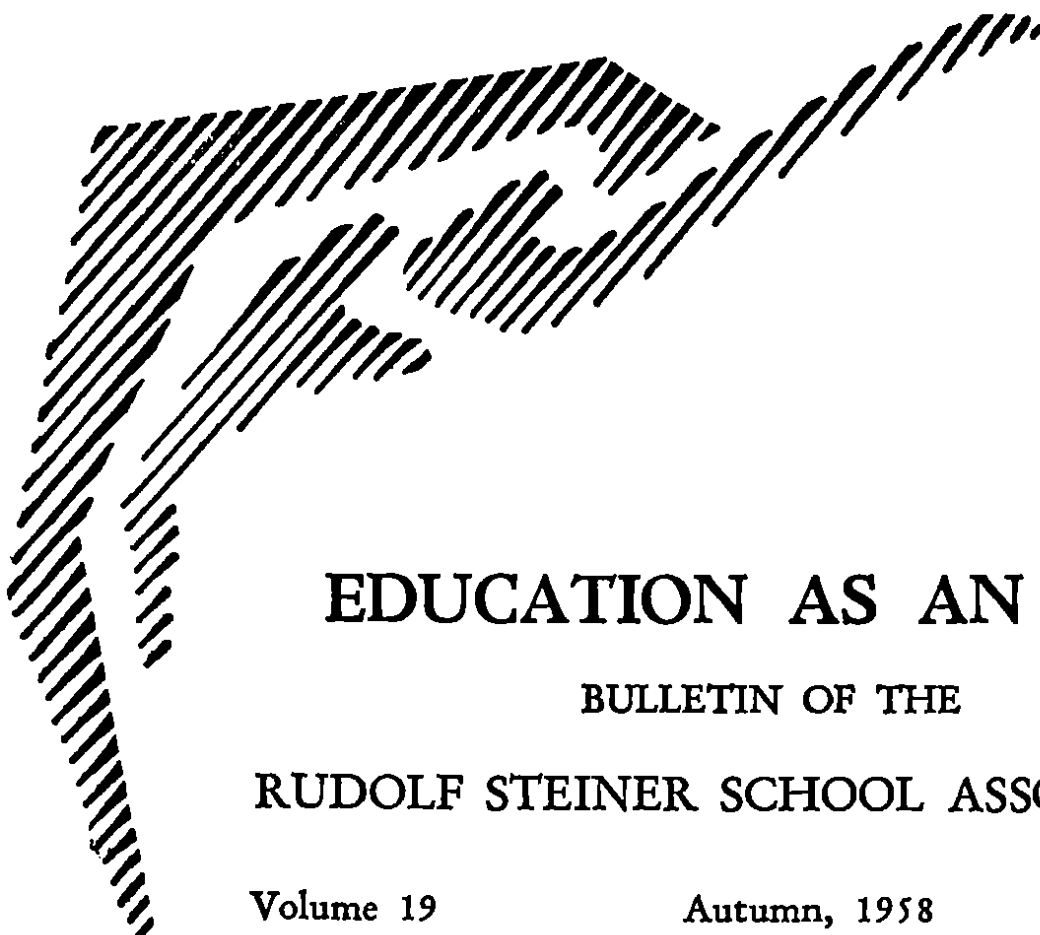




EDUCATION AS AN ART

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We stand again and again before young people today with the heartfelt question: How can I speak to this young person so that he can take my words as a strengthening force into his moral being? If I preach at him, he will understandably reject what I have to say. If I keep silent, I neglect a fundamental duty. If I reason merely, I appeal only to his critical faculty, — I fail to reach his heart.

Each of us has to solve the question in our own way, out of the particular situation in which we find ourselves. The letter printed here in English translation, which the German poet, Christian Morgenstern, wrote as a greeting to his twelve-year-old godson, the son of Morgenstern's dear friend, Friedrich Kayssler, a distinguished actor, may help us at some moment to attempt to speak in our own way to the heart of some young person whom we love.

—Henry Barnes

To my twelve-year-old godson,
Christian Friedrich Kayssler

1911

My dear boy,

There are two ways to live, the easy way and the thoughtful. On the easy path you don't concern yourself much about things, — indeed, you pay little heed to yourself: you let yourself grow like the weeds in the field. On

the thoughtful way you are yourself both flower and gardener; you seek to take yourself more and more in hand, as a skillful charioteer guides his unruly horse.

Every human being, my dear boy, is something new, something which exists only *once* in the whole wide world, and from every human being something very special, entirely surprising and entirely unique can develop. Never forget that just like the clay, from which you can form a bear or a human head or, also, something quite formless which has no real meaning, so also, like the clay, you yourself are the stuff, the material, for a bear, for a man, in fact for everything which is beautiful and notable. If, however, you are clumsy, or indeed lazy, then perhaps out of this same material only a meaningless lump may be produced.

Don't ever forget this fact: you can become the sculptor of yourself, that is, of your own person, with all your inner and outer qualities, as soon as you start to interest yourself in the material which you yourself are, — that means untiringly to devote your careful attention to it.

* * *

For the time being, let's stick to the little bear which you modeled recently in clay. What pleased us all so much about this work of your hands is that you made something visible to the eye which we recognize as the essential characteristic of the bear, — just that which characterizes the bear, his special nature, his manner of movement, his own bearish feeling. And just this characteristic quality of his own self, you see, a human being can make outwardly visible through his own efforts, if he works on himself in the right way.

* * *

Be unpretentious. — Master yourself.

—*Christian Morgenstern*
(Translated by Henry Barnes)

THE GENTLE PRINCE

(A story told to the First Grade on the day before the first flute lesson.)

There was once a king who had two sons. One son was very strong but he was also very cruel. He liked to show off his strength by hurting everyone he saw. Whenever he saw a beautiful flower, he stepped on it. Whenever he saw a little animal in the woods, he ran after it; and he screamed and frightened all the little animals in the woods till none would come near him. He liked to make a noise and to shout out loud when anyone else spoke — especially when his father, the king, spoke. Everyone knows that when the king speaks, it is always something very important that he says, and because the prince never listened to the king and did all those wicked things, people called him the Bad Prince.

The second son was quite different from his brother. He loved flowers and little animals, and when he saw a pretty flower he stopped to look at it and admire its beauty. He was kind to all the animals in the woods, and they often came to eat nuts and berries out of his hand. Whenever his father, the king, spoke, the second prince listened carefully and re-

membered all the important words that were spoken. People said that because he listened to his father, the king, he would some day be a very wise man, and because he was kind to all the little animals, people called him the Gentle Prince.

Now the Gentle Prince and the Bad Prince lived together with their father, the king, in the palace, and one day a troupe of minstrels came to sing and play for the king and his two sons and all the people who lived near the palace. The oldest minstrel was a very old minstrel who had been to all the lands in the world and had learned all the songs that had been sung since the world began. He played the songs on his flute, and because he played such beautiful music on his flute, and made so many people happy with his music, it was said that he played a magic flute. When the Gentle Prince heard the music of the minstrel, he went to him and said to him, "Teach me to play the flute so that I can play such beautiful music as you play."

The old minstrel was happy to teach him, and he taught him how to hold the flute, how to blow into it gently so that the music fairies would come and help to make the sound more beautiful. He taught him how to play the flute and at the same time listen to the song he played, and after many days and weeks and months the Gentle Prince learned to play some simple songs. Then one day the old minstrel said, "I must go away, but you can learn to play as I do if you listen to the birds and to the waterfall, if you listen to the words of wise old men." The Gentle Prince obeyed the old minstrel and soon played on his flute so well that people said, "He will soon play as well as the old minstrel himself."

When the Bad Prince heard that the Gentle Prince could play nearly as well as the old minstrel, he was filled with jealousy. He went to the old minstrel and said, "Give me a flute. I want to play the flute. I'm sure I can play as well as my brother; perhaps I can play even better." The old minstrel said, "I will be glad to teach you how to play the flute." Whereupon the Bad Prince answered him, "I don't need an old man to teach me. Just give me a flute and I will play, for I already know where to put my fingers and into which end to blow." The old minstrel said, "I cannot give you a flute unless I teach you how to play." The Bad Prince became very angry and stamped out of the house and slammed the door, but that night he came back when the minstrel was asleep. He crawled in through a window and stole a flute from the minstrel's flute case.

Next day he took the flute into the woods, so that no one would hear him, and began to play, hoping that in a few minutes of practice he could learn to play as well as his brother. He put his fingers over the holes and blew into the flute, and a terrible shriek came out of the flute. He became angry with the noise that he had made, and blew harder, and the noise became more terrible. He blew harder and harder, covering first one hole with his fingers and then another and made such a terrible sound that the sky became dark and the thunder clouds appeared. All the fairies in the forest hid in the flowers and the flowers closed up to hide their beautiful colors. The wicked gnomes came out of the ground and danced an ugly crooked dance. Wicked witches came out of their caves and flew about the sky on their brooms. Fierce wild beasts came out of the deep dark forest and growled

and hissed and made a fearsome noise. The thunder rolled and the lightning flashed. The wind blew so hard that branches broke from the trees and all the little animals hid in fear. The Bad Prince blew harder and harder and the whole world became such a dreadful place that the sun, who was watching it all, said, "Stop!" And he called the Gentle Prince from his hiding place and said, "Play on your flute and heal the wounds that your brother has given the earth."

The Gentle Prince began to play, and the clouds rolled away. The thunder stopped and the lightning stopped. The wind became a gentle breeze, and the sunlight flooded the earth. The wicked gnomes could not bear the sunlight and they crept back into the ground. The wicked witches could not bear the sunlight and they flew away into their caves. They took the Bad Prince with them and locked him up deep in the darkest cave because they thought he must be one of them.

As the Gentle Prince played, the flowers opened and the fairies came out and danced among the flowers, and as they danced they helped the music to become more beautiful, and the flowers bloomed as they had never bloomed before. The little animals came forth and sat and listened to the Gentle Prince. The birds came close and sang in harmony. The whole world laughed with joy and everyone was glad because the Gentle Prince had healed the earth and all was well again.

—Harry Kretz

From EVENING HOURS OF A HERMIT

All the pure and beneficent powers of humanity are neither the products of art nor the results of chance. They are really the natural possession of every man. Their development is a universal human need.

Man! In thyself, in the inward consciousness of thine own strength, is the instrument intended by Nature for thy development.

The path of Nature which can develop the powers of humanity must be easy and open to all. Education which will bring true wisdom and peace of mind must be simple and within everybody's reach.

The exercise of a man's faculties and talents, to be profitable, must follow the course laid down by Nature for the education of humanity.

When men are anxious to go too fast, and are not satisfied with Nature's method of development, they imperil their inward strength and destroy the harmony and peace of their souls.

The schools hastily substitute an artificial method of words for the truer method of Nature, which knows no hurry and is content to wait. In this way, a specious form of development is produced, hiding the want of real inward strength but satisfying times like our own.

—Johann Pestalozzi (1780)

* * *

In several past issues of the Bulletin there have been excerpts from Gerbert Grohmann's book, THE LIVING WORLD OF PLANTS, translated by Virginia Field Birdsall. In the summer issue of 1957 an account of Grohmann himself, scientist and teacher at the Waldorf School in Stuttgart, Germany, was given by his friend, Karl Ege.

The following is a chapter from his delightful and valuable book, LESEBUCH DER TIERKUNDE, published shortly before his death in July, 1957. He himself called it a Nature Book for children, who at 10 or 11 begin to make, in school and outside, their first discoveries in natural science. In the years before, animal stories and fables were right and sufficient. Now however, the older children need and want simple, living, factual knowledge which will allow them to marvel at the wonder and wisdom of the animal world.

* * *

PRAISED BE THE EARTHWORM

No one would say that the earthworm is a particularly attractive animal. There is nothing endearing about him; in fact, many people find him a bit disgusting. But when his task is rightly understood, he is treasured, and there is cause for rejoicing when he appears in field or garden and is active and feels at home there.

We will first describe his bodily structure. He has no legs, is completely naked, and crawls over or under the earth on his belly. He is encircled throughout with rings and has neither eyes, ears, nor even a head. It is very difficult to find his mouth, which is located in front of his second ring. With this mouth, which has neither jawbone nor teeth, he certainly cannot bite anyone nor can he bite off anything; he must go about it differently. But he also has no nose.

His peculiar secret is that he has delicate sensations throughout his naked skin. He can tell, for example, whether it is warm or cold. If it is too cold, he stays underground. He perceives and tastes by means of his skin, and perhaps he also hears a little, even without ears. When he tastes the earth, he does so with accuracy because his entire body is almost like a tongue. If there is a shaking or violent motion of the earth, he flees beneath it. He even knows whether it is light or dark, and if someone shines a flashlight on him, he is immediately aware of this and will draw himself together. It is wonderful that this simple animal who has not a single sense organ can yet perceive everything around him solely by means of his moist skin.

There is no difference to him between taste and smell. Nevertheless he always knows whether a piece of earth is good or bad and will crawl away from unhealthy soil, seeking that spot of earth which he knows is right for him.

As he has no head, he naturally has no brain, not even the slightest sign of one. He really does not need any because everything that he perceives: light, darkness, the smell of the earth, warmth, cold, motion, is taken in immediately through his . . . but oh no! an earthworm has no limbs. These elements enter into his very rings, one can say. He seems to be clearly aware

of the difference between above and below because he always turns the same part of himself upwards. This can be seen by the large vein which courses through the middle of his back. He does not have a specific heart.

If a person forgets his squeamishness and takes a worm in his hand, pulling him slowly over his finger from back to front, he will notice that he scratches. These are the fine bristles of which he has four rows on his skin. On each side of his body are two rows, one above and one below on his belly. These bristles are the 'climbing irons' by which he keeps himself steady on his vertical path. He can even move them slightly and so one might, with a little stretch of the imagination, call them legs. When he crawls on paper he makes a slight rustling sound. This can be tested by anyone. Because the bristles slant from front to back, they support the worm when he climbs upwards; otherwise he would fall backwards. These bristles are the only thing about him that gives him any resistance.

The zoologists classify the earthworm with the ringworm. We can see that the worm is covered with distinct rings from the front to the end of him. The foremost ring, or member, is pointed and can draw itself together so that it becomes longer. By this means the worm bores himself into the earth when he has found a place that is slightly open. His bristles help him to do this. He has as many pairs of bristles on either side of him as he has rings.

The next thing that we will describe about the structure of the earthworm is the large muscle directly under his skin which runs throughout his entire body. This compensates for his lack of arms and legs. He is a strong animal for his size, which you can feel when you hold him in your hand. His back muscle enables him to move by means of a wavelike movement. First he stretches himself and then he draws the back part of himself along. He can also crawl backwards but does it differently than the snake, who must coil and twist himself because he has a bony spine. Without this muscle, how could the worm possibly stretch himself or draw himself together?

The common earthworm found in Europe and America can be as long as a foot and has about 150 rings. It is well known that he can be separated into parts. This often happens when someone is digging in the garden, or sometimes a bird flying in the air will drop a piece. But what does it matter? The worm feels no pain and what he loses is soon restored.

Let us enumerate the many different animals who like to eat earthworms! First there are the various kinds of birds who search the ground with their sharp eyes, especially after it has been plowed up. Then there is Mr. Hedgehog who smells the earth to see if he can catch a worm to make a tasty meal for himself. Then there are the moles under the earth who eat countless worms, and the shrewmouse and other animals who eagerly search after them. Even toads eat them. You might think that few earthworms would be left, but that is not the case.

A piece of land will often be examined to see how many of these quiet crawlers exist on it. In two acres of forest land over three million earthworms have been counted. If these worms were all heaped together, they would weigh over 400 pounds, which is as much as a fat pig. It must be remembered that the worms multiply very quickly.

Somewhere in the first third of the earthworm can be noticed a thickening that looks somewhat like a girdle. This starts with the 27th ring and continues for eight rings. It is here that the worm lays his eggs. They are covered with mucus, for the girdle is really a mucus gland. He pulls off the entire cocoon or egg mass like a dress so that it shrinks together. He does not make his cocoon out of silk like the silk moth but it is made from the mucus which dries in the air. The eggs are then laid under the earth in a small hole.

Earthworms are really night or twilight animals. Because they are naked and have a moist skin, there is always the danger that they will dry out. As they do not have any lungs they must breathe through their skin and so, whenever there is a prolonged or heavy rain, they crawl out of their earthen tunnels so that the water, seeping into these passageways and filling them up, will not suffocate them. This is how they came to be called in some languages 'rain worms'.

It can be very dangerous for the worms if after a heavy rain the sun suddenly shines. They cannot stand the sunlight for it destroys their blood. That is why large numbers of them are often found lying dead after a storm. They need the protection of the darkness in order to exist and this they like best when it is moist and warm. As they are very sensitive to frost and cold, they will congeal if the temperature is two degrees below freezing. In winter they burrow deep into the earth, but even then it often happens that the frost reaches them. But if the earth is covered with straw or some other mulch, they are protected and stay alive.

One often sees small leaves stuck in the earth as though they had been placed there for a game. This is done by the nocturnal activity of the earthworms. They gather bits of leaves and drag them into their tunnels. When the leaves rot, they can be eaten by the worms with their soft mouths. There are foods which they especially like, such as cabbage leaves. They also eat the earth, taking into themselves what they can digest and expelling the rest which they have made fertile through their intestines. These are the 'worm castings' which are often found. And so we see how quietly and with what perseverance the worm works for the fertility of the earth by making it more loose and crumbly. That they often nip up young sprouts is no cause for complaint, seeing that in all other ways they are of such great assistance.

They usually grasp leaves by the tip so that they can draw them into their passageways without crushing them. Pine needles they seize differently, for these needles hang in pairs and would prick them if they were grasped by the tip. What wisdom lies behind the behavior of such a simple animal! Who was his teacher? How was this wisdom implanted in him?

Their upright passageways are usually nineteen inches deep. It is easy to see what it means to the earth to have so many worms continually crawling in it, eating it, and then in some other spot eliminating it. In this way, through their unseen care, fields, meadows, gardens and woods become fertilized. The farmer as well as the forester and gardener must necessarily appreciate their worthy help. Whether plant or animal remains, everything goes back to the earth and is fruitfully transformed. The earthworm prepares the soil for new plant growth both by watering and manuring it.

Let us now consider how many of these small, quiet, valuable helpers there are. In two acres of land two to five million worms and a million worm holes have been found. It has been calculated that the worms in a medium sized farm weigh more than all the cows and calves put together. Who would think this possible? It is no exaggeration to say that this subterranean cow barn helps to keep the people above it alive.

But the activity of the worms is even more praiseworthy. These little helpers, by means of their tunnels, make it possible for enough air to enter the earth. They loosen the earth, they fertilize it and they ventilate it. Because of the worm holes, the roots of plants can breathe and also can drink the fine stream of moisture which trickles down through these passageways.

In only a few decades the worms, when there are many of them and they are healthy, plough the earth and work the bottommost layer to the top without a plough, just by their own activity. It is easily understood why intelligent farmers and gardeners pay careful attention to the well-being of these worms. Recently they have even been bred and if there is a good increase, they are sold where they are needed.

What really are these worms? They belong to the earth. Each single one is like a small piece of the earth's intestine. He is not a complete animal, but only a small piece that crawls independently over and under the earth. His head and limbs are strewn, so to speak, over the intestine or sucked up by it. His task is to let the particles of earth gradually flow through him and by so doing, to give them new life and fertility.

Man either treasures something that is small or, if he does not understand it, looks at it with contempt. But the small can be great and the insignificant mighty. This is true of the earthworm. And so let us not turn up our noses when we see one, but let us rather take off our hats to him.

—Gerbert Grobmann

(Translated by Anne S. Barnes)

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