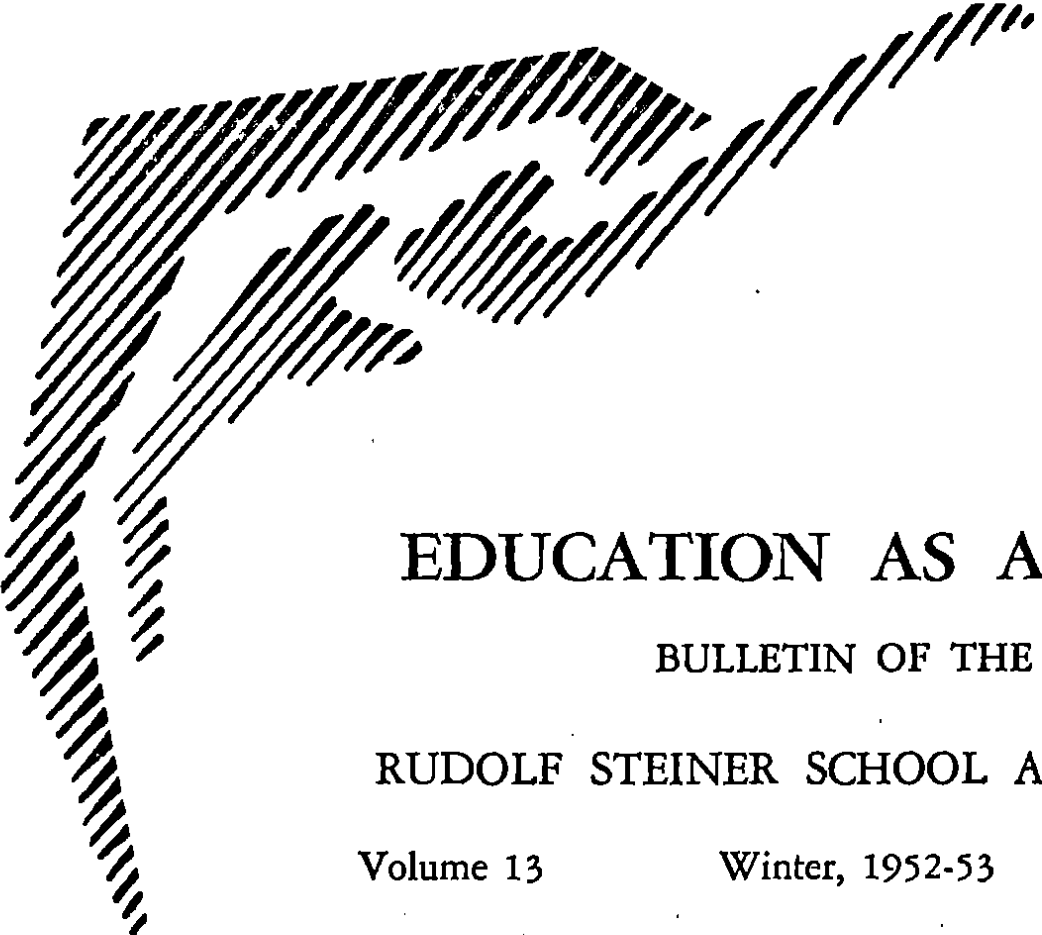




EDUCATION AS AN ART

BULLETIN OF THE

RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Volume 13

Winter, 1952-53

Number 4

C O N T E N T S

From The New Art of Education — Rudolf Steiner

From The Education of Free Men — Herbert Read

Mr. Edmunds' Contacts with American Education

A Michaelmas Story — Karl Ege

Verses for the First Grade — Christy Barnes, Martha Harris

From THE NEW ART OF EDUCATION

By Rudolf Steiner

When we admit the great need that exists to-day for moral and spiritual impulses in educational methods and allow the significance of such impulses to work deeply in our hearts, we are led to the most fundamental problems in modern spiritual life — problems connected with the forms assumed by our culture and civilization in the course of human history. We are living in an age when certain spheres of culture, though standing in a measure side by side, are yet separated from one another. In the first place we have all that man can learn of the world through knowledge — communicated, for the most part, by the intellect alone. Then there is the sphere of art, where man tries to give expression to profound inner experiences, imitating with his human powers a divine creative activity. Again we have the religious strivings of man, wherein he seeks to unite his own existence with the life of the universe. Lastly, we try to bring forth from our inner being, impulses which place us as moral beings in the civilized life of the world. In effect we confront these four branches of culture; knowledge, art, religion, morality. But the course of human evolution has brought it about that these four branches are developing separately and we no longer realize their common origin. It is of no value to criticize these conditions; rather should we learn to understand the necessities of human progress.

To-day, therefore, we will remind ourselves of the beginnings of civilization. There was an ancient period in human evolution when science, art, religion, and the moral life were one. It was an age when the intellect had not yet developed its present abstract nature and when man could solve the riddles of existence by a kind of picture-consciousness.

What is our position to-day? As a result of all that intellectual abstractions have brought in their train we build up scientific systems of knowledge from which, as far as possible, art is eliminated. It is really almost a crime to introduce the faintest suggestion of art into science, and anyone who is found guilty of this in a scientific book is at once condemned as a dilettante. Our knowledge claims to be strictly objective; art is said to have nothing in common with objectivity and is purely arbitrary. A deep abyss thus opens between knowledge and art, and — to his undoing — man no longer finds any means of crossing it. When he applies the science that is valued because of its freedom from art, he is led indeed to a marvelous knowledge of nature — but of nature devoid of life. The wonderful achievements of science are fully acknowledged by us, yet science is dumb before the mystery of man. Look where you will in science to-day, you will find wonderful answers to the problems of outer Nature, but no answers to the riddle of man. The laws of science cannot grasp him. Why is this? Heretical as it sounds to modern ears, this is the reason: The moment we draw near to the human being with the laws of nature, we must pass over into the realm of art. A heresy indeed, for people will certainly say: "That is no longer science. If you try to understand the human being by the artistic sense, you are not following the laws of observation and strict logic to which you must always adhere." However emphatically it may be held that this approach to man is unscientific because it makes use of the artistic sense — man is none the less an artistic creation of nature. All kinds of arguments may be advanced to the effect that this way of artistic understanding is thoroughly unscientific, but the fact remains that man cannot be grasped by purely scientific modes of cognition. And so — in spite of all our science — we come to a halt before the human being. Only if we are sufficiently unbiased can we realize that scientific intellectuality must here be allowed to pass over into the domain of art. Science itself must become art if we would approach the secrets of man's being.

FROM THE EDUCATION OF FREE MEN

By Herbert Read

Herbert Read, born in England in 1893, is the author of some sixteen books on art, education and poetry. He has been Professor of Fine Arts at the University of Edinburgh and special lecturer at Cambridge and other universities. The following are excerpts quoted from his essay, 1944, with the kind permission of Freedom Press, London.

. . . We recognize an artist of some kind in every child, and we maintain that the encouragement of a normal creative activity is one of the essentials of a full well-balanced development of the personality.

. . . Since scientific method is not within the mental capacity of young children, and aesthetic method is natural to them, we must turn to art as the only method available for the first stages of education.

. . . It is only on to a stock of goodness that knowledge can be safely grafted; by grafting it on to stocks that are unbalanced, undeveloped, neurotic, we merely give power to impulses that may in themselves be evil or corrupted.

. . . We know, on the basis of many recent experiments, that the child begins life with a mind full of extremely vivid imagery. One school of psychologists even maintains that in the first years the child has difficulty in distinguishing between its perceptions of the external world and its secondary

images, and that the normal memory-image is only gradually separated from these vivid eidetic images. Whatever may be the truth of this theory, we do know for certain that the next stage of development, the stage of conceptual thought, is only reached by the gradual suppression of imagery. Now the whole Aristotelian tradition in education is so committed to the superiority of conceptual or logical processes of thought that all means have been taken to drive images out of the child's mind and to make it an efficient thinking machine. . . . It was experimentally established that images performed no useful function in abstract thought, and the more abstract the thought the more intelligent it was assumed to be. To quote a well-known educationalist, "Those children of the most fertile imagery . . . were by no means those of the highest school intelligence. . . ."

What we must question is the standard of "school intelligence" implicit in all such tests. . . . We know the examinations and tests by means of which the standard is established. Most of us have suffered from their indignities. . . . But we do assert that there is more than one standard of intelligence, and indeed more than one mode of thought. The purpose of thought is to arrive at truth, and truth, we say, is not found exclusively in the possession of those with a high "intelligence quotient"; it is just as likely to proceed out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, poets and artists, even madmen.

These babes and sucklings, poets and painters, visionaries of all kinds have one thing in common — an imagination so vivid that it must be regarded as the use of the particular kind of imagery . . . already referred to which has been called eidetic imagery. This imagery, which is natural to babes and sucklings, is in certain rare cases retained beyond adolescence, and among these rare cases are to be found our poets and painters and visionaries of all kinds. But more, when we come to investigate the nature of scientific thought, in so far as this thought is an inventive or creative activity, and not merely a logical arrangement of accepted facts, we find that it too relies on images. . . . We can convince the scientists that in so far as their own processes of thought are creative, their thought is imaginative. Yet the systems of education which they have devised, and the tests which they have imposed on children, give no marks to the imagination. Images, they say *and prove*, are not essential to efficient thought. So everything is done to suppress these inconvenient sprites, and to enthrone the absolute rules of the concept in the child's mind.

MR. EDMUNDS' CONTACTS WITH AMERICAN EDUCATION

Mr. Edmunds, a member and oft times Chairman of the Faculty of Michael Hall School in Sussex, England, lectured in this country from early August to December. He has been the prime mover in associating the eight Steiner schools in Britain as well as being acquainted with many of the over forty Steiner schools in other countries. Recently at a gathering of friends and faculty of the Rudolf Steiner School in New York, he spoke of his experiences here in the educational world apart from his visits to the Steiner schools. Readers of this bulletin may be interested in the following brief resumé of what he told us and in the response of educators to the conceptions of Steiner pedagogy.

It is characteristic of Mr. Edmunds, whose fire, fearless sincerity and humor have stirred a response in both his lecture audiences and chance acquaintances throughout the country, that even before he reached America he had already

made significant friendships aboard ship. In mid-Atlantic, at the Captain's table of the S.S. Veendam he met the head of the American Education Press in Columbus, Ohio, and, among others, in the course of the voyage, a professor from Antioch College, both of whom invited him to visit them on his tour.

In September in Washington, D. C. a meeting with Dr. MacGrath, Commissioner of Education, was arranged for him by Mrs. Mitchell and Miss Katherine Phelan of the Waldorf Schools Fund. Mr. Edmunds was received with polite interest which grew warm as he elaborated upon two points. First: What can education offer as a constructive goal between the tendency to whip up nationalism, and the communistic leaning to wipe out all differences? Steiner education would like to offer the conception which St. Paul expressed of many members, one spirit; not a system, but something which can be planted and grow wherever there are men. Second: Art in education. Mr. Edmunds had just visited Letchworth Village in New York State. Here, in this immense undertaking of over four thousand patients, he visited a class of over thirty adults with the mentality of two and three year olds, who produce handicrafts of a quality that could be displayed in shop windows. They were being membered into a human community and here there was happiness. Where there is abnormality we are accustomed to appeal not to the head but to the hands. Why do we recognize the fact that this is essential for abnormal persons but do not see it in relation to normal ones? What could we *not* do if this force for healing, balancing, and educating faculties were applied throughout education?

In Columbus, Ohio, Mr. Edmunds stayed with his fellow passenger, head of the American Education Press. He was a man of many interests and among other things had established a bureau for linking up all the community endeavors of the town. He edited a weekly paper for each school grade through which he hoped to counteract the influence of the comics. He felt that what children want is the truth and with enormous trouble and care was giving them a super realism of a sober sort. Mr. Edmunds took the bull by the horns. "Your kind of truth may serve adults, but that is not the way children see a wolf. What do you call imagination?" This led to a fruitful exchange of ideas. Mr. Sayre was impressed by what he heard of Steiner education and asked for further material. He in turn acquainted Mr. Edmunds with the methods of the educator Ligon who works with children over a long period of time on the basis of what lies well within the abilities of each. Then, when a secure self-confidence has been achieved and the children are thoroughly at home within their own limits, these are gradually expanded. His work has been recently recognized by psychologists and voted a half million dollars.

At Antioch College Mr. Edmunds felt at home in the general atmosphere of respect and ease between the generations — a sense of order within freedom, although he was also amazed at the lounging attitudes, ash-droppings and gum-chewings of those imbibing higher education in some of the seminar courses. A cocktail party in his honor included the Vice President of the College and the heads of various departments. Mr. Edmunds challenged the gathering. "Gentlemen, now that the students are no longer about, what have you in your cupboard?" In the lively discussion that followed they admitted, being honest men, that they had nothing in the way of either inner or outer security to offer the students in whom they were so deeply interested. "Good-bye, Mr. Catalyst!" were the vice-president's parting words to Mr. Edmunds.

In San Francisco Mr. Edmunds met a woman doctor who worked with retarded children. She had discovered that if she could supply more nourish-

ment and circulation to the brain a marked improvement occurred. She worked in this direction through diet and exercises. Mr. Edmunds described to her how what she was trying to do by direct physical means Steiner education strives to do by awakening sympathy in the child and leading the life of feeling and will towards the thinking. He also felt that this undernourishment, lack of life, in the brain was the crux of the educational situation. If no life and will are brought into the thinking it becomes automatic. We become machines and eliminate the human element from our lives.

In Los Gatos Mr. Edmunds was invited through Mr. and Mrs. Miller to speak at Montalvo, a center of artistic and cultural life. After his lecture a man whom he had rather mistaken for the head gardener, rose, spoke eloquently, and ended by saying, "If I have rightly understood you in what you have just said, you are asking for an absolute and total change in human thinking." This man was Arturo Fallico, Professor of Philosophy at San Jose University. Fallico invited Edmunds to speak in some of his seminar courses and they became fast friends. Fallico spoke earnestly of the danger in our times of the depersonification of man — that he is becoming a "thing". He would like to establish a course in the Philosophy of Education and invited Edmunds to help him.

The next talk was to a group of parents of retarded children. Edmunds spoke of the enormous population of such children scattered throughout the world, of how they brought alive to modern society a picture of its prevailing illnesses and thus had a positive task as moral awakeners. For such children it is not so much a question of *cure* as of helping them to apply their will constructively in however simple a manner, contributing what they can to society.

Mr. Edmunds visited two prisons run on diametrically opposing principles. He saw a Catholic School for retarded children where he was impressed by what regularity and repetition can achieve in helping the life of will even though very little else may be done. During his trip he had countless significant talks with a wide variety of individuals.

He has often been asked whether Steiner education is European or international and to this he replies, "It is neither. It is a world education."

C. B.

A MICHAELMAS STORY*

Told to the Children of the Rudolf Steiner School in New York

Once there was a boy. (Or was it a girl? — Indeed, what boy or what girl might it not have been?)

He was called George.

Everyone was fond of this fresh, healthy youngster.

* * *

One day when he was alone in the kitchen, he found in the ice-box several containers of chocolate ice cream. Now that was just what he liked better than anything else and you can well imagine how his mouth watered when he saw them.

With one quick glance he took in the fact that this time there was one ice cream container more than usual.

"Mother must have made a mistake!" — flashed like lightning through his mind. And with the same swiftness he let himself be carried away by the

pangs of his appetite and the tempting calculation: — "Oh, she will never notice it if I eat up the extra one."

Why didn't this ice cream taste as good as it usually did?

Yes, and if he had only known that his mother, who knew his ravenous sweet tooth so well had bought more this time just in order to give him a treat.

Not long afterwards, from his own room, he heard his mother open the ice-box. His heart beat right up into his throat.

And then came the question he dreaded. — "George did you take some of the ice cream?"

But before he could even come to himself, he heard himself saying: "No, Mother!"

"But one container is missing. Didn't I hear a noise in the kitchen a few minutes ago? There is no one in the house except you and me."

"Perhaps it was the cat. I have been in my room the whole time!" he replied.

"How can you lie so?" he heard a voice deep inside him saying. "What a coward you are!" And he knew quite clearly that in reality it was not he himself who had told the lie. He listened to himself and was astonished at what came out of his mouth. With open eyes he went on tangling himself still deeper in the thicket of foolish lies. But the power that drove him to it seemed at the moment irresistible.

"Come to me in the kitchen," called his mother. And then she said very searchingly: — "George—?"

"No Mother, really truly, I didn't do it," came the words again from his lips. And to emphasize them he shook his head vehemently and struck his lifted knee with his fist, while he looked his mother straight in the face. Only his glance was not free and clear, but uncertain and forced.

"But George" — admonished his mother softly and with an undertone of disappointment. And out of her eyes there gazed at him, straight, clear, inexorable yet warm, a quiet power. Something higher than what he usually knew as his mother looked right to the bottom of his soul. And he knew — "These eyes see and understand everything — that in me which gives in to the lie-demon and he who is ashamed of it."

This clear searching gaze accompanied George into his sleep. During the night he dreamed that he had run away from home and had lost his way in a dark forest. He hunted desperately for a way out. But when he attempted to turn back, the trees began to close together about him into a dense wall and threatened to crush him to death.

When he struggled to find his way to the right, strange snake-like vines grew up out of the ground and wound themselves about his legs.

When he wanted to flee to the left, enormous nettles and thistles with long poisonous spikes blocked his path.

And when he tried to go forward there arose before him an impassable wall of rock.

Each time he withdrew, however, the ghostly hindrances vanished and he heard dry scornful laughter. But the moment he tried to free himself they were there once more.

*Michaelmas Day, the 29th of September, is an autumn festival, better known in Europe than in this country. It is the day of the angel Michael who conquered Satan and cast him out of heaven.

In his great despair the good spirit, which he had beheld in the eyes of his mother, came to his help.

He felt himself suddenly enveloped in a great light which was a thousand times brighter than the sunlight which he beheld with the eyes of his body. But it did not blind him. It made his head clear, filled his heart with courage and warmth and poured power and strength into his limbs.

Then he heard a voice which seemed to come from the heights but at the same time spoke within him — "Be strong! Go forward courageously! Lay hold upon the sword of truth!"

He stretched out his right arm and a mighty power streamed from the being of light which enveloped him into his heart and from there through his arm and formed itself in his hand into a sword.

Before the flashing, iron power that streamed from this sword, the spectres which had held him captive fell back in retreat. The forest vanished and George found himself on a wide open plain with well cultivated fields and green pastures where peaceful herds were grazing.

And there in the distance, did he not see the writhing dragon disappearing into the black abyss of the night?

In the eastern heaven the sun rose in its most radiant morning glory. The sword had vanished from his hand but appeared now in the sun as a gleaming cross.

The path upon which he found himself led straight into the sun. And he set forth knowing that upon it he would become a good and strong man.

* * *

The first thing he did when he awoke was to go straight to his mother. And now he could look her quietly and clearly in the eyes, and say: "I did it."

But she said not a word. She led him to the calendar and pointed with her finger to the date.

It was Michaelmas Day.

George recalled all the stories about Michael which had been told him at school and at home. And now it seemed to him that he understood them all so much better.

Karl Ege

VERSES FOR FIRST GRADE

These verses were made up by first grade teachers to help their children to become thoroughly at home with their letters. They are printed here in the hope that they may be useful to other teachers and parents and inspire them to make up similar verses of their own.

The following alliterations were spoken as the children first ran the form of each letter on the floor, next drew it very large in the air and on the black-board, and finally formed it on paper with crayons. The teacher had first told the story of Snow White and Rose Red, developing the character of the bear in great detail. Then all the children had made a picture of him with crayons. Out of this form the letter B was developed and the alliteration was recited rhythmically as their right arms followed the form of the letter as indicated in the

verse. Each of the following verses was developed in a similar manner.

The big bear has a straight brown back
And a bumpity bump
And a bulge in front.
He likes bees and bugs
And big bear hugs
And he says, "B, b, b, b!"

When the cat curls up in a cozy curve
She's as cunning as can be.
But when a little dog runs by
"K, K!" she cries. "S, s!" says she.

Though the king can cut and kill
And he steps out with a will,
The king is kind and never cruel
And that is why the king can rule! "K!"

*(The form of this letter is made with
the child's back, arm and leg.)*

Hammer down your house posts
Heave your hammers hard!
Hang the heavy beam
Straight in between.
Hub! but it's heavy work
To build a house and never shirk. *Hub!*

This is the top of the tree.
This is the tall trim trunk.
The leaves talk, tinkle and titter,
"T, t, t!" And the little birds twitter.

The snake makes a soft and secret
sound.
"S, s, s, s!" is the song that she sings
As back she sways and forward she
swings
And circles to sit on the ground.

Christy Barnes

When the children had practiced the capitals and small letters, they made a book, using an alliterative couplet below and an illustration above.

Big balloons, red and blue,
Bounce and blow from me to you.

Cunning little cat
Cuddles on her mat.

Dark night goes
Bright day dawns.

Five fairy fishes
Float on the foam.

Growing in my garden
Are pinks and greens and gold.

High in the heavens
Hangs a lovely star.

Jumping-Jack, Jumping-Jack!
Jig in front, jig in back!

Kind fairies bring
Gifts to their King.

Lonely little candles bright
Let me see your light!

Moon above the mountains
Are you many miles from me?

Nine round eggs in a nest,
Robin loves them best.

Please pick a pumpkin
And put it in a pie.

Queen, Queen, tall and fair,
Quiet Queen with golden hair!

Roses, roses on the tree,
Red and bright to see!

See the silent snake
Sliding through the grass!

Tick-tock, tick-tock
Tell the time by the clock.

Very pretty, very blue
Violets I will pick for you!

The wild old wolf
Walks in the woods.

At the end come these three:
Funny X and Y and Z!

The singing sounds now we do
A, E, I, O, and U!

Martha Harris

THE RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

15 East 79th Street, New York 21, N. Y.

President: Frances Walling

Vice President: Margaret C. Wesson

Secretary: Nancy Root

Treasurer: Anne Barnes

Editor: Christy Barnes

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