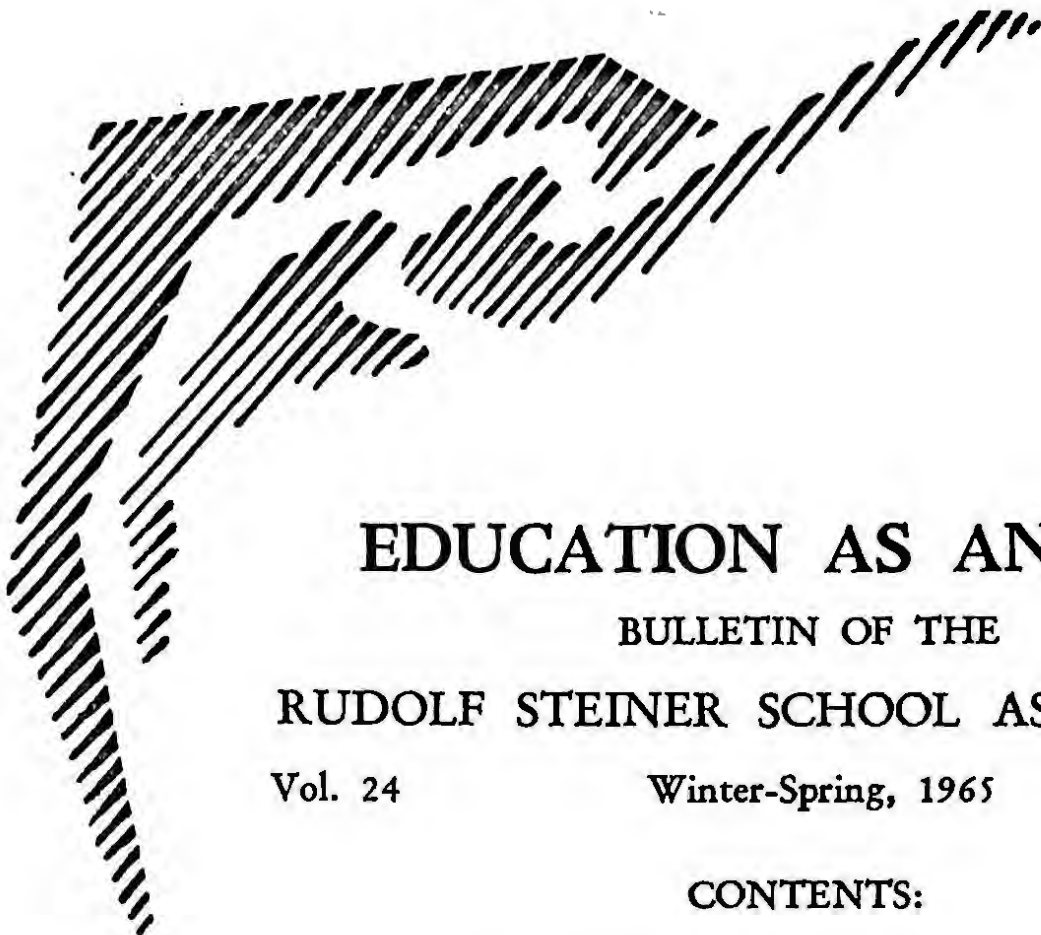




EDUCATION AS AN ART

BULLETIN OF THE RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

Vol. 24

Winter-Spring, 1965

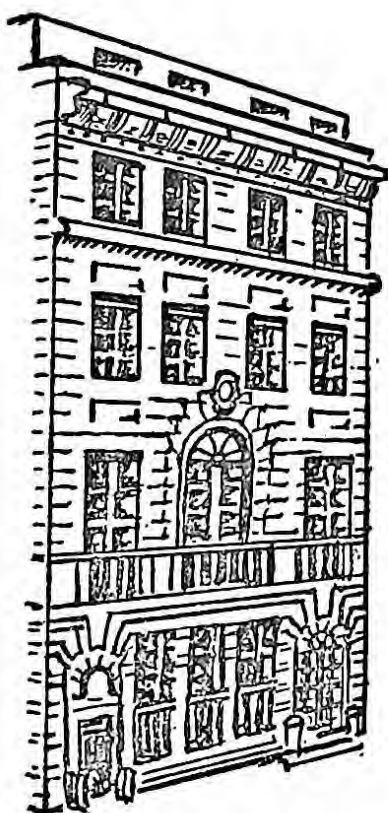
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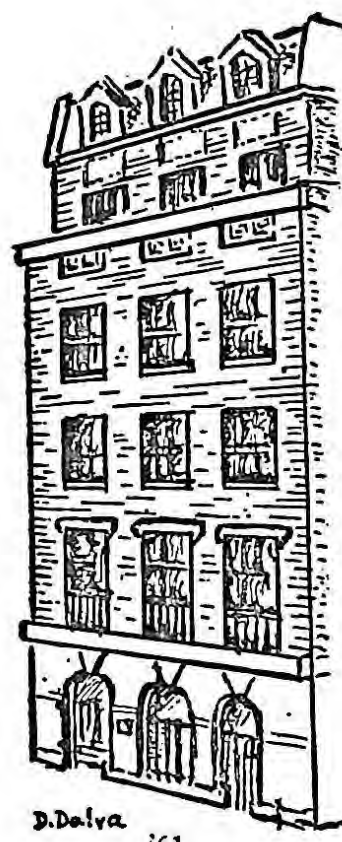
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A SPECIAL ISSUE

To review the past, to take note of our strengths and shortcomings in the present, to look with grateful confidence towards the future, the Rudolf Steiner School Association has with pleasure joined the Fathers' Association of the school in bringing out this special number.



*Lower School
79th Street*



D. Dalva '61

*High School
78th Street*

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY EDUCATION AS AN ART?

Modern education is based upon scientific thinking, experimental in principle. The behaviour of the human beings who are to be educated is studied, analyzed, compared with that of others, and certain behaviour patterns are discovered. Then certain methods of teaching are applied and certain results are achieved. Since new ideas are always popping up, and since the possibilities are unlimited, there is an unending atmosphere of business and importance. The modern educator goes about his task with the same sincere determination with which the scientist goes about working out a new mechanism.

The education based upon spiritual science, however, recognizes the human being as a spiritual entity. To the teacher the child is not a complex mechanism with intricate reflexes; he is a divine creation.

He is a creation who if neglected will not survive. He is a creation whose physical manifestation is but a vessel for his soul and spirit. Just as a fine work of art is the creation of a human being, a child is the creation of divine forces, of the spiritual world. A work of art can be compared to a child in so far as it is a creation out of the spirit of man. A machine is a creation out of the pure intellect of man.

The child, therefore, can be considered as a work of art with the world spirit as its creator. As teachers or parents we are destined, or one might say we are privileged, to be the world-creator's lowly servants.

If it is true, therefore, that the child is a work of art in the process of being created, education can only be an art and never merely a science. The painter at work at his painting submerges or lives with his entire being in his creation and thus finds harmony and balance of forms and colors; and thus the teacher must live with his entire being in God's creation, if he is to be an artist rather than a scientist.

—WILLIAM HARRER

HISTORY OF THE EDUCATIONAL MOVEMENT AND THE SCHOOL

It was in September, 1919, upon the initiative of Emil Molt and under the leadership of Rudolf Steiner, that the first Waldorf School opened its doors in Stuttgart, Germany. Emil Molt founded the school primarily for the children of workers in the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory. He entrusted every detail as to faculty, curriculum, methods to Rudolf Steiner, who selected the entire staff of teachers and gave to them special pedagogical training.

In January, 1928, the Quarterly of the Rudolf Steiner Educational Union* stated:

"A small group of Americans interested in writings and lectures on education as exemplified primarily in the Waldorf School, Stuttgart, undertook to draw attention to these ideas and give them currency on this side of the Atlantic."

The second issue of the Quarterly reports progress:

"Mrs. Virginia Birdsall, who has been an unusually successful teacher and school executive for a number of years, has opened a small school in New York City where she will endeavor to apply the principles and methods laid down by Dr. Steiner. Mrs. Birdsall is very modest about her venture which at present comprises only two small classes in a single classroom, but all who have followed her previous career and have seen her turn aside from flattering invitations to continue in the main stream of American progressive education because she felt impelled to the more difficult role of initiator of a new sort of school, will watch her effort with confident assurance of success. The Rudolf Steiner Educational Union is in full sympathy with her initiative. The little school may be visited at 111 East 39th Street."

In 1929, the year of the crash which introduced the depression, many private schools were forced to close. However, the faculty of the Rudolf Steiner School, now 10 members, realizing the importance of this beginning, accepted low salaries, and at one point they voluntarily cut even these in half.

There followed a decade of hardships, address changes, growth, and, most important, insight through experience.

The position of the Waldorf pedagogy is stated in April, 1940:

"These methods are not experimental, for they have been used since the forming of the Waldorf School in 1919. Dr. Steiner said at that time: 'The principles of the Waldorf School are in no sense revolutionary . . . There is no desire to cast everything aside and imagine that the only possible thing is something radically new. The aim is rather to investigate the inner forces now ruling in the nature of man in order to be able to take them into account in the sphere of education and thereby to find a true place in the social life for the human being in body, soul and spirit. For education has always been a concern of social life and still is so at the present time. It must be a social concern in the future as well.'"⁽¹⁾

* Forerunner of *Education as an Art*.

1) *Education as an Art*, Volume 1, Number 1

The original Waldorf School in Stuttgart had prospered, having passed an enrollment of 1,000 in 1928. Other schools in other countries had opened.

Then in 1938 the Nazis closed the German Waldorf Schools, and they were not opened again until after the war. The attitude of the occupation authorities toward the Waldorf schools gives an indication of the reason for the strong Nazi opposition to them and one aspect of their importance in post-war Germany.

Dr. Earl McGrath, U.S. Commissioner of Education, states in reference to the Waldorf Schools in Germany:

"The Waldorf Schools which I had an opportunity to observe when I was in Germany seemed to me to cultivate the traits of independence and respect for the rights of others which we in the United States so much prize. The emphasis on citizen participation in the activities of the community impressed me. I am therefore of the opinion that anything that can be done to keep the Rudolf Steiner Schools in operation on an efficient basis will be a contribution to the development of democracy in Germany."⁽²⁾

The schools in the United States cooperated with the Waldorf Schools Fund, Inc. in sending more than \$100,000 in relief to aid the European schools during the postwar period. About fifty Waldorf schools were then in existence in Europe and the United States, while today over seventy are reported throughout the world.

In 1944 a major move was made by the Rudolf Steiner School in New York. The acquisition of the East 79th Street property made possible another phase of development. Moderately large classes were possible; space for some of the important extras, such as shop, cafeteria and library, was found. Of great importance was the easy access to Central Park.

The most recent picture of the school appeared in the spring issue of *Education As An Art* of 1961, when the eight American Schools were described and the international scope was presented. "When the traffic signal changes and the flow of traffic comes to a screeching halt, a long rope chain is pulled across Fifth Avenue. Holding on tightly to the jouncing loops of rope are the 25 or so Nursery children of the Rudolf Steiner School on their daily pilgrimage to the open spaces of Central Park. They will be followed shortly by a second rope of the same size, the voices bubbling a little louder: the Kindergarten children. More sedate lines of older children, two by two, hurry after the little ones, mischief quite evidently held in only long enough to reach the grass and rocks of the park. Anyone visiting the park around eleven will hear the sounds of joyful playing emerging from behind bushes and trees or see an important game of baseball going on in the open fields. Fortunate indeed are the children and teachers of the school to be so close to beauties of nature within the center of the busiest section of New York City. Into the building each morning tumbles a fair cross-section of the city's children. Some have travelled over an hour by train, subway and bus. The clanging of fire engines, sirens of police cars

2) Bulletin of the Waldorf Schools Fund

and the honking of impatient taxis throb against the walls of the building, but healing forces are at work within to protect and help the children in overcoming the nervous tension and distraction which beset them. The artistic element in teaching, which speaks to the whole child, to his heart and will, and not merely to his head and nervous energy, is of utmost help. For this reason the school has sought to foster a genuine artistic life in every class and individual. An important place is assigned throughout the twelve school years to painting, modelling, choral speaking, singing, orchestra and eurythmy. Everything is done to develop the imagination and the sense of beauty. The daily lesson is started with a morning verse spoken in unison by the class and class teacher, creating within the child an attitude of true reverence toward man and the universe."

A second building on East 78th Street was purchased in 1956 to house a high school. The problems of adolescents and college entrance had to be encompassed by the view of a new art of education.

The Rudolf Steiner School in New York City has carried multiple responsibilities, in addition to the problems of its location in the city. It has, as the first Waldorf School in the United States, been host to many professional visitors who wished to see theory in practice. It is a matter of concern to the school that it lacks time and personnel to be of adequate assistance to those groups in various parts of the country who are working toward new Waldorf schools.

In the contemporary scene the images of progressive and traditional education wage war for acceptability among educators and the public. The Rudolf Steiner School is in the vanguard of a different concept, based upon the principle that a man shares with all humanity something special which makes him more than a super animal and that it is the responsibility of educators to seek and serve those qualities which best contribute to the fullest development of the human being.

*"Nature makes of man merely a creature of the kingdoms of nature, Society makes him into a being who acts according to law, but only he himself can make himself into a free being. Human individuals, with the moral ideas belonging to their nature, are the presupposition of a moral world-order."**

Now there are graduates of the Rudolf Steiner School who have finished college. Evidence of the quality of the academic education comes back to the school as reports from alumni touch on the special aspects of their early education which have helped them in their college and post-college years.

Eight Waldorf schools are now serving children in the United States. Although they have grown from a common root, each school is individual in its character. However, the common objectives of the education remain; the techniques include the treatment of each child so that his school experiences grow within him and become a source of strength upon which his future development will be built. The Rudolf Steiner School in New York is on its way to fulfill the need of a "new art of education." Although as much still remains to be done as has already been accomplished, there can be no question that the effort is fully justified.

—RICHARD JOHNSON

* Rudolf Steiner, *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*.

AN IDEA ON WHICH TO BUILD

We are everywhere faced with the breakdown of human values. Efforts to halt the tide by applying pressures from outside are doomed to failure in the long run. Only by helping the individual find his own creative strength and moral integrity will we have made a positive contribution. This has always been the task of education, but the fact that we are where we find ourselves today is proof that education is in urgent need of renewal.

There is no lack of concern, no lack of goodwill. There are devoted teachers, able administrators. The need is for the educational ideas, the basic insight.

Rudolf Steiner's contribution was to open the way to a knowledge of man as body, soul and spirit and to show how these three aspects interact in childhood. Spirit, soul and body are one in early childhood. Spirit and soul are absorbed in the work of forming and fashioning the body to an instrument for the individual's use in later life. Consciousness is at a minimum; activity predominates. The child learns by identification; he imitates everything around him. This is the time to teach through the power of example, through the right ordering of the child's environment, through creative play. All premature intellectualization, all forms of argument and appeals to the child's judgment weaken his vitality for later life. They draw the forces of soul and spirit too soon away from their work in the body and open the door to nervous disorders, psychological insecurities and lack of physical endurance in adult years.

Change of teeth at about six years marks the conclusion of the first, intensive period of physical development. Not all the energies which were absorbed in the work on the organism are now required for this task. Some, especially those which Steiner characterizes as forces of soul, can be spared for a new kind of learning. Imagination awakens. Feelings begin to emancipate themselves from bodily processes. The child is ready to learn through pictures, stories, drama, music, rhythm. He seeks an authority which he can revere and follow. Whereas it was the body as a whole which was worked through and individualized during the first years, it is now especially the circulation and breathing which have to be harmonized and brought to their normal, individual rhythm to serve as a healthy physical basis for the emotional life in later years. The capacity for judgment is either secured or damaged at this stage of life. This is the age — of the elementary school child — when Steiner advocates that all subject matter be presented so that it appeals to the artistic sense natural to this phase of development. Mathematics, science, the humanities, all knowledge *can* be introduced through the imagination. To direct one's teaching prematurely to the abstract intelligence is to stunt the creative powers of the soul.

Puberty marks the conclusion of the second period of development. Still other energies, which were absorbed in the work on the circulation, the nervous and glandular systems, are now gradually set free and are at the disposal of the individual consciousness. These are what Rudolf Steiner calls spiritual energies: the capacity to generalize, to think in logical terms, individualized sense perception, the capacity for personal love and an enthusiasm for the ideal. Now the

task of the teacher is to show the child how to *know* what he has *imitated*, and what he has *felt* in previous years. The teacher's authority is now his mastery of the subject, no longer his personal relationship with the child.

Traditionally, man comes of age at twenty-one. This is the time when his own individuality, his ego — a spiritual entity, independent of inheritance and the conditioning influence of his environment — is able for the first time to come to conscious expression, to take hold of the physical and the psychological organism which have been prepared for it, and to make use of them as its instrument.

The knowledge that man is a threefold being, comprising body, soul and spirit, and the realization that his development takes place in three unfolding stages culminating in the physiological achievements of the change of teeth and of puberty and in the spiritual coming of age at twenty-one make it possible to establish a curriculum which is in fundamental harmony with the evolving child himself. The education of the early years is primarily through the body, appealing to the child's will through imitative activity. In the following phase, education is directed primarily to the soul, to the psychological responses, and appeals through imagination to the feelings which are in process of individualization. After puberty, education is concerned in the first place with spiritual capacities and the appeal is through conceptual thought to the ego which is struggling to find itself within the emotions and the bodily instrument.

If one works *with* the laws of human development, the conscious individual emerges in his own time in full possession of both physical and psychological capacities. He is an integrated unity with them and is able to act, to feel, and to think, out of his own, individual, creative nature.

—HENRY BARNES

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENCE

I. A Parent

— Almost any school can "teach" a subject . . . impart knowledge to a child. Rare is the school which creates in the student a *desire* to learn. Yet that to me is one of the most impressive facets of the Rudolf Steiner School as I know it. Such an instilled desire to learn creates an inspiring atmosphere in the classroom and results in one of the most delightful vicious circles I can imagine: the teacher inspires the students to learn; the students' enthusiastic response arouses the teacher to even greater effort. This atmosphere permeates the entire school to the extent that it is visible to even the most casual visitor. What fortunate parents we are to have our children at the Steiner School, to know that they will grow into better educated, more complete adults.

RICHARD M. BRADSHAW

II. A Visitor and Observer

— I have visited a great many Rudolf Steiner schools in Europe. I have attended some of the children's classes and monthly festivals, have talked to the pupils and to the teachers. Everywhere and every time I have been impressed by the happy atmosphere in these schools, by the free and yet courteous rela-

tions of the students with their teachers. One can well understand that the Hitler regime forbade Waldorf education in Germany. The Waldorf schools laid too much stress on the education of a free individual who could think for himself and feel compassion for other human beings. As soon as the Hitler regime was down, Rudolf Steiner schools began to spring all over Western Germany; in the post-war chaos some of the officers of the occupying armies said of them: "Here are islands of hope amidst an ocean of despair."

It is not only the dedication of the teachers to their educational task that makes Waldorf schools outstanding. It is the method of education inaugurated by Rudolf Steiner and based on a deep understanding of the child's nature and its changes at different ages. I wish the quality of this method were better understood at a time when our whole system of education passes through a crisis and new ways are sought to prevent the deterioration of the human being.

—SONIA TOMARA CLARK

III. RUDOLF STEINER EDUCATION: a father's view

— No greater pedagogical need exists today than Rudolf Steiner's avowed purpose for Anthroposophy — to lead "the spiritual in the human being to the spiritual in the universe." Such a direction — more than dogma, law, psychiatry, and moral injunction — if thoughtfully considered, becomes the ablest of humanist and moral agents.

Steiner education seeks not to "fill up" but to elicit — most often through its inductive methods — a young person's deepest inward potential, the most authentic voice of his *Weltinnerraum*. It seeks not to prepare him for a prescribed college or a prescribed vocation, but first to prepare him to know himself, to know what are his private resources in all their discrete forms. But it is not subjective or solipsistic, like so many educational methods since Dewey. It wants *whole* men, and asks always that a person confront the abundant universe — allowing *it* to be *itself*, to impress and create him through wisdom in *its* laws and *its* logos.

Our modern literary tradition — Kafka, Camus, Faulkner, and Sartre — is often a frightful and sad tale of increasing alienation and deracination, of men forced into strange skins and deep burrows, of man spiritless and bankrupt, of man made stranger to himself and to his world by mass thought, apathy, racy living, gaudy objects, and dehumanizing materialism. These authors did not imagine such a world. It is here. I know of no pedagogy which seeks with such joy and firm purpose, or which can boast such rich fruit in its drawing upon those inalienable resources — man's body, his soul, his spirit — to counteract the separations and confusions of this moment. The children of the Rudolf Steiner School *are* its fruits: joyous, open, disciplined yet free, curious, will-ing, preferring the rare to the common but encouraged to discover the rare in the common, and — as one fine teacher has put it — "simmering in their own rich juices."

The child is father to the man. We who have shared the educating of our children with the devoted teachers of the Rudolf Steiner School trust they will be rich men.

—DR. NATHAN LYONS
English Department
Hunter College, New York

IV. A Chairman of the P.T.A.

— I am being asked to write this paragraph at a particularly fortunate time, one when I can look back upon a two-year term as Chairman of the PTA of the Rudolf Steiner School. I think that for me to be able to say that I have received very much more than I have given in these last two years is perhaps the most descriptive single statement that one could make about what the School has to offer parents as well as children.

The Rudolf Steiner School is so much more than an attractive physical plant in which children learn in a special way. It has within it a spirit of warmth, devotion and reverence for wholesome, genuine values which cannot help but be contagious. I think that all parents who have had any close contact with the school have come away with a feeling of closeness to it and to their children which they never had expected. For it is sometimes in observing the *doing* aspects of the school that one learns to appreciate the principles upon which the school is built. The look of genuine affection which lighted the faces of both my child and her teacher when they met after a two months' absence from one another told me more about the relationship which can exist through the eight-year class teacher system than anything I could read.

This "contagion of spirit" has manifested itself over and over again to me in the projects to which parents have given time and effort so lovingly as a token of their feeling about the school. I think that such a relationship between school and parent is perhaps one of the greatest forces which a child can feel in strengthening his own attitudes toward education and life.

—HELEN BROWN
(Mrs. Roderick Brown)

V. Various remarks of recent Alumni

. . . My two years at Steiner changed me as a person. I became more clear thinking, more responsible, and less inhibited in my basic outlook on life. At Steiner I was made to speak in front of people, and now I find this relatively easy.

* * *

. . . The faculty of the Steiner School possessed a rare admixture of moral concern and intellectual flexibility, which gave the student a mature and gentle environment for mental and spiritual activity. My years at the school will always be thought of with warmth and deep appreciation.

* * *

. . . My intellectual inspiration has come from college, yet somewhere I learned to think for myself, which is more than I can say for some people here who were better prepared.

. . . I found that my preparation was adequate, I would even say ample.

* * *

. . . Eighteen years ago I was enrolled in the Rudolf Steiner Kindergarten. There were eight fruitful years in the elementary school before I entered the second high school class to graduate. During my years in high school I began to realize that the education we were receiving was unique. After graduation I continued in the highly specialized field of chemical engineering, and came into contact with a great number of students who had been educated in other schools. As I learned more about my classmates' past educational experiences, I rapidly came to the realization that much of the uniqueness of the Steiner education lay in the dedication of the teachers. This dedication was never confined to a single subject, and its aim was the development of the individual. The graduate of the Rudolf Steiner School is a well developed human being, capable of handling any human problem with understanding and compassion.

* * *

. . . In intellectual growth the danger arises of a gradual enfeebling of imaginative faculties. I think the Rudolf Steiner education combats this problem in an excellent way by an early study of fairy tale and myth, and through a continual nourishment of aesthetic sensibilities.

* * *

NOTES BY THE REGISTRAR

"At least I've been able to *see* the answer to my first question," the mother said smiling, as she came into the office for her first interview. She had sat waiting in the high airy hall, which was lit by the three French arched windows at the top of the sweeping marble stairs. The hall is a busy place, and her head moved back and forth, watching lines of children fairly bouncing down the stairs and out; down and outdoors, in and up again, fresh and rosy with the wind and the sun and the snow of their morning recess in Central Park.

As the woman looked about her in the lull, her interest was caught by the burst of bright paintings on the bulletin boards, the unusual wood-carvings, sculpture and handwork in the showcase. They give a warmth, a homely reality, to the mansion near Fifth Avenue. Here one may enter and feel a certain at-homeness and this is the way it is in the 72 Rudolf Steiner schools of the world. Each one unique, but in every place there is an atmosphere pervading these schools which makes their different languages seem no barrier — at least, not until conversation starts! The very atmosphere becomes a language, telling of care for wholesome, happy children.

"I had wanted to ask, are you a *progressive* school? But the teachers in the hall were saying, "shhhh!" and so I see you're not!" the mother was continuing her interview. Perhaps she was too polite to say so, but neither are we a straitlaced, hands-off, prunes-and-prisms school. She could not have found us dishevelled, but neither are we shevelled. We do not want to be.

We want gentleness in our children and we want them natural, too. Gentleness arises in face of the wondrous, out of reverence. Dr. Steiner has pointed to reverence as the soil of growth and learning. But gentleness is not weakness: rather it becomes strength on a conscious leash.

"And what of sports? A man must grow strong, be able to fight for himself in this world. Arts and crafts? One can't afford to take time away from developing the competitive spirit," a father once said to me. Our hall can demonstrate a healthy give and take, and sometimes our "shh!" must be louder. But TV's violence shows us competitive spirit in the raw, wars and rumors of war its ugly ultimate. It may be necessary in today's world, — is it? but be aware! Better to grow the strength, ability, security and generosity to cooperate, to build together. In the kindergarten children are being taught this at the sand pile, with their block sky-scrapers. The soccer field teaches it, but so does the math lesson, the Cladny experiment. So does the persevering effort to get that knitting needle through the loop of wool, the digging deep with chisel to fashion a free-form bowl. Strength, with integrity, with care, and sharing it all together.

Our hall is a busy place which reflects the hum of the seasons' rhythms. A Christmas Fair is one of its high points, full of wreath and holly and cheery greeting, an exchange of scholarship help for handmade gifts and toys. Before the Fair, St. Nicholas has moved in portly majesty through the hall bearing golden nuts for goodness and apples for effort, with saucy Ruprecht prancing behind, swishing his reprimanding whip. It has happened that Mr. Barnes, returning to his deserted desk, has found on it a golden nut!

For 2 or 3 September days the hall is witness to the wailing of several inveterate home lovers, new to the Kindergarten, strange to the joys of group work. But soon they take their place in the march of tiny soldiers on a long rope of loops, trudging to the Needle, to the Rock; up the hill of Algebra, to the campaigns of Latin and French IV.

Suddenly the hall is filled with big boys — men, straight and tall — young women! No illusion this; they are alumni returning for their annual party. Sixty or so gather to share experiences of their many colleges, travels and jobs; several bearded ones, young women, enthusiastic youth. They speak with a clean, clear-sighted naturalness. One, an honor student at Yale, receives a joshing. Enrolled in Chinese studies, he has been invited by the Peace Corps to a post in India. "Wrong language, Jim," his classmates laugh. Another is describing differences. "Yes, at first you have to get used to another sort of schedule — no Main Lesson, no subject blocks — and new approaches. The first few months aren't easy," he says, "but then you catch on and realize you have a big advantage, coming from Rudolf Steiner. Others get lost in the different subjects and in the details, but *we* connect things. We've learned to see it whole." Wholeness, the greatest possible wholeness, that's an aim. And each child like a rosy sound apple, juicy and firm inside, going out into the world bearing its bundle of brown bursting seeds!

—ANNE STOCKTON

THE OTHER SCHOOLS IN THIS COUNTRY
WORKING WITH THE PEDAGOGY OF RUDOLF STEINER

Garden City	<i>Waldorf School of Adelphi College Garden City, New York</i>
Honolulu	<i>Mohala Pua School Niu Estates Subdivision Honolulu, Hawaii</i>
Kimberton	<i>Kimberton Farms School Phoenixville, Pennsylvania</i>
Los Angeles	<i>Highland Hall School 11615 Riverside Drive North Hollywood, California</i>
Sacramento	<i>Sacramento Waldorf School 3600 Fair Oaks Boulevard Sacramento, California</i>
Spring Valley	<i>Green Meadow School Hungry Hollow Road Spring Valley, New York</i>
Wilton	<i>High Mowing School Wilton, New Hampshire</i>

THE RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

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Editor: Ruth Pusch

Treasurer: Rose Richter

Membership in the Association, including the quarterly Bulletin,
is \$3.00 per year. Single copies of the Bulletin, 35¢ each.
