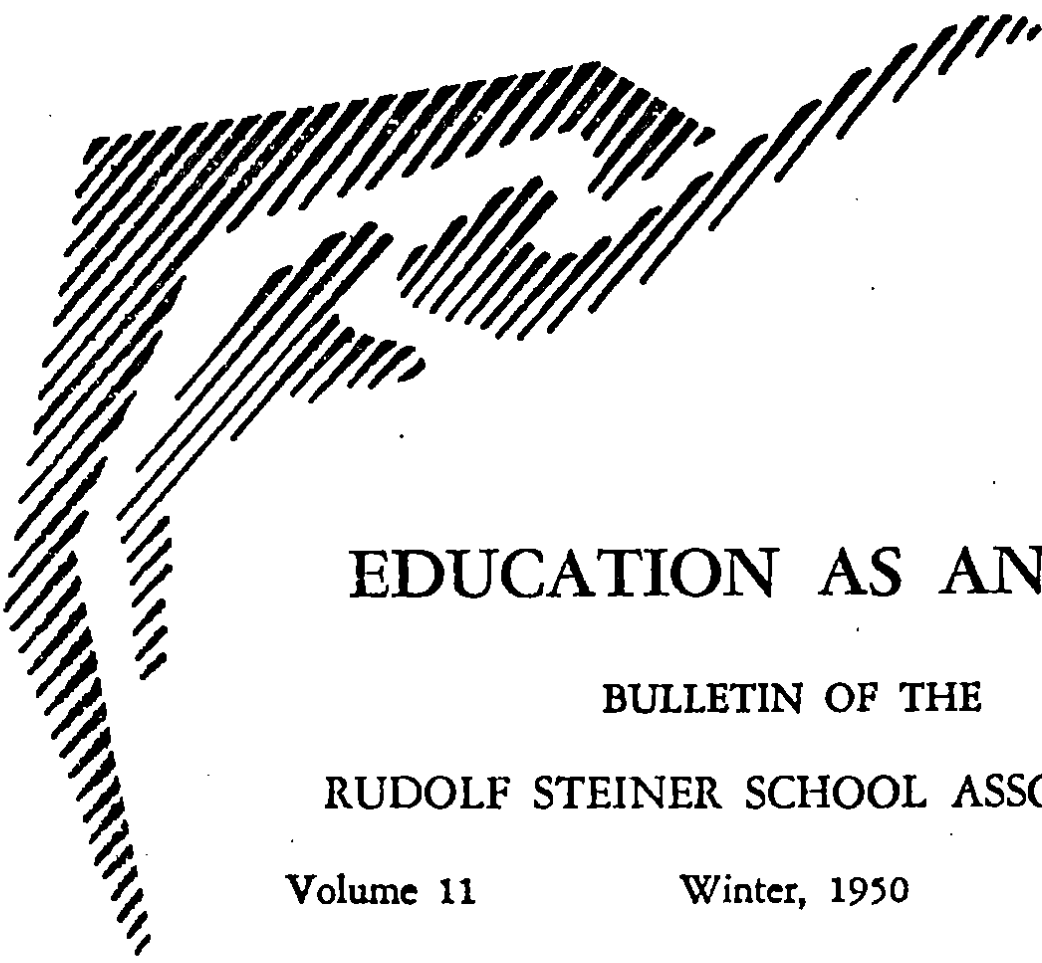




EDUCATION AS AN ART

BULLETIN OF THE
RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Volume 11

Winter, 1950

Number 4



SAINT JOSEPH'S SEARCH FOR FIRE

One cold night, when Mary and Joseph had finally found shelter in the stable, the Mother of Jesus felt that it was time to care for the Child. She said to Joseph: "My dear, sweet friend, pray go and look for some coals to light a little fire and warm the Child's clothes!"

And Joseph got up from the straw, put on his coat and set out for Bethlehem. The town was cold and dark. All the doors were locked and, like the doors, the hearts of the people were locked too. Joseph knocked in vain; no one answered him. Finally, at the end of a street, he saw a flame reddening. A baker was heating his oven to bake his bread.

Joseph approached and greeted him. But the baker, an insolent and brutal giant, barked out: "Hey, what is this old man doing, strolling around my fire? The bread is not yet baked—and anyway it's not to be given away."

"Baker," answered Joseph, "I am seeking for fire. My Lady Mary and the Child Jesus are so cold!"

"I give neither fire nor flame," grumbled the brute, "but if you insist, stranger, I can always make you feel one of my sticks which serve me to light the fire."

"My good husband," said the wife of the baker who, after having listened, now joined them, "My good husband, this old man speaks courteously; his wife and child are cold. It is hard to be without fire on such a night. I pray you, give him some coals from your fire!"

"Peace, wife," snarled the baker. "I am the one who commands in the house and at the oven!" And then, picking up some red-burning embers with his shovel, he added with a loud laugh: "Here, beggar, that's for you—if you want to carry it away in your coat." And he dumped out his shovelful of coals. But Joseph picked them up, put them into his coat, and, full of faith, he carried the burning coals back to the stable. On his arrival, Our Lady asked: "Joseph, my sweet friend, have you brought any fire? While you were gone I found a pot; you can see it at the foot of the cradle, and in that the fire can do no harm." And she pointed to the pot with her finger.

And Joseph opened his coat. The coat was not burned yet the coals were still red and glowing! He put the coals into the pot and blew upon them. The embers flamed up. The little warm flame rose towards the ceiling and the Child, turning His little feet towards the warmth, smiled.

Translated from the French Apocrypha by Margret Janke

ARE WE FAIR TO SMALL CHILDREN?

"But it's her favorite toy!" the mother was exclaiming. A new, small child had arrived and I was rejecting half her baggage. I had got now to the set of blocks, all identical, which were indented to fit into one another endlessly just by the flip of one's finger; a child could lapse comfortably into a state of coma while her fingers fooled with them. "She won't miss it," said I in a hard firm voice, thinking of the fat chunks of wood I was going to give her, all differing in shape and texture.

Next went the blocks with the tinkly rattles inside them. "They were a gift," was the mother's excuse. "But her father did say he couldn't hear himself think when she was banging them." "No, and the child couldn't hear her important little thoughts either," said I.

Next went the expensive machine-gun which blows the world's largest bubble and makes a good nerve-racking noise each time the bubble comes out; all you do is turn a handle. "We have little wooden bubble-pipes here," I said; "the child has to work patiently to get a good bubble, and you should see the joy in her face when she has succeeded. Her crows of delight are like gay music; we don't need any other sound."

Next went the coloring-book, also the world's largest. I knew there would be one, and that the mother would feel perfectly virtuous about it; the get-rich-quick men are devilishly clever. "But she *loves* to color!" the mother protested. "Of course she does, bless her, and she shall," said I. "But if you think about it, these cheap, trite pictures are not half so near to real art as her own

scribbly drawings. And the printed outlines are just so many dinky little fences, hemming in and stunting her bright fantasy. Let her just see the great rolls of blank paper I'm going to spread out in front of her, as much as she wants, day after day—or the large blank scrapbooks we buy so easily. When she sees the other children eagerly recording, in their own style and to their utmost satisfaction, all the fancy in their heads and all the history of their days, she will pour hers out too, and a quiet joy will surge through her."

Next went . . . Do you ever trouble to analyze your own childhood, to think out why you could play happily for hours on end with wet earth, why you could use the simplest twig for spoon or fork, why flat stones or just leaves sufficed month after month for dishes? Do you ever trouble to think out why that discarded window-frame you found lying on the ground became instantly your drawing-room, why you sat in it and walked around in it for weeks?

As I write I'm watching a child breaking off bits of grass and putting them into a little pan; I don't know whether it's spinach for the doll's supper or a bed for the stuffed rabbit—but she knows clearly. A toy lawnmower, shiny and perfect, blades and all, stands against the house—a recent present from her home. She hasn't so much as touched it. Why not?

Small children are not cabbages. And they're not scientists. They're spinners—spinners of tiny bright colored fancies. If you don't clutter up their lives, they spin constantly and serenely and earnestly; they spin the most common straw of daily life into gold. They work almost in secret, and against time. For in a very, very few years the day comes when their own ego, their own individual spirit, must enter their palace and open up the rooms and take the gold, every bit of it, to use out in the world. It then becomes a precious garment to warm them and protect them and fortify them for this cruel epoch in which they must live.

*Gladys Barnett Hahn**

AN EXPERIENCE IN TEACHING SPELLING

Must spelling be a dry and distasteful subject; a monotonous memorizing of lists of words; a tedious fulfillment of duty? Or could it become a part of the magic of language; an interesting game to play at home as well as a subject to be studied at school? This was the question which faced me as a new teacher with a group of children who were just learning to read.

Standard spelling books contained lists of words statistically arranged according to frequency of use at different age levels. But these words had no direct relation to our lessons. So why not ignore these books and take the spelling words directly from our own lessons, I thought.

In our first walks through the countryside in connection with acquainting the children with the world around them, many things in the fields and woods and streams were observed and discussed.

* Mrs. Hahn is engaged in curative pedagogy in her own home.

Afterwards, in the classroom, the children attempted to spell such words as fox, tree, woods, rabbit, etc., before these words were written on the board. Almost every word could be spelled by someone, but the important thing was that every child was trying to sound out, and to figure out how the word was spelled before he saw it. Then it was written on the board until there were ten or fifteen words. The children also helped to select the words chosen. As the words became more difficult it was observed that many words were spelled different from the way they sounded. The children were given a few minutes to study the list. As soon as someone thought he could spell all the words, he came up in front and spelled each one out loud. The faster he could do it, the more exciting it was. Every child came up and tried it. After a few lessons almost every child could learn a list of words perfectly in ten minutes. The next day there was always a written quiz which not only included the new words but was a review of old ones as well. We worked these written quizzes up from thirty-five to fifty words.

Those who had perfect papers were marked 100. The others had no marks but the number of words missed was indicated. As every child was anxious to spell perfectly, he would study the words he had missed, and on the following day there would be another quiz using the same words. It was a great satisfaction to every child when he could better his own paper.

If the subject being studied in the main lesson were arithmetic, words such as minus, subtract, etc. were used. If it were bible stories, words were taken directly from the Old Testament, such as God, heaven, earth, creation.

Oral spelling quizzes fitted very well into odd moments of the day and were often the cause of some excitement.

At the end of the third year, practically all of the words appearing in standard lists for that level had been used without any conscious effort to do so, plus a great many in more advanced lists. But best of all, spelling was something exciting for the children which they enjoyed doing everywhere, outside of school, as well as inside.

Maxine Crawford

THE NATURE OF A CHILD'S SOUL

The Temperaments And How To Treat Them

BY CAROLINE VON HEYDEBRAND, TRANSLATION BY DAPHNE HARWOOD*

No being can receive the nurture due to it, no creature can develop properly unless those responsible for it truly perceive its nature and what conditions it in life. Many fundamental mistakes are made in the treatment and education of children because they are not truly *known*. To be educated truly for their welfare they must be known through and through. The formative forces whose immediate work is the shaping and creating of forms are at the

*Reprinted by kind permission from the book *Childhood*, Anthroposophical Publishing Company, London. Caroline von Heydebrand taught for 16 years at the original Waldorf School. Daphne Harwood was one of the founders of Michael Hall School in England, the wife of Cecil Harwood, teacher and author. Her death last summer was a great loss to all her friends and to the educational movement in England.

same time bestowers of life and promoters of growth. The manner in which they work in the child is of infinite importance. Hence educators can only work fruitfully if they can form a lively conception of these forces. Such a conception we will now attempt to convey by a description of four children. The formative forces work in a different manner in each of these children and give rise to different states of soul.

The Sanguine Child

Robin, aged five, has curly red hair above his round forehead, very blue eyes and a dainty little tip-tilted nose. His overlip projects beyond his underlip. He is not especially big for his age, but slender and well-proportioned. His head is fairly large, his limbs mobile. He likes tripping along on the tips of his toes; but he can walk with great firmness when he has a mind to. He is an excellent jumper and can clear several steps of the stairs to the garden at a bound. It won't be long before he jumps right down all ten steps from the terrace to the garden. If he falls over he instantly yells and sheds a few tears, but he soon consoles himself. He belongs to those children who can laugh with tears in their eyes. He leaps on his brother, several years his senior, with loud war-whoops. He is no coward but feckless and impudent like a small yapping dog. If he gets the worst of it, as inevitably happens, he feels much wounded and sulks in a corner. But his wrath is dissipated in less than no time. Without a thought for his humiliation he tries to rouse his brother to play with him again. Big brother shall be a horse, himself the headlong rider. He soon tires of this game, and invents another which in its turn soon gives way to something else. Even when playing alone he changes constantly and contrives many situations within the compass of a single game. What he sees or hears distracts him from what he is doing and immediately starts a fresh train of ideas. His head and eyes have a constant quick, birdlike movement. Even when you are talking seriously to him, with the best will in the world he cannot keep his attention fixed. His flitting soul will be away out of your reach should a fly stir on wall or window-pane. Mother calls him 'sparrow,' Grandmother 'little lizard'—both names fit him. He has a clear high voice and is very musical. He learned to play the pipe all by himself. He is looking forward with eager excitement to school with its promise of an endless succession of new things. The grown-up people have many disparaging and rather uncomprehending epithets for him: volatile, scatterbrained, unstable, unconcentrated, forgetful or superficial, lacking in earnestness, nervous, etc., but they all love him nevertheless. For he is childhood itself, sheer child; and this wins all hearts, even those who have called him these hard names.

And now, what of his health, what sort of sleep has he and what appetite? On the whole he is healthy. Apart from a few slight children's ailments he merely gets an occasional cold, which soon goes. He eats with enjoyment, but not much at a time; and he dislikes anything heavy. In this too he is bird-like, he "pecks" rather than "stuffs". His appetite can be intense at moments but it is soon quenched when he gets the food he wants. He would not overeat of his own accord, but foolish grown-up people urging him at parties to eat more than he needs are to blame for spoiling his digestion. He dislikes meat, eggs, floury food and potatoes, also cocoa. He loves fruit and even as a baby his favorite food was grated apple. He has a decided liking for salt and even

for sour things; on his fifth birthday he asked for a sour cucumber. He often steals the salt cellar and amuses himself licking up specks of salt. And he will cheerfully swallow whole teaspoonfuls of neat lemon juice when called upon to take it for a sore throat. He falls asleep quickly, but awakens easily. He habitually wakes early in the morning but since he is forbidden to get up so soon he chirrup and sings gently to himself keeping rhythmic time with his head, hands and feet. He is a harmonious little being, and, so far, only his father is apprehensive as to how this "volatile scatterbrain" will get on at school.

The Bodily Basis of the Sanguine Temperament

In what way do the formative forces act in sanguine children? They are at work wherever breath and the circulation of fluids are functioning rhythmically: in the pulsing of the heart, in the to and fro of in-breathing and out-breathing. Hence there is a kind of swing about the sanguine child. The air seems to be his element rather than the earth. He hovers, as it were, above the earth, not submitting to be drawn down by forces of gravity. He loves to swing on swings and rocking horses, to climb high trees and rock on swaying boughs. A sanguine child dancing in the wind is a delicious sight. It would make an adult sea-sick to swirl and swing like this child to whom flying through the air on a merry-go-round is the greatest of all joys. His breathing and his rhythmical nature can easily adapt themselves as yet to all the gyrations which the set nature of an adult could not endure. Small children are seldom sea-sick.

And just as he alternates between in-breathing and out-breathing, and is swayed by the changing rhythm of the blood's circulation, so he demands rhythmic change in his life and play. There is nothing of greater importance for education than the peaceful rhythm of everyday life. For sanguine children this is essential to life (and sanguine children means here, broadly speaking, all children; for this temperament is proper to childhood as sweetness is to grapes). Rhythm is the very being of the sanguine child. It is exacted by his organism. But his rhythm is quicker than that of an adult, just as his pulse is quicker and his breathing faster. From this point of view it is understandable how even children of an opposite temperament love change because, being children, they have a trace of the sanguine nature in them. But this love of change is at its height in the pure sanguine children. They are unable to concentrate long on anything. For them concentration is an in-breathing and demands quick out-breathing to succeed it—namely, a turning of oneself towards the outer world. To be 'flighty' is not a fault in them but a characteristic of their temperament and age. For this reason educators will do well to be very patient with such shortcomings (from their point of view) as flightiness, lack of concentration, superficiality, lightheadedness. For sanguine children it is proper to be light-headed.

Dangers of an Extreme Sanguine Temperament

While it is right to have patience with bouncing Robin—who is only following the pulsings of his heart—and confidently expect that he will settle as time goes on, the liveliness of Susie, however, who is the same age, is a cause of grave anxiety. She shows how the sanguine nature can degenerate when it goes beyond its bounds.

While Robin laughs heartily and rolls on the floor with laughter, Susie is absolutely unable to stop laughing at all. She laughs and giggles unrestrainedly, and ends by crying equally unrestrainedly. She pulls toys out of the cupboard and flings them about the room, but does not play with them and fetches more instead, which similarly only distract her for a few moments. Robin glows with pleasure when his father shows him animal pictures in old Brehm's "Natural History." He asks questions and is vividly interested, then whips over the next page, trembling with excitement, to greet the next animal with a shout of joy. Susie scarcely looks at the pictures, she only wants the next, next, *next*; nothing holds her attention enough for her to ask questions. And if by any chance she does ask she will not stay for an answer. Robin is not excessively affectionate, but he loves and respects his parents and feels the bond uniting him to sisters and brothers. Susie has no anchors. She drifts hither and thither on the surface of life and is too weak to unite herself with the people about her. One might fear her becoming feeble-minded some day as she cannot go to any depth below the surface of things and she does not bring to anything her real attention. How is she to be saved from this, how helped?

Treatment of the Extreme Sanguine Temperament

If once Susie could really come to love someone among those around her—this of itself would begin to bring steadfastness into her life. And whether this comes about or not depends enormously on the behavior of the adults. Nothing is of such importance in education as that the child should love his educator. True to his sanguine nature he will of course have first one friend and then another, cling first to one and then to another grownup person. But he should feel true devotion to one at least among his teachers or educators; and forsake his sanguine disposition to this extent. This will be a stepping-stone in his educational progress. It is important, Rudolf Steiner used to say, not to fight against the temperament either in self-education or in children's education. One should not attempt to root it out neck and crop, it is too much ingrown with a man for this. It represents indeed the link between body and soul, for it is conditioned by the body but manifests itself psychically.

Hence one neither can nor should force the sanguine child to put off that lively flightiness which is inherent in his very organism. Once more it depends very much on the adult whether he can succeed in getting the over-sanguine child to attend each day (naturally for shorter periods at first) to some one game, or picture book, to stick to some particular occupation. The more the child loves his educator the greater will be the success. But while doing this one must not deprive the child of his joy in variety and change. So much in a child's life calls for a sanguine, not a rigid, attitude. The teacher should repeatedly give him opportunities to experience these fleeting impressions and use up on them the surplus of his sanguine nature. It will be good too when engaging a sanguine child on a lengthy occupation to arrange for alternation and change within the occupation—even if it is only a change in ideas and imagery. The more his fantasy is stimulated by constantly changing images the more content he will be to stick to one thing, especially when by doing so he can give pleasure to a beloved and revered adult.

(To be continued in the next issue of the Bulletin)

WHY JOIN THE PARENTS' LEAGUE?

*Re-evaluation of the Parents' League
in an Open Letter From the Membership Chairman*

Why should you join the Parents League? Because you wish to take an active part in controlling the cultural environment in which your children live. In choosing to send your child to an independent school, you have indicated your awareness of the environmental factor in shaping your child's character and personality. Psychologists differ on many subjects—but on one they are in accord, and that is that both heredity and environment play important roles in the development of the human personality. You've done your bit for your child's heredity—the Parents League offers you the opportunity to do equally well by his environment!

Because the standards of the community as a whole affect those of every group within it, the League's committees work actively in all phases of community life—examining legislation concerning the health, welfare and education of all children, familiarizing our membership with the newest methods and philosophies of education, providing opportunities within the League for wholesome and constructive recreation for our children, cooperating with the public schools to try to assure those children (who will comprise the majority of our citizenry) of the highest possible standards of education and recreation.

Bringing together parents and children from all the schools into a single community organization is one of the major accomplishments of the Parents League. It should be emphasized that the League is a constructive organization, not a critical one. Your children's schools are members and work in close cooperation with us, and encourage parents to participate in our activities.

From a purely pecuniary point of view there are also many advantages to belonging to the League: (1) the use of the Exchange alone is worth the price of membership in actual dollars saved in buying clothes and books; (2) the Bulletin's news of activities for parents and children is available nowhere else in so convenient a form; (3) the experienced advice of our office staff in matters pertaining to schools; (4) the Saturday Club's program of constructive recreation—these are some of the many practical advantages of membership.

Eloise Skidmore

The Parents' League of New York has its headquarters at 22 East 60th Street, New York City. Telephone, PLaza 3-3610.

Membership in the Rudolf Steiner School Association, including the quarterly Bulletin, is \$2.00 per year. Single copies of the Bulletin, 25c. each.

Address Secretary, Rudolf Steiner School Association, 15 East 79th Street, New York City.

Editor of the Bulletin: Christy Barnes.

Design: Arvia MacKaye.
