*.

When we hear the patter of raindrops, the wind rustling the leaves, they are outer sounds. The rain slaps the roof. Every drop makes the same kind of sound. If it beats against the window the sound is different as glass is different from slate. A tin roof is again different, so is the sound of rain on the leaves or on a dirt road. The rain itself has no voice, its sounds vary according to what it strikes. These sounds tell us of lifeless substances, that is of things which do not breathe or move, or grow from out of any impulse in themselves.

The plant kingdom is a silent kingdom which, however, does have some inner life, and yet no inner sounds. The only sounds come from the popping of seeds, dropping of fruit, wind in the leaves, falling of dead branches, creaking of trunks in a strong wind. These sounds are much like the sounds in the mineral kingdom, sounds of substance, not yet of being. Even the sound of corn growing on a hot night or the tone that sounds sometimes from a tree-trunk in winter are sounds of substances touched by other substances.

In the animal kingdom we have at first bloodless beings whose sounds are still like those of substances because they are made by the bodies of the animals: crickets, bees, locusts, yet there is something new in their sound, a kind of rhythm: *katy-did, katy-didn't*. And they sometimes sound only at dusk or at night following the rhythm of the nights. They scrape and saw and rub.

Next we hear the animals which also make a rhythmic sound especially in the evenings. The sound comes from within their bodies almost as rhythmically as breathing. As you listen to the frogs every evening, the sounds rise and fall like breath, all alike, and always the same. These inner sounds are possible in frogs which have blood as the insects do not, but their blood is not always warm.

The birds are warm-blooded beings, but they have not much blood. They are filled with air. Their songs are also rhythmical but they express more feeling. Birds make gay sounds, sleepy sounds, clucking, motherly sounds. Crows have a real language of sounds by which they call and warn each other.

The change of feeling in animal sounds is most telling in the dog and the cat. Dogs express alarm, joy, loneliness, pain, anger and hunger as they bark, squeal, whimper, yelp, growl, whine. The cat tells of its comfort or hunger and makes mother-talk, purrs, meows, yowls and spits. Among the wild animals, the lion roars with rage or hunger; the coyote bays at the moon; jackals and foxes bark to summon others. The more animals respond to human beings, the more do their sounds express feeling.

The human voice includes all other sounds. In rage, excitement, fear, and in other uncontrolled feelings it can sound like animals. But human beings have the power of speech, the power of words, the power to sing, to create songs and poems in which the sounds of words, the tones of music express not only the feeling of the speaker or singer but can express the sounds in nature which he has captured and transformed.

By listening to a truly human voice we hear more than animal feeling. We can tell whether the speaker is honest or dishonest, selfish or unselfish, thoughtful or thoughtless, reasonable or unreasonable, self-controlled or uncontrolled. And each human voice can be quite different from any other voice, quite individual. It sounds out of all that is *special* in the person and that makes him different from someone else.

Introduction to Heat

In our introduction to acoustics, we studied the ways in which sounds occur throughout the four kingdoms of nature. Now as we start a new chapter in physics, let us start with another four without which we could not maintain life on earth: the four elements: earth, water, air, fire. Are all four elements substances? What is their relationship to each other? Other names for the four elements which we will use in this study are solids, liquids, gases, warmth or heat.

We can understand the relationship of these if we think about our own physical bodies in which we have bones, blood and air, and throughout all a pervading warmth. The warmth in us fills us and spreads through our bodies. It flows in our blood, but radiates into our organs, tissues, limbs, even a small distance out from us into the surrounding air. We can warm something we lay hold of; it becomes warm too. Warmth is not a substance but it can enter into any substance.

When our body warmth is just right (normal temperature) we feel well, awake. If our temperature goes up we have fever and finally delirium, a kind of wild dream. We become violent. If our temperature goes down below normal we begin to feel dull, dead, lacking in vitality and cannot make much effort. So we see how the warmth in us has much to do with our energy, with our will. When we have too much or too little warmth we are no longer in full possession of our will.

We speak of a person who has a strong will as having a fiery disposition, a kind and loving person as warm-hearted. We burn with anger at some injustice or with shame at some wrong deed. When we feel sympathy, appreciation, it is a warm feeling, a glow. Warmth is a quality of love. We know that everyone loves a warm-hearted person. His enthusiasm, sympathy and interest in others are like the flame of a cozy fire around which people gather to warm themselves on a cold night. Warmth is a quality of love. It leads men to spiritual deeds so that they even give up their lives for something they love.

Think of a warm-hearted person, then of one who is just the opposite, a cold-hearted one. Such a one is often very clever and shrewd. He lives more in his head, more in his thoughts than in his feelings. There is no fire in him. People do not gather around him for he makes them feel cold and indifferent. Cold-hearted men are able to sacrifice the rights and lives of other men. Coldness in man can become cruelty.

Taking temperature by mouth and at a part of the body lower down we find that body warmth is less in the head. The head-man is cold. The heart-man and limb-man are warm in their nature.

Warmth we thus see has an opposite—cold. It is the only one of the elements that has its opposite and cold likewise can take hold of the other three elements. Warmth and cold—what belongs to each? Solids, liquids, gasses—how are they related to each other?

Air gives us life. From birth to death our breath as a substance takes no shape or body of its own. It has the tendency to spread everywhere. It is for all to breathe. No one can claim it or sell it. It is the most spiritual of the substances in a sense, as it is like the spirit of man in that it cannot be claimed by some and forbidden to others. It is *given*. It is a heavenly substance.

Water has body but takes no form except that of the earth, a sphere. It always flows together. Far more than air, water has weight, but at the same time buoyancy and circulation. It is formless but creates form. The mother earth can be thought of as a water sphere bearing within its watery hold the island continents as a mother holds her child. The element water is essential to the birth of form, to growth. Where there is water there is always circulation. It is in constant movement, ever-flowing. Plant, animal and man are far more of a water nature than of a solid or earth nature. Water is the life-bearer of the earth.

Earth—Solids have definite volume, definite shape and weight. They are, in themselves, unmoving and passive. Yet as they are worked upon by surrounding and penetrating forces, they change their shape.

Warmth, as it enters the world of substances—the air, the water, the land—works as a force which seeks to expand them, to carry them out and away from the earth, to make them less dense, less heavy. Through heat a solid changes to a liquid and then to gas. Cold has the opposite effect, for when air is cooled it sinks, becomes more dense, approaches more the solid state. A gas can be cooled to a liquid, then to a solid. Cold tends to solidify and warmth to dissolve substances.

Dorothy Harrer

THE ANGELS

The Third Grade had just heard the story of Jacob's Dream and the children were busily at work with crayons, drawing a picture of the ladder stretching from heaven to earth with angels ascending and descending upon it. Each child worked with care and for a short while an industrious hush hung over the room. Soon, Jack, a restless boy, always curious to see what everyone else was doing, left his desk and wandered about the class. He loudly commented on all the drawings, praising some and criticizing others. "Who ever heard of green angels!" he would say to one, and to another, "Your angels look like bees, ha ha!" To his best friends he was careful to make some pleasant remark and usually added, "Your picture is much better than mine." But when he reached Mary's desk, Jack was honestly amazed by the beauty of her work. "Look, look!" he shouted to everybody, "Mary's angels are wonderful." Everyone looked up; the picture of round rosy angels with golden wings was held high so all could see and admire, and an enthusiastic hubbub bubbled around the room. But the boy whose angels had been compared to bees was quick to say, "Mary's are nice, but who could really make angels any way, for nobody knows what they look like." "But I know what they look like," said Mary seriously, "for I've seen angels, two of them."

The class was stunned. "Is she telling a lie?" "No, Mary doesn't tell lies." "Did you dream it?" some asked. "You imagined it all," others said. Half of them believed the statement, half clearly doubted. But Mary stuck to her story, saying it had all happened when she was four years old, and her strongest champion was Jack who had first praised her picture. Into all this commotion the teacher stepped, sending the children back to their seats to finish their own pictures before the bell rang.

Later, at lunch time, the matter was still being discussed. The doubters were making a terrific noise expressing their opinion. The ones who accepted Mary's story were lapsing into a defeated silence. Jack was obviously upset. He had no intention of deserting Mary but he was appalled to find that all his best friends were among the disbelievers. Finally, completely exasperated by the fuss of his opponents, he banged down his fork on the table and into the second of silence caused by his action thundered: "What's so great about seeing angels! I have a friend who saw God!"

Virginia E. Paulsen

SCHOOL NEWS

This has been a busy year for the School. The parents have tackled several urgent problems with persistence and initiative. There are rumors of meetings lasting into the small hours of the night in parents' homes, as well as the usual class and P. T. A. meetings. A Music Committee was formed. Mrs. McFadden, Mrs. Tandler, Mrs. Trampler and Mr. Wheelwright combed the city and found an excellent Grand Piano. It was unveiled in the Assembly Room to an enthusiastic audience of children on Dr. Steiner's birthday, played upon for the first time by Mrs. Irene Laney, and now the School can invite concert pianists to play for the children. In order to pay for the piano and to provide scholarships for music lessons, a series of concerts is being held this year and it is hoped that they may become a permanent feature in the life of

the School. We had the great good fortune to have the New Music Quartet which received such excellent reviews on its first appearance at Town Hall this winter. We are all grateful to Mr. Trampler, a parent of the School and violist in the Quartet, who made this possible. Miss Edith Eisler, violinist, who leads the orchestra and teaches violin at the School, also gave a concert. Miss Deighton and Miss Palermo gave a program of songs and Mrs. Laney a concert on the piano.

The Fair raised about \$2,700 this year, more than ever before, under the guidance of Mr. Biegel helped by the truly tireless efforts of many other parents. We should like to mention all those who worked late into many a night but want especially to say how much we shall miss Mrs. Frisch whose wonderful puppets have been a delight to both children and grown-ups at the Fair for many years now. Her daughter is graduating and Mrs. Frisch is leaving to take over the directorship of occupational therapy in a hospital in Philadelphia.

With Mr. Farley Wheelwright heading the Committee for the parents and Mrs. Walling for the Association, over \$8,000 has been raised towards the Building Fund to obtain more space for our present needs and to house a prospective high school. Though it will not be possible to open a high school this coming year, a good start has been made towards achieving our goal, and the School is deeply grateful to all those who have contributed towards this next step in its growth.

At the Conference for Education in Occupied Countries, held under the auspices of the American Council on Education, which took place in Washington, D. C. in December, the Waldorf Schools Fund was represented by Miss Katherine Phelan, Mrs. Mitchell and Mr. Henry Barnes. Miss Phelan had arranged an outstanding exhibit of work from Steiner Schools abroad selected from the many tokens which the Fund has received in gratitude for the help it has given. The Conference was attended by over 200 welfare societies, members of which came from European countries, from Japan and from all parts of the United States.

The Training Course for Teachers has continued its work with Mr. Ege each Saturday morning. Miss MacKaye gave a course in modeling for the first part of the year and in painting during the later months.

Under the auspices of the Association, a children's Assembly took place on May 13th to which the public was invited. The Seventh Grade, under Mrs. Harrer's direction, gave a performance of the Song of Roland. Their beautiful and dramatic recitation, singly and in chorus, their few but effective gestures, and above all their whole-hearted enthusiasm made it a joy to watch and a masterly achievement for children of that age.

At the invitation of Mrs. Beulah Emmet, principal of High Mowing School, Wilton, New Hampshire, a Teachers' Conference will be held for its third year at High Mowing from June 21st to July 5th. Teachers from Kimberton Farms School and the Waldorf Demonstration School, Adelphi College, as well as from High Mowing and our own school, will attend. The morning course will be based on the *Practical Course for Teachers* under the leadership of Mr. Ege, and in the afternoon Mr. Barnes will be chairman of a seminar for the discussion of concrete pedagogical problems. Miss Leroi will teach Eurythmy, Miss MacKaye modelling.

An Educational Conference, arranged by Mrs. Elizabeth Graves, will also be held in Carmel, California, during July and August this year. Students are coming from as far away as Hawaii. The Study Course will be conducted by Mr. Ege, modelling and painting given by Miss MacKaye.

The Eighth Grade will give *The Tempest* as their graduating play. We are sorry to see these children leave us but glad to speed them on their way to such schools as High Mowing, The George School, Chapin, Dalton, Newtown High, Hunter High, and Brooklyn Tech.

CHILD'S SONG*

The little birds are singing
Among the cool green leaves.
They're singing of the May time
The blossoming of the trees.

And as I hear them singing
I seem to hear them say,
"We thank our heavenly Father
For the blossoms of the May."

The little birds are joyous
When morning lights the sky.
They're happy in the branches
And praising God on high.

And when the day is over
They're cradled in their nest.
It is our heavenly Father
Who watches o'er their rest.

The little birds are cared for,
And I am cared for, too,
Wherever I may wander,
Whatever I may do.

And more than all the birds
The blossoms or the trees,
I know our heavenly Father
Loves me more than these.

Gladys Barnett Hahn

* This song was written to music composed by Edmund Pracht.

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