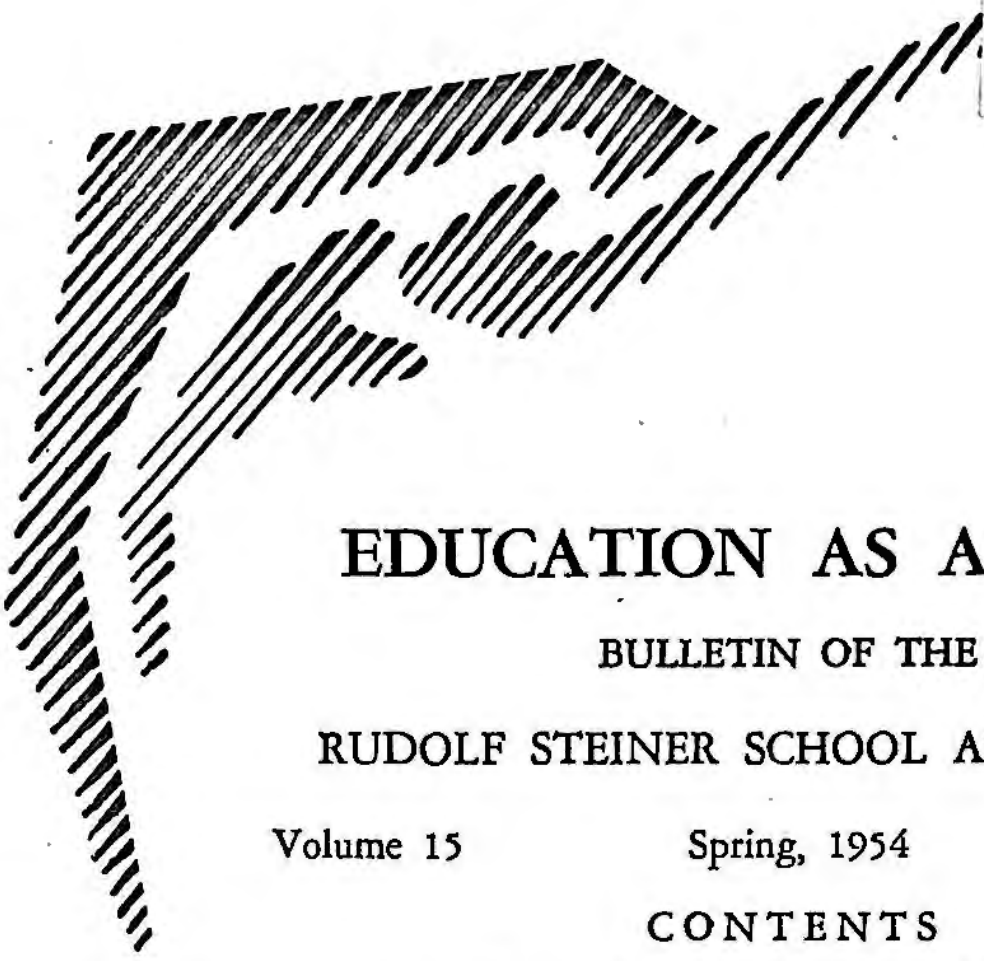




EDUCATION AS AN ART

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HAPPY, HEARTY FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

Twenty snapping, scrapping, scampering puppies turned loose in one room present a picture of blissful playfulness, but utter confusion! Twenty healthy, hearty three-and four-year-olds in one room can likewise present a picture of complete confusion; a confusion that may reach frightening proportions. For young children are notorious for their punching and pushing, for hurling harsh words and hard objects, and inflicting all sorts of cruelties upon each other.

Yet a parent one day visited a classroom, and upon finding twenty-odd youngsters playing and working together harmoniously, glowing with the joy they found in each other, she said rather surprisingly, "This is such a happy group. I know little children quarrel and fight, but I haven't seen anything at all like that." Why is it that these children get along so well? Are they particularly unusual? Not at all—they were as quarrelsome and pugnacious as any similar group of children when they first entered school. Does the teacher deliver a daily discourse on the intrinsic rewards of brotherly love and fellowship? Definitely not! To anyone who knows young children such a procedure is not only worthless, it is laughable.

But if the teacher, in all she says, in all she does, in all she *is*, can be the living example of those abstract principles about which we dare not speak to the children, she is then teaching those very principles to them. If the light of love and understanding and compassion shine through her, enveloping each child in its warmth and protection, then that light radiates through the child himself, the warmth and protection become part of his innermost being, and he can become capable of love without sentimentality, of strength without force.

Practically speaking, this is a matter not of *what* the teacher does, but of *how* she does it. In the course of a single day, countless situations arise which challenge the "how" of handling them. In any of these situations, there is no "either-or" solution; many degrees of variation are possible depending upon the circumstances and the children involved, but generally, in achieving the same end result, two directions may be followed. On the one hand, the teacher can create an atmosphere of resentment and fear, fostering the attitude that force and outward superior strength are desirable, in which case the children grow tense and nervous, and a chain reaction of quarrels and bickering is set up. On the other hand, she can create a warm atmosphere of friendliness and good-will, fostering the attitude that love and understanding and inner strength are desirable, in which case the children relax and shed their tensions, and become peaceful and happy with each other.

When Susie calls out, "I don't want to sit next to you, Bobby," the teacher can insist that they sit together, explaining what a nice little boy Bobby is; yet Susie will be indignant and Bobby uncomfortable. But if the teacher says in a welcoming voice, "Come sit with me, Bobby. I like to have you next to me," Bobby's face will light up, he will feel warm and wanted, and Susie will invariably move next to him with an "I like you too, Bobby," look in her eyes, and both children share a special contentment with each other.

When Johnny climbs into an already crowded "lions' house," knocking over part of its walls, and is shooed away by its inhabitants, the teacher can easily take Johnny away because there is no room for him, making him feel clumsy and unwanted, and the others, smug and self-righteous; she can also insist Johnny join the group, making him feel equally unwanted and the others, resentful. But should she come to help Johnny reconstruct the lions' house, and even *enlarge* it, the prospect of a *bigger* house is a great joy to any lion, and so they all join in creating a more spacious dwelling, and Johnny becomes the finest lion of all for having brought this about.

When Mary has not slept well the previous night, and is tense and cross in the morning, the teacher can sit her in a corner by herself, thereby adding to her irritability; or she can push Mary into an activity in which she is too tired to participate companionably and soon find a whole group of annoyed, quarreling children. But, if the teacher suggests sympathetically that Mary lie down in the dolls' bed to rest, before she is even tucked in, there will be a host of little mothers, both masculine and feminine, eager to care for a real baby (and with such tenderness!). Mary will relax and thrive under this gentle devotion, and all the children share in a rich experience.

Words, very often, become entirely unnecessary. Picture, for example, little David—in his hand, a wooden block, already started on its way to crash on top of another child's head—when he finds himself looking into his teacher's eyes. No word is spoken, yet without a perceptible pause in the motion of the block, it comes down to the floor and becomes the cornerstone of a fine building. The child's mood has changed completely, not out of fear, but out of all the experiences and feelings previously shared, which have been called up again.

Of course, with any group of children, accidents occur—water can be spilled, blocks can tumble over, fingers can be trod upon, hands and feet, that mean only to be playful can sometimes hurt another—yet children can come to accept these for what they are if the teacher's expression, her voice, her

gestures, even her quiet pauses, create the attitude of "he didn't mean it" (which is most comforting), and a truly sympathetic "I'm sorry" can come forth, not as an automatic response, but as the voiced expression of the feelings within.

Now we may ask, "Are these children then capable of defending themselves?" Indeed, yes! Not with a mere lashing out of fists, in disorganized fury, but with a deep inner strength and dignity. One of the most severe punishments one child could inflict upon another in this group became, "You are not my friend any more;" this simple statement carried more force and meaning than striking or pummeling ever could, for it brought the erring child back to the group with a good feeling for wanting to be accepted. And oh, what great joy to hear one child vigorously defend another with, "Of course he can play with us. We're all friends!"

Any child flourishes in such an atmosphere, for little children believe the whole world to be moral. That is why they are so quick to imitate all they see. Let them, then be clothed in a warmth and security that can penetrate within so that their creative abilities and imagination are free to work, for when children are working creatively and imaginatively, they have neither the time nor the inclination to quarrel.

Nannette Grimm

CAMP CLEN BROOK, Marlboro, New Hampshire

Inquiries have come to us as to possibilities for teaching children, who have no opportunity to attend a Rudolf Steiner School, some of the main lesson subjects as presented in such a school. Should there be sufficient demand we would be very glad to arrange for such teaching.

Camp Season — June 30th to August 25th.

Please direct inquiries to Mr. and Mrs. William Harrer, 15 East 79th Street, New York City.

I REMEMBER DR. STEINER

*The following was told to the children of the Rudolf Steiner School
on the occasion of Dr. Steiner's birthday.*

When I was asked to speak to you children about Dr. Steiner as I remembered him, I began thinking of the different ways in which one can remember a person. Some people have a picture in their memory; some remember sounds and some remember feelings. When I had thought about it, I realized that I could remember Dr. Steiner in all these three ways.

A friend of mine had heard that Dr. Steiner was not very strong. If we did not hear him this summer, perhaps we would never have another chance. We both decided we must go abroad to hear him, and she paid my fare to England. When we arrived in England, we traveled south to Devon and came to Torquay, a beautiful town located on the English cliffs. There we found many people from all over the world. In the house where we stayed, there were two people from the far south, from Australia; two others came from the far north, from Norway. Upon attending the first lecture in the big auditorium, we found it filled with people from all parts of the world, and one could hear the hum of voices speaking in many different languages. Then

someone turned and put his finger to his lips and suddenly there was absolute silence. Everybody stopped talking and looked toward the stage. I saw a man coming up onto the stage who I knew must be Dr. Steiner. As he walked onto the stage, the stage seemed very large and he seemed very tired and quiet. I had the feeling that perhaps I wouldn't be able to hear him when he spoke. When he began to speak, his whole face changed. You children have heard the expression used that a person's eyes "shone like stars." When Dr. Steiner spoke a light seemed to shine out through his eyes upon us all. His voice began to grow and fill the whole auditorium. As he spoke, his voice and expression changed all the time. At first, his voice was very large and deep and then it became light and cheerful. When he had been very serious for a long time, he suddenly assumed a light and amusing tone of voice and told a funny story and everybody burst out laughing.

Dr. Steiner lectured every day three times a day for two weeks and I heard him every day and never grew tired of watching his face and hearing the sound of his voice. I remember watching him and hearing him, but there is one way that I don't remember him. I don't remember a single word he said! You see, he spoke in German, and at that time I wasn't able to understand a word of that language. I can now read what he said in his lectures, for they were all taken down at the time; but the fact that I couldn't understand the content of what he was saying made my memory of how he looked and sounded something that will stay with me forever. I have even seen him look very, very stern. (You children have all seen your teachers look stern, haven't you.) That was when he told us that we all could do more to help the world. Dr. Steiner was only asking us to do what he himself was always doing. All of us knew that he had just come from Holland and there he had also lectured three times a day for two weeks. The little children do not realize what work that meant, but the older ones who have spoken on the stage understand. You know how much preparation has to be done even if you are to speak for only ten minutes. Think how much more is needed when giving many lectures. Though Dr. Steiner was no longer well, he devoted all his time and strength toward helping all the people possible with his great knowledge and wisdom.

Margaret Peckham

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EURYTHMY IN SCHOOL

Parents often wonder what this eurythmy is which their children say they are doing in school. One can say that, "eurythmy is an art of movement, visible speech and visible song for which the human body is the instrument," but this may mean little to someone who has never seen eurythmy. Perhaps it may be best described by telling about some of the things that the children actually do in school.

In the first grade we try to lead natural play over into formed movement. Children at this age live in a world of imagination and through imitating all kinds of movements and rhythms around them they can become acquainted with their own bodies in a natural way. For example, without *telling* them that they should experience the uprightness of their bodies, we may let them imagine that they are high, straight fir trees. The tree which each one of them represents is the very highest in the whole forest and the child then takes the most beautiful upright posture, the head riding free on the shoulders, looking out over the

forest. Then we may let a little bird fly out from the tree and they experience how light they can be, imagining that they are the bird themselves, not touching the floor with their feet but flying high up into the air. As a contrast to this lightness they must also feel that they have heaviness in their bodies. We can get an extremely heavy feeling in the limbs and body when, for instance, we imagine that we are building a castle and having to carry heavy stones into the middle of the room. The whole body is then dragged down to the earth by the weight of the stone. We will also learn to gallop with energy and strength like race horses or jump free and light like the hare. We may curl the whole spine up as we pretend to be little hedgehogs hiding away when danger is near. We are giants and dwarfs, birds and beasts. There is no end to the variations in rhythm and movement the child can imitate and so grow to know, through natural movement, his own body and its wealth of possibilities.

In the second grade we try to make the children's manner of forming these movements more exact. We let them move rhythmically in connection with words. As human speech is able to express everything we see and hear around us, all these things must be contained in the different letters and words.

We find, then, that the same quality which we experienced as the uprightness in the tree is contained in the letter T, that the light jumping of the hare has the same quality which we find in the sound of the letter H. We let the children experience this with their own body, not, at this age, by explaining about it, but by combining the movement with a little verse containing the particular letter. For instance, "The happy hare is hopping over the high hill." Or we may feel the protecting quality of the letter b when with our movements we build a "bulky boat with bark and beam and let it bask in the bay." Or we imitate the weaving waves on the water and experience that it is not just by chance that the word "wave" has the letters w and v in it, but that each word, in some way or other, expresses the quality of the thing it stands for. The mere sounds in the words, "clear cut rock" have quite a different quality and movement from "the light and lovely lily." We learn that a sparrow with its sputtering sp has to move quite differently in eurythmy from an eagle with the more gliding sounds in the word eagle, and so on.

In the third grade we would bring this still further and form little poems in movement out of what the different sounds and words in the poem give us. We could, for instance, take the poem about the little cock-sparrow in the green tree and the boy with his bow and arrow behind the bush. We could in this case divide the class into two groups, one of which would characterize the lurking boy while the other group could take the part of the cock-sparrow using the fluttering movements which the sounds p, f and l would render, to characterize the frightened cock-sparrow who then finally escapes.

When we reach the fourth grade the children come to a state in their development when they become more aware of themselves. They begin to see themselves more from outside, so to speak, and we have to teach the movements in a different way. They are now finding another relationship to space. We loosen them from the circle on which we have been working all the time until now, and turn them towards the audience or "the outer world," to let them experience in motion — "There is the world and here am I."

The circle plays a very important part in the eurythmy lesson. From the very beginning, in the first grade, we place the whole class in a circle with their faces turned towards the center. We do not only place ourselves, but we actually *form* the circle, all of us together, in every eurythmy lesson, and we take great care to stand at regular distances from each other in forming the circle. The form in itself has a formative effect upon the children and if we form the circle carelessly and in a disorderly fashion it does something to us which is not strengthening but deteriorating. During the first three school years we worked almost entirely standing and moving in a circle. The circle was like the whole world with the deity or God-head at its center and combined us into a wholeness where we could feel secure. Now in the fourth grade, when the individuality is more awakened, the children have to face the outer world and stand more on their own.

They move now in different directions in space and experience more consciously what a difference it is to move forward, backward, to the right or to the left. They learn how to form a straight line and how to form a curved line in space with their whole body. The exercises with the rods are here very useful. These exercises help the body and mind to cooperate and bring about greater strength and accuracy in form and movement. This helps them as they are led now more and more into moving geometrical forms in space. This is an important part of the curriculum in the higher grades. In the lower grades we had been more or less running along straight or curved lines. Later we learned to form the way in which we ran these lines. To begin with, we ran symmetrical and quite simple forms such as squares, triangles, five and six pointed stars, circles and spirals not only to get a bodily experience of the various forms and figures which they learn in their geometry lesson, but also in order to get a clear and conscious relationship to space. This means to stand clearly and consciously in life. If a child shows confusion and helplessness here in finding his way within the moving group-formation, you can suspect that he will have the same kind of difficulty in finding his way through life. If you can help him here, he is helped for life.

Through this shaping in space they learn to move their bodies more and more consciously. The sounds of the words in poetry and the tones and intervals of music determine the movements with which they model the space about them. In group-formations they learn to form and shape patterns *together*, knowing that in a square, for instance, each one is only a fourth of the whole, and that they have to consider the movement of the three others in order to form the moving square shape. This helps to build up a social feeling in their whole being. In the higher grades they move in more and more complicated forms and learn how even a little difference in the turning of the shoulders can cause disharmony in the whole. The moving group may now be formed in a freer and more unsymmetrical way, so that each member of the group has his own form and movements, which, however, always harmonize with the others.

In this way each individual can contribute to the group with his own special qualities and together with many individuals form a harmonious totality, just as in an orchestra the melody, tone and quality of each instrument sounds out into a harmonious whole.

Kari Van Oordt

SLEEPING BEAUTY

A Play for the First Grade

This little fairy tale play was written by Mrs. Birdsall who is a pioneer in Waldorf School education and one of the first teachers of our school. At present she is the librarian at the Kimberton Farms School. *Sleeping Beauty* has been used several times by first-grade teachers successfully. It is being given by Miss Paulsen's first grade in the 25th Anniversary Assembly.

SCENE I — IN A GARDEN

Enter Queen: Oh, would I had a daughter fair
With eyes of blue and golden hair.
Enter Frog: Your wish, dear Queen, shall be fulfilled,
For so, in truth, the gods have willed.
A daughter shall be born to you
With golden hair and eyes of blue.
Frog hops off stage, and happy Queen exits skipping.

SCENE II — IN PALACE HALL

King and Queen enter, followed by nurse with baby and all the fairies.

King: Dear friends, we come together here
To give our thanks and make good cheer.
A daughter, beautiful to see
Has come to bless my Queen and me.

Queen: Come fairies all, and wish your best
In order that my child be blest.

Fairies come forward to give their gifts.

First fairy: Dear babe, I give you beauty rare
As roses in the summer air.

Second: And I bring wisdom,

Third: goodness too,
Let us bestow, dear babe, on you.

Fourth: And I bring grace: where 'er she treads
The flowers scarce will bend their heads.

Fifth: I give you health. Grow straight and strong
And walk your pathway with a song.

Sixth: May riches also be your part.

Seventh: And may you have a loving heart.

Eighth: May truth attend you on your way,

Ninth: And happiness be yours each day.

Tenth: May you have many, many friends,

Eleventh: And peace be yours till your life ends.

Bad Fairy enters: My gift is very quickly told,
For when the child's fifteen years old,
A spindle shall her finger prick.
The princess shall fall dead so quick
Not all your gifts can help her then.
She ne'er shall live or breathe again.

(Exit)

Good Fairy: Alas! I cannot quite undo
This cruel wish that's come to you.
She shall not die, so spare your tears,
She shall but sleep one hundred years. *(All exit)*

SCENE III — THE TOWER

Old woman: Spin, spin the princess' doom,
The princess comes, so soon, so soon.
Princess enters: I wonder what is in this room.
I think I'll see.
Old woman: Come in, my dear.
Princess: Good day, little mother.
Old woman: Good day, fair child.
Princess: What do you do with this soft, white stuff?
Old woman: Spinning, fair child, to get thread enough.
Princess: And what is this thing spinning round so gay?
Old woman: A spindle, my dear.
Princess: Then tell me, pray,
If I may not hold it, mother dear?
Old woman: Surely you may and have no fear.
Princess pricks finger, falls on couch. Old woman leaves with an evil laugh.

SCENE IV — BEFORE HEDGE OF THORNS

Hedge: The hedge of thorns are we,
As you can plainly see.
One hundred years have passed.
The prince comes, at last!
Prince gallops in: The hedge of thorns I do not fear.
I vow I'll wake the princess dear.
(strikes hedge which falls apart).
Ah, what vision rare is this!
'Tis she! I'll wake her with a kiss.
Sleeping Beauty, rise.
Open now thine eyes!
Princess: Ah, my prince, I dreamed of you!
Both: And now our dream has all come true!
King and Queen enter and kiss the princess. Grand procession of all characters follows.

Virginia F. Birdsall

THE RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

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