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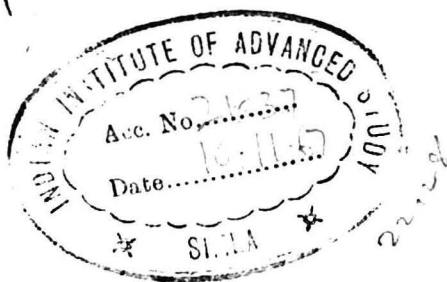
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**To You Who Stand on the Threshold
of a Teaching Career**

THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED

Dare not to enter, if you love not teaching,
For the way is steep and rugged is the road.
Thorns and thistles strew the path ; but
Fragrant blossoms bloom between
To cheer you on !

Wealth and Fame as the world knows them
Lie not this way ; but
Yours is the thrill of conquest :
Victory over ignorance and superstition—
Twin enemies of a Nation's progress.

Here no trumpets sound, no chariots wait,
No golden decorations are decreed ; but
Yours is the joy of moulding our youth :
Of rousing the indolent, cheering the plodder,
Steadying the unstable, encouraging the eager.

Dark is the night and dreary the day,
Obstacles beset you all the way ; but
Yours is the pride of kindling the fires
That in later years shall banish
Darkness for ever from our land.

This is your reward !

A. P. P.

INTRODUCTION

This is not a book on psychology, but about psychology. Hence, it will not deal so much with the principles of psychology as with their application.

Another point which must be stressed at the very outset is the desire of the writer to effect a close co-operation between teachers and parents. If we believe, as psychologists would have us to, that the child must be treated as a whole, it would be foolish to expect good results if teachers and parents do not work in close harmony, in order to get the best results out of the child. It is with this view that some questions end with a few notes to parents, explaining the teacher's attitude towards their children, and showing how parents can help the teacher to achieve the end in view.

Wherever possible, examples have been given to illustrate the principles of psychology; and the stories that follow some of the answers are intended to encourage teachers and parents to apply them freely in everyday life. All the stories narrated in the book are actual incidents from school life.

PRACTICAL PSYCHOLOGY

For Teachers and Parents

Question 1: What shall I gain by reading this book?

The other day, I telephoned to a caterer asking him to provide lunch for fifteen people. He agreed, took down the order, settled the price, and cut off. I had to ring him up again. You may wonder why! He wondered too! But if that caterer knew his job, he would not have wondered. For he had forgotten to ask me what kind of people he was to cater for: (1) whether they were vegetarians or non-vegetarians, (2) to what community they belonged, and (3) if any special courses were to be prepared.

On the first day of school, teachers are faced with a problem similar to that of the caterer. They cannot just open the book and start teaching. They must know what kind of children they have to deal with, and how they can get the best out of each one of them. It does not need psychology to tell us that children differ from one another; commonsense and experience of life prove that only too well. The trouble really is that teachers are so intent on teaching their subject that they forget entirely about the children.

You have probably heard the story of the tutor who had to teach John arithmetic. It is popularly believed that if the tutor knows arithmetic, *that* is enough. But experiments in education show that the best results cannot be obtained unless the tutor knows both arithmetic and John. That is, he must know to

teach arithmetic as well as to apply his teaching to the particular boy in hand, namely, John. If John is smart, the tutor will have to use a method of teaching quite different from what he would have to use if John were dull.

The same principle is applied when teaching in the classroom. Every child is different. Of course, we must not imagine that there is no similarity at all. This would be a gross exaggeration. There is no doubt that children of more or less the same age have many things in common; but if the teacher is to achieve the best results, each child must be studied carefully so that individual needs are catered for as far as possible. This is what we shall talk about in this book.

Besides the general principles which hold good for all children, we shall deal with the various individual differences that must be watched for and treated accordingly. Let us go back to the example of the caterer. If my friends were vegetarians with South Indian tastes, or non-vegetarians with Western tastes, my caterer would not only need to be a good cook but would also need to have experience in cooking the special dishes required for each of these communities. So also with teachers. They must not only know the general principles of teaching but they must also be acquainted with a practical knowledge of how to deal with various types of children which are found in the classroom. So far, for the benefit that is to be derived from this book by the teacher.

Parents : As for parents, this book will acquaint them with the methods being used by teachers in modern schools, and will endeavour to give practical hints to enable parents to co-operate closely with the

work of the teacher, so that the child may derive the greatest benefit.

There is another point about which many parents would perhaps be surprised to learn. Ten years ago, physical education and medical inspection were sorely neglected, if not totally unknown, in schools. Today, both these factors play an important part in the progress of education. People have now come to realise that mental development is closely connected with the physical development of the child. Hence, Government Inspectors and educationists insist that the school teacher should keep a close watch on the physical defects and shortcomings of children. But if parents are not aware of this—and many parents are not—the following incidents may frequently recur :—

When teachers just out of the Training College go to school to take up their first job, they are keen on applying the principles they have been taught. A thorough survey of the pupils results in these discoveries : Little Keki has a squint ; little John is hard of hearing ; and Govind is short-sighted. Following the instructions of the professors in the Training College, these enthusiastic teachers sit that evening and painstakingly write letters to the respective parents. Back come the answers next day : (1) “Keki has had a squint from the day he was born. You ought to know that nothing can be done about it.” (2) “Whoever told you that John is hard of hearing ? Perhaps you speak too low or there is too much noise in your class.” (3) “Did you say Govind was short-sighted ? Are you a teacher or an oculist ? I do wish you would mind your own business in future !”

Such an attitude on the part of parents would damp the spirits of the most ardent teachers. Fresh from college, they had great plans of how they would put into practice the principles they had been taught.

This book is intended to bring about a better understanding between teachers and parents. Parents mostly believe that their task is over and their responsibility ceases when they send their children to school and pay their fees regularly. It may be too much to ask parents to take the lessons of their children or see that they do their home-work; but it is certainly not too much to expect them to make some effort to co-operate with the teachers who try to do their best for the children placed in their charge. Ultimately, it is the child who suffers when parents and teachers fail to co-operate, and it is certainly more to the interest of the parents that this state of affairs should be remedied.

Question 2: What should be the aim of education?

In the old days, education was considered to be a preparation for life. Too late, educationists came to learn that education as a preparation for life was a wasteful process; for when the children reached the life for which they were prepared, the knowledge they had gained was out of date. Modern life moves very swiftly, and progress is very rapid. Hence, it is foolish to prepare children for life as adults and expect them to be successful.

Some teachers and parents, thinking on similar lines, make children memorize difficult extracts from classical prose and poetry when the children are not

at all in a position to understand or enjoy what they are memorizing. Their argument is: "Let the children memorize these difficult definitions, and gems of poetry and prose; when they grow up they will understand and use them in the proper way." To which an American author has replied: "As well fill an infant's stomach with beef-steak, for when he grows up he will digest it!"

Today, educationists have laid down that education aims at equipping the child for *living*. They mean, and rightly so, that the child should be taught to live as a child, the boy and girl to live as a boy and a girl, the youth to live as a young man and a young maiden. For if they are taught to live their present lives well, the training must carry some benefit when they grow up to be men and women.

It is futile to try and prepare the child for manhood, or even a youth for adult life. They are not interested, because it is something too far away for them to realise its full value. They have a life of their own and they prefer to live for it and in it. That is why teachers must equip children for living, not merely prepare them for future life.

We must also remember that education is not simply the imparting of knowledge. Its aim is to develop the individuality of children in order to make them useful and responsible members of juvenile society.

In short, the aim of modern education is to make children good citizens as children, and not to prepare them for citizenship as adults. This is most easily done by extra-curricular activities which help to develop the initiative and organising ability of children.

No amount of teaching or classroom education can develop initiative or organising ability. On the other hand, it must be admitted that very few opportunities present themselves in the classroom for developing these qualities. Hence, the best way to do it is to encourage extra-curricular activities—sports, athletics, inter-school debates, socials, parent days, safety patrols, scouting, guiding, etc. Give the children opportunities for developing initiative, organising ability, and leadership, for learning to shoulder responsibilities and also for self-expression and self-assertion.

Education should lead to intelligent use of leisure as well as to ability to earn a living. Whereas the latter is fairly well attended to now-a-days, training in the proper use of leisure is still sadly neglected.

Much attention is now-a-days given to vocational education. It cannot be denied that education should foster the ability to earn a living; but what is sadly neglected in education, even today, is the intelligent use of leisure. Children should be taught how to occupy their leisure hours pleasantly, intelligently, and profitably. In directing children to the choice of hobbies, teachers should ensure that such occupation benefits the child without causing harm, annoyance or inconvenience to those around. Mere occupation of leisure hours should not be the aim in view. It is the intelligent use of leisure that yields pleasure and often profit as well.

Parents : If parents understand and hold the same views as the teacher on the aim of education, much more progress could be made in making boys and girls better equipped to face the battle of life when they leave school. For instance, many parents hinder

the proper development of their children by refusing to allow them to participate in extra-curricular activities such as excursions, school picnics, scout and guide camps, safety patrol duties, etc. This not only retards the training of the children for leadership and the shouldering of responsibility, but also makes them a target of ridicule for their school-mates.

Question 3 : What is meant by the playway in education ?

Educators of former days made learning more difficult for children, believing that it would train them better. The general idea was : "It does not matter much what you teach in school as long as it is difficult enough." Modern educators try to make learning as interesting as possible. Teachers are told to adapt the subject and the treatment of the topic to suit each class and, if possible, each individual. The subject matter is made as practical as possible and as true to life. For example, a lesson in money would be taught not by means of sums on the black-board but by getting the children to play at shopping and making them actually handle coins and materials for sale. Whenever children carry on an activity for its own sake and not as a means to some later result, they may be said to be "playing", but if they look to some result outside that activity, they are said to be working. Particularly in the lower classes, children have to be taught everything through the play method or at least through the practical method, that is, by seeing and doing things themselves.

Question 4: On the first day of school every year, when facing a new class, I always have a strange nervous feeling. There is a sort of tension in the room. Is there any way of getting over this?

Many books on *Public Speaking* give the following advice: Keep calm, be natural, etc. "It is all so easy to say but very difficult to do" is the remark of many readers of such books.

Here is some practical advice: The best way to keep calm is to keep busy. The war has shown very clearly that occupation is the best, and often the *only* antidote to fear or panic. Another sensible advice is: Don't face the class as a whole; the sea of faces is likely to upset your calm. Choose out any one child, preferably in the centre of the room, one whose face you like, and start addressing that child as if it were the only one in the room.

But more important than trying to overcome fear is to prevent it. There is only one way of doing this effectively: Plan out your work—plan it out so that you are kept busy keeping your children busy, for the chief thing is to keep the children occupied and interested. If you do this, the children will co-operate with enthusiasm.

Some teachers start the first period of the first day in class by telling the children a story. This is the easiest and safest way of keeping out trouble.

Whatever you do, *don't* frighten the children with the punishments that are in store for them, during the year, if they fail to obey your orders, or are slack in lessons or homework. Some teachers who do this, believe that it is better to give the impression of being

a very strict teacher, and in reality be a kind one ; but wiser teachers know that children are not as "simple" as they seem.

Question 5: You say, "Plan out the day's work. Keep the children occupied and interested and they co-operate with enthusiasm." In theory, this may sound well but is it not hard work putting it into practice? Merely getting the children to listen to me during lessons is difficult and tiring enough.

Your difficulty is a common one. It is but natural that if the children are to do only the listening, the lesson is going to be difficult and tiring for you, and all the more so for the children. Stop making the children do the listening, and let them do some talking while you do the listening. If children are allowed to speak and do, they learn better ; and when they are busy learning, discipline in the form of external control is hardly necessary. When children are interested in a lesson and allowed actively to participate in it, they are too interested in their own work to think of troubling the teacher or of being up to mischief. It reminds me of the slogan : "If an ass kicks, it can't pull, and if it pulls it can't kick." Moral : Get the ass to pull.

He Did the Job—You must have heard the story of the man who was driving a donkey-cart with a heavy load. The donkey refused to move an inch and the man tried all the tricks he knew : coaxing, shouting, beating ; but all were useless. Finally, a passer-by said to him: "Stop getting the donkey to try to do your work. Get it to do some-

thing for itself." The driver laughed at the idea. But the passer-by, taking a carrot from his basket, attached it to a small stick and kept it dangling in front of the donkey's nose. The donkey in trying to get at the carrot naturally moved ahead, but as the stick was fixed to the yoke, every step brought him no nearer to the carrot though it moved the cart ahead. The moral is easy : the donkey forgot that it was doing a job for its master; it was busy trying to do something for itself.

The trouble with most beginners in the teaching profession is that they want to be teaching all the time. They talk for the entire period and imagine that the children have gone away wiser for the lesson. But it has been no lesson at all—just a lecture ; for although the teacher teaches, it does not mean that the children learn.

Another major mistake which beginners make is to try to teach too much in one lesson. They cram in as much information as possible in the period of time allotted. They strive to inform and fail to teach. They usually sacrifice method at the altar of matter, by concentrating on knowledge while they neglect interest. To repeat : They teach, but the children don't learn !

Question 6 : What do you mean by the statement : " Although the teacher teaches, it does not mean that the children learn " ? Surely, if the teacher teaches, the children must learn. There can't be any difference between the two .

If there was no difference between the teacher teaching and the children learning, this book would not have been written. Many teachers would achieve

much more success if they stopped teaching and started getting the children to learn, or, to use a better phrase, if they started getting the children to teach themselves. Teachers can achieve this only if they know how to take advantage of the children's instincts. Today, every good teacher knows that the short cut to success in teaching is the proper and timely direction of the child's instincts.

Question 7: What instincts of the children should teachers appeal to during a lesson?

Lessons which teachers prepare for class use are usually arranged according to the five steps taught by Herbart, a great educationist. The five steps are:

- I. Preparation
- II. Statement of Aim
- III. Presentation
- IV. Recapitulation
- V. Application

In the *Preparation* stage, the teacher asks the children a few questions on matter which is known to them. Most of the children put their fingers up to answer these, and there is plenty of enthusiasm. If the questions are well chosen, that is, not too difficult or too easy, and if most of the children are asked to answer them, the class begins to feel a sense of power in their ability to use the knowledge they have gained in previous lessons. The children are also pleased that none of the questions are left unanswered; this creates a sense of confidence. It gives vent to the instinct of *self-assertion* or *display*. Slowly and skillfully the teacher leads the children by means of graded questions from the known to the unknown, that is,

leads up to a point when the children are faced with a question which they are unable to answer. That rouses their *curiosity*. Here is something which they don't know and they would certainly like to know.

Now comes the *Statement of Aim* in which the teacher promises to satisfy their *curiosity* in the course of the lesson. This stage is often omitted, and the teacher proceeds from the Preparation direct to the Presentation.

In the *Presentation* stage the teacher brings forth the new matter to be dealt with and presents the new knowledge, thus satisfying the instinct of *curiosity* which was aroused in the first stage of the lesson.

In the fourth stage, the teacher *recapitulates*, that is, revises the lesson in brief by means of rapid questions. At this stage the teacher again appeals to the children's instinct of *self-assertion*.

In the final stage of *Application* the teacher appeals to *imitation*, *self-assertion* and a variety of instincts depending upon the subject, the age of the children, and the type of children taught.

In the case of difficult lessons, especially in mathematics, the teacher may have to appeal to the *combative* instinct. This is in the nature of a challenge: "I have shown you how to work this type of sum. Now let me see you working out some more of the same kind. They are not easy but I think you can do them if you try hard enough." In the case of poetry, prose, history or even geography lessons, the teacher may appeal to the instinct of *self-assertion* or *display* when the children entertain their companions by recitations, dramatizations, etc. In the lower classes, the teacher generally makes use of the instinct of *play*,

and introduces games to apply the knowledge that has just been acquired. The *Application* stage usually takes the form of rhymes, songs, games or dramatization.

You will notice that throughout these five stages, teachers do their utmost to efface themselves from the lesson and make the children feel that they are learning by themselves. In the Preparation stage, the children are made to use their previous knowledge. In the Statement of Aim, their curiosity is roused. In the Presentation, their curiosity is satisfied. In the Recapitulation, they repeat what they have just learnt, and in the Application they put into practice the knowledge just gained.

Question 8 : What is meant by “sublimation” of the instinctive impulses ?

Instincts, though innate, are not fully developed at birth ; hence their crude tendencies can be sublimated by directing them into useful channels. For instance, the instinct of curiosity in its primitive state is an impulse to pry into anything and everything ; to ask endless questions, useful as well as useless, etc. This instinctive impulse in children to satisfy their curiosity by prying, can be sublimated, that is to say, children can be led to try and discover the secrets of nature instead of wasting their time on wanting to know useless details about their companions' and teachers' home lives, local scandals, gossip, etc.

It is not only useless to try and suppress the instinctive impulses of children ; it is often harmful. If an instinct cannot conveniently be sublimated, it can at least be substituted, or its force lessened by another instinct. Thus, when a little girl was in a fit

of temper due to the teasing of her brother, her anger was soon forgotten by rousing the child's curiosity in a new toy.

Parents : According to some psychologists, education consists entirely in the sublimation of instincts. This is true to a very great extent, and parents would do well to seek the co-operation of the teacher in this matter. If children become collectors of stamps, match-box labels, etc., their acquisitive instinct is satisfied; if not, they are likely to resort to stealing small articles from their companions and school-mates. If they are taught from an early age to take care of pets, they will develop a love for birds and animals and are not likely to give way to wanton cruelty to bird or beast. Children who are taught to recite well, sing, play musical instruments or dance, are able to satisfy their self-assertive instinct ; children not so equipped, tell dramatic lies, act stubborn, or defy the conventions of society in order to attract attention to themselves.

Question 9 : I read a remark in a book on successful teaching which said : "Interest yourself in the conditions which prevail in the homes of your pupils." I think the teacher should never pry into the home affairs of pupils. Do you agree with me ?

If by "home affairs" you mean gossip regarding personal matters, I certainly agree with you. But I don't think that is what the writer meant. You remember in the very beginning we agreed that there must be a frank and easy co-operation between teachers and parents and that the school and the home are not

two water-tight compartments but just one continuous environment in which the child is to be developed.

If you are to achieve success as a teacher it is important that you interest yourself in the conditions that prevail in the homes of your pupils. Remember I do not say in the home affairs of your pupils but in the conditions that prevail in their homes.

I agree that it is difficult to find out about conditions in the homes of pupils without showing undue curiosity or appearing inquisitive. A friend of mine used to adopt a very effective method of doing this. On the first composition day, he would ask the pupils to write an essay or a letter to a pen-friend, describing "A Sunday at Home," in which the pupils were asked to describe family activities and other interesting sidelights of life at home.

He Slept in Class—Douglas who sat at a desk in the front row dozed almost every day during the English lesson. I thought there must be something wrong with my teaching, but I noticed that he dozed even during poetry lessons, when everybody else eagerly participated in the lesson. "There must be something wrong," I said to myself, and I wrote a note to his mother.

When she came the next morning, I said to her, "What time does Douglas go to bed at night?" "Eleven o'clock," she replied, "I make him study after supper from nine to eleven." "And what time do you wake him up in the morning?" I asked. "Four o'clock," she said, "then he studies from four to six."

I heaved a deep sigh of pity. My sympathies were all with Douglas. I turned to the mother.

"Who helps him in his lessons at home?" "I do," came the reply, "and I have noticed that he often does not seem to understand what has been taught in class," she continued. "No wonder," I exclaimed, "for he sleeps the whole day in the class, at least he does for nearly the whole of my period. You know," I went on, "you are paying pretty high fees for him to attend my class. You surely don't want him to use that valuable time making up for lost sleep!"

The mother thanked me for this advice, and Douglas had no more naps in class.

Question 10 : What is Intelligence ?

Intelligence has been defined in various ways. Some psychologists say that intelligence is just commonsense. Stern defines intelligence as the ability to adapt oneself to new situations. In general, we call those children intelligent who can adapt themselves easily to new standards, follow instructions quickly and correctly, who profit by experience, etc.

Wisdom is Intelligence plus Organised Knowledge.

Thus, if highly intelligent children are too lazy to learn, or are not given a chance of acquiring or organising knowledge, they will remain children of poor wisdom. On the other hand, children of low intelligence may appear wise or learned by increasing and organising their knowledge.

Professor Whitehead says : "You cannot be wise without some basis of knowledge ; but you may easily acquire knowledge and remain bare of wisdom." In other words, knowledge is the mere memorization of

facts, but wisdom is the added power to use that knowledge in the proper way and at the proper time.

Question 11: Can native intelligence be increased?

Although the native intelligence of a child develops till about the age of 16, the degree of intelligence in that child always remains at the same level. The intelligence of children may be said to develop in much the same way as their height.

We know that children develop in height as they grow in years till about the age of 18 for girls and 22 for boys; after that, their height remains stationary although their age increases. So also with intelligence. In average children, intelligence develops fairly steadily till about the age of 14; then the rate of development slackens, and intelligence generally stops developing about the age of 16.

Children with low intelligence stop development at the age of 14, average children at the age of 16, and children of high intelligence about the age of 19.

There is another point of similarity. Some grow tall, others remain short, depending on their individual innate physical characteristics. No amount of stretching exercises could appreciably increase the rate of development, or the final height reached.

So also with intelligence. Children generally maintain a certain rate of development in intelligence proportionate to their age, from early childhood till about the age of 16. No amount of teaching or learning can appreciably increase this rate of development or the final degree of native intelligence reached about the age of 16.

Evidence from intelligence tests indicates that the rate of development and the ultimate limit of intelligence is fixed at birth for each individual.

Note : Does this mean that grown-ups face the problems of life as ill-equipped as they did at the immature age of 16 ? Not at all. The problems of life are so complicated that mere native intelligence would be powerless to solve them. Familiarity with social customs, the advantage of schooling and adult training, the benefit of experience and knowledge gained from books and companions, all these help the adult to face the problems of life with confidence and to solve them effectively.

Question 12 : If intelligence cannot be increased, what use is it to send children to school ?

You might as well ask : "If height cannot be increased, what use is it to send children to the gymnasium ?" Just as height is not all that matters in the physical welfare of children, so also intelligence is not all that counts in the education of children.

Besides, you must not imagine that all children of high intelligence get on better in life than those of average or low intelligence. The mere possession of high intelligence is not the key to success in life. It is the use of that intelligence that brings success. Intelligence that is dormant is of no value, just as a boy with two hands is no better than a boy with one hand, unless he makes full use of both his hands. Now, schooling awakens the intelligence of children by arousing their instincts of curiosity and assertion, thus encouraging children to use their native intelligence to the fullest extent. For it should be noted that the

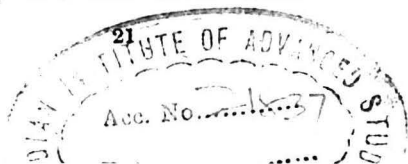
degree of intelligence used in any situation is governed very largely by the intensity of interest aroused. Thus, a child with low or average intelligence who is interested in model building will use his intelligence to the fullest extent and produce better results with a mechano set, than a child endowed with a high degree of intelligence but who is not interested in mechanical models.

There are other advantages in schooling. Although teachers cannot increase the intelligence of children they can increase their knowledge; and by showing children how to use that knowledge to the best advantage, teachers can help children to become wiser and more intellectual.

Experiments have brought to light another interesting fact: A pupil who has learned arithmetic can understand algebra more quickly than one who has not done arithmetic. So also a boy who has learned to repair his bicycle may be able to set aright a defect in his sister's sewing machine more easily than if he had never tampered with his bicycle before. In the same way, children who have been well educated are able to tackle the problems of life more easily and effectively than uneducated children, because they have learned to change "fact" into "faculty."

Question 13: What is meant by the advice, "Teachers should see that fact becomes faculty"?

It was Sir John Adams who defined intelligence as "applied thought" and used the phrase "fact becomes faculty." To understand this we must remember that although mind and knowledge are not the same thing, they are not even what some people



imagine as the "container" and the "contents." When we take in new knowledge we do not store it up somewhere in the mind, but we use it to develop the mind. Just as when we eat bread we do not store it up in the body for future use, but make it part of the body itself. The body benefits only when it assimilates the food taken in, and uses it for energy and the building of new tissues. So also the mind benefits when it assimilates the new facts and makes use of them, thereby turning facts into faculties, as food is changed into bodily energy.

Hence, teachers must not be content with aiding the children merely to collect new knowledge; they must teach the children how and when to use that knowledge and more important still, must give them *many* and *varied* opportunities for using the new knowledge, so that they get a better hold of it and become quite familiar with its use.

Parents : Parents can help very much by interesting themselves in what is taught to the children in school, by encouraging them to repeat and explain that knowledge at home, and also by giving them more opportunities for its practical use.

Let us take the case of nursery rhymes. If parents are interested, they will encourage the children to repeat the rhymes they have learnt in school and even to teach them to the younger children at home or in the neighbourhood. Children learning addition of money can be asked to help mother total up the bazaar expenses or dad's monthly expenses for dhotie, milk, bread, etc. It shows children that the school and the home are closely related, teaches them how to put new knowledge to immediate use (changing fact into

faculty), makes the work of the teacher easier by affording opportunities for practice, and gives the children the satisfaction that schooling makes them useful members of society, teaching them how to help in "running the home," so to say.

Question 14: What are the Laws of Learning? How are they applied to class-room teaching?

Thorndike mentions three major Laws of Learning :—

(1) *The Law of Effect.*—According to this law, if an action satisfies, it encourages repetition and induces learning; if it annoys, it discourages repetition and retards learning. Hence, before asking a child to do something, the teacher should make sure that the child is capable of doing it. This does not mean that only easy tasks must be given to the children; on the other hand, teachers must be careful not to expect the impossible from their pupils. Children who are given graded tasks, go from one success to another, and make rapid progress. In brief, nothing succeeds like success.

(2) *The Law of Frequency.*—The law of effect and the law of frequency work hand in hand. When we succeed in doing something, we like to repeat that action often; the oftener we repeat the action, the better we can do it. Children love repetition; but teachers must ensure that the repetition gives satisfaction to the learner. This can be done by introducing variety, for example, repetition can take the form of recitation, dramatization, question and answer, composition, etc.

(3) *The Law of Readiness.*—This is also called the law of preparedness. When children are prepared

for a particular lesson, they learn it with pleasure and profit; if they are taken unawares, or are forced to learn against their will, they learn little or nothing. Compulsion to learn often leads to disgust or dislike for a subject. This law proves the value of the Preparation stage in every lesson, which makes the children ready to receive the new knowledge. Trying to teach children who are not in readiness is like feeding children when they have no appetite; it not only fails to do good, but may even do harm.

So far, for the mental attitude of the learner; but learning also depends on the physical attitude or disposition of the child. A child who is comfortable and not distracted is disposed towards learning, whereas one who is uncomfortable or distracted is inattentive and not well-disposed to learning. The teacher should therefore do everything possible to remove the causes of discomfort and reduce distracting influences to the minimum.

Question 15: What is the difference between Attention and Interest?

There is such an intimate connection between attention and interest that Ross says, "they are merely different ways of looking at the same thing, like the two sides of a coin." McDougall says, "Interest is latent attention; attention is interest in action." Interest has often been called the mother of attention, and as such, interest begets attention.

Attention is defined as an intensified form of consciousness; and interest may be defined as readiness to be attentive. Hence, even when we are inattentive, due to distraction, discomfort, fatigue, etc., our

attention ceases but our interest in the subject still continues.

Attention can be *non-volitional*—sustained by direct instinctive or acquired interests, or *volitional*—sustained by an act of the will. The first is spontaneous, the second deliberate.

Interests are also divided into two classes: (1) natural or instinctive interest; (2) acquired interest. Children who like to draw have a natural interest in drawing. Here are two examples of acquired interest:

(1) Children who dislike drawing may acquire an interest in drawing because it helps them to do fretwork or embroidery; (2) It often happens that through frequent practice in drawing during their fretwork or embroidery activities, some children who originally had no liking for the subject now begin to like drawing and are interested in the subject for its own sake.

Natural and acquired interests differ in kind, not in intensity. They might be compared to the natural love of a mother for her offspring and that of a woman for her adopted child. Both children are likely to receive the same amount and intensity of love and affection. Acquired interests are like adopted children, once strangers or aliens, who have become, by close contact, as intimate as blood-relations.

One of the important aims of education is to increase and supplement the natural interests of children by the development of new, acquired interests.

Whatever concerns children is of interest to them. Thus for example, children are interested in learning about the working of a cycle pump, while a lesson on water pumps may bore them, although both are similar in function.

When teaching subjects which are not in themselves interesting, teachers should appeal to the children's instincts of curiosity, self-assertion, combat, or construction; teachers should avoid using the incentive of fear—fear of punishment, fear of failure, fear of public opinion etc.

Span of Attention : We speak of paying attention to an interesting lecturer for hours at a stretch; but experiments indicate that with most people, attention lapses every five or six seconds. Thus we are never attentive continuously, but only in spurts.

That is not all. It has been found that attention decreases in intensity in the course of a lesson, lecture or task, if special means are not used to keep it up. That is why, when the teacher does all the talking, the children begin to grow inattentive after about ten minutes, even though the subject matter is uniformly interesting. Monotony begets boredom, and inattention follows. If the teacher continues to do all the talking, the children become still less attentive because fatigue sets in; and when fatigue comes in through the door, attention steps out through the window.

Experiments show that short rest periods during a lesson prevent fatigue and help children to maintain attention at a high level throughout. It is also known that two short rest periods are better than one long one; and strange though it seems, children do more and better work if they are allowed short rest periods every half hour or so. Acting on this theory, some educationists advocated a short rest period every ten to fifteen minutes. This, however, resulted in much loss of valuable time. Then psychologists announced

that extensive experiments showed that a change of occupation could prevent inattention as efficiently as a short rest period could do, and without any loss of time. They stressed the value of using a variety of teaching methods and activities during a lesson.

In brief, class periods should be short ; and even in a lesson of thirty minutes, teachers should not keep talking continuously, but should plan their lesson in such a way that every five minutes or so there is a change of approach, and instead of imparting knowledge only through the ear, the teacher should show a picture and use the eye-gate, or get the children to copy a line from the blackboard, etc. Above all, teachers should strive to make the lesson interesting. "In interesting work, the effort of the children goes into the work ; in uninteresting work, the effort goes largely into the attending."

Obstacles to Attention.—Children generally grow inattentive when they are tired, and hence, periods should be arranged to suit the average child in the class. Inattention is also due to distraction, noise from the streets, from adjoining classrooms, movements in the corridor, frequent interruptions by persons bringing notices, etc.; bad ventilation, overheating, a chill atmosphere, or draughts of wind also cause inattention ; uncomfortable seats, overcrowding, or faulty arrangements of the pupils may have similar results.

Besides physical factors, intellectual ones also must be taken into account. If a lesson is badly prepared, not orderly in its arrangement, not interesting in its presentation, the children will not be attentive. A teacher cannot expect children to keep up attention

for a whole period if the teacher's voice is dull and monotonous, or if it is too loud or too soft. The teacher must suit the lesson to the children so as to keep up their attention, because when children don't understand, their attention wanders.

Question 16 : Can memory be improved ?

Psychologists have shown that retentiveness is a native quality of the brain which remains unchangeable throughout life and is affected only by bodily health. Mere exercise in rote learning cannot improve the memory. What can help is clear thinking, orderly arrangement, lively interest, and close attention. Burton Confrey says: "Interest is the mother of attention, and attention is the mother of memory; so that if we arouse interest in a subject, attention will develop and memory follow."

Memory is aided by various types of imagery: visual, auditory, etc. Children should, therefore, be encouraged to see, hear, touch and do. "Doing" entails muscular activity which, brings into play what in technical language, is known as kinaesthetic imagery; it is especially valuable because it requires concentration, and thus helps other forms of memory as well. For example, if a child is told to learn the word "kinaesthetic", the easiest way to remember its spelling is to look at the word (visual); repeat it aloud (auditory); write it down (kinaesthetic). Writing it down is generally considered the most effective method of memorizing and is very helpful in remembering spellings, and learning new words in foreign languages.

It is interesting to note that immediate memory or the ability to recall a thing soon after it is learnt is

weaker in children than in adults. That is why children find it difficult to repeat a message or reproduce a passage just learnt. On the other hand, the retentive memory or the ability to recall a thing some time after it is learnt, is better in children than in adults. Psychologists tell us that retentive memory reaches its maximum efficiency at the age of thirteen or fourteen.

Aids to memory :—

- (1) Create an *interest* in the subject-matter, and explain the value of memorizing it. Children always remember matter they are interested in, or which helps them in their daily work, better than subject-matter which they are not interested in, or which hardly comes of use in their daily work.
- (2) *Explain* the subject-matter till it is thoroughly understood. Children can memorize what they understand more easily and quickly. Rational memory is always better than mechanical memory.
- (3) *Arrange* the subject-matter to be learnt in some orderly way. Arrange it so that one point leads to the next.
- (4) Get the children to pay close *attention* to the matter being memorized. Three minutes of attentive memorizing is better than ten minutes of inattentive repetition.
- (5) *Spread* the period of memorizing. It is easier to memorize by using ten minute periods a day for three days, rather than a thirty-minute period all in one day.
- (6) Use the *mixed method* of memorizing.

There are three methods of memorizing : the part method, the whole method, and the mixed method. When learning a poem by the part method you memorize line by line, then stanza by stanza. Experiments show that this is a poor method, for a double effort is required : (1) to learn the stanzas and (2) to learn the links between one stanza and the next. The chief disadvantage, however, is that in the part method the meaning of the poem as a whole is not taken in and hence the memorization ceases to be intelligent or meaningful and becomes merely mechanical. In the whole method you repeat the whole poem at a stretch, every time. This method has been found more successful than the part method, up to a limit of 240 lines of poetry. This method, however, has one great disadvantage, especially when used with children. When children are faced with the task of memorizing a long poem, they are easily discouraged if they try the whole method. With most children, the part method is better than the whole method, because the joy of achievement which results from mastering the first stanza encourages the child to tackle the second; and so one success leads to another for, as you know, nothing succeeds like success.

In practice, it has been found that the mixed method combines the advantages of both these methods. Divide the matter to be memorized into convenient sections, as large as possible. Memorize the first section, then the second; then repeat the matter from the beginning, combining the first and second successfully, before attacking the third.

Remember that the method used is only one of six factors that govern success in memory; even the

best method chosen will fail to prove effective if the other factors are neglected.

Do As I Do : One day I asked the boys to memorize a very beautiful but fairly difficult poem by Francis Thompson. I allowed them five days in which to learn it by heart. On the first day only one boy had memorized it. On the second day two more boys were able to recite the poem fully. I was sure that if this rate was to continue the entire class would never succeed in studying the poem by the appointed time. The next day I had a surprise in store for them. Instead of reading the poem from the book before dealing with the paraphrasing, I recited the poem by heart. The boys were surprised, but not as much as I was, when the next day everyone of them had studied the entire poem almost to perfection. Several experiments of this nature lead me to conclude that children memorize poems and lines much quicker and with greater enthusiasm if the teacher does likewise. Not only is their interest in the subject increased but their combative instinct is also aroused, and they are more easily convinced that the matter to be learnt is valuable and worthwhile memorizing.

Question 17 : How are habits formed ?

Human actions can be divided into :— .

- (1) Automatic—the beating of the heart, breathing, winking, etc.
- (2) Instinctive—I screech when my hand touches a mouse in the dark; a child imitates sounds made by others, etc.

(3) Wilful—or voluntary acts directed by the mind.

The three characteristics of a wilful act are :

(a) variability, (b) hesitation, (c) delay.

When a voluntary act is repeated very often it slowly becomes habitual. Let us suppose you had a new type of lock to your classroom door. On the first day you took some time to open it and it required your full attention. You were even annoyed when the students round you distracted your attention, and delayed the opening of the lock. The second day was almost a repetition of the first except perhaps that there was less hesitation. After a week you could open the lock without hesitation or delay, but you still had to keep your attention fixed on the action.

Now after a year, you open the lock almost automatically. You do not find the students distracting you, in fact, you keep joking with them even while you open the lock. Opening the lock has now changed from a voluntary act into a habitual one.

So we can say that a habit is a voluntary act which has lost its characteristics of variability, hesitation, and delay, and becomes more or less fixed, automatic and quick.

Mere repetition of an action does not make it automatic. Only those acts which result in pleasure or are indifferent, that is, do not result in pain, become automatic. An action that results in pain will never become automatic in spite of frequent occurrence.

Prof. James lays down the following rules for habit formation :—Launch the process with as much initiative as possible ; seize every opportunity for drill; permit no exceptions to occur.

Teachers and parents should remember that in the formation of habits as in the process of learning there are always periods of "no progress". These are called "plateaux". Such periods always occur in the process of learning and it is wrong to force children to continue their effort; for a "plateau" is a "mental rest period." When a "plateau" occurs, children should be made to relax their efforts; they should be told that "plateaux" are to be expected, and after a short rest they should be encouraged to start afresh.

Breaking a habit is not only wrong terminology but is also bad psychology. A habit cannot and should not be broken. It should be unmade. The making of a habit can be compared to the winding of a ball of wool. If you wish to undo what has been done, you unwind the ball. So also with habit. It is, no doubt, difficult to get out of a habit once it is ingrained in us; but it is not impossible. Firm determination and a sincere desire to get rid of the habit is most important.

In the earlier stages the formation of a bad habit can be easily checked, by finding out the want which is being satisfied and by gratifying that want by means which are desirable, thus guiding the child to the formation of a good habit in the place of the bad one which has to be checked. For instance, it is no use telling a child who steals not to steal again; the child should be encouraged to cultivate the hobby of stamp-collecting or some other activity which will satisfy the acquisitive instinct.

Just as pleasure or satisfaction resulting from an act encourages the repetition of that act, so pain or dissatisfaction resulting from an act discourages its repetition. This can be applied to aid the checking

of bad habits in the early stage of their formation. If the act results in pain, through punishment, or does not yield the satisfaction expected from it, there is no incentive to repeat the act, and the habit is nipped in the bud. But once a bad habit is deeply ingrained, punishment may do more harm than good. What is required is some positive remedial treatment, such as is mentioned in the previous paragraph. No benefit can be gained by censure or threats; sympathy, understanding, patience and encouragement are more helpful and always yield better results.

Question 18: Can you tell me what heredity is and how much it influences the child? Can environment counteract the influence of heredity?

Many teachers and parents believe that heredity is the all important factor which decides the future of a child's life, and that children born with unfavourable heredity traits are severely handicapped in life—in fact, some go to the extent of asserting that such children are fighting a losing battle. This is true, but certainly not to the extent it is believed. Children are born neither good nor bad but with *possibilities* for good or for evil. Heredity is really nothing else but a leaning or tendency. Heredity or Nature provides the *potentialities*. It is Environment or Nurture which provides the *opportunity* for the realisation of these potentialities. For instance, a child born of musical parents may have the potentialities of a musician; but if it is never given an opportunity of handling a musical instrument, the chances are that this talent will never show itself in action. On the other hand, a child who does not have this leaning or tendency, or does not

possess the potentialities of a musician, may be trained to become at least a fairly good musician, if surrounded with music and given ample opportunities to develop a musical taste.

To put it in another way, we may say that children are born *with* a biological heritage and *into* a social heritage. Very little can be done about the biological heritage. It is with education as a social heritage that teachers must concern themselves. It is the one factor under their control, and if they use it well, they can make the most of the potentialities which each pupil brings to school. It is for this reason that teachers should do their utmost to provide good surroundings for the children in their charge. "

It is important to remember from the very start that children are not born dirty or careless or deceitful or rowdy. It is not heredity that gives the child of the slums a leaning towards dirt; it is the surroundings which ultimately make him dirty or clean. If a child is allowed to play on the beach, wearing a bathing suit, he will not hesitate to roll in the sand and to get himself 'messed' about; but if that same child is taken to a clean classroom, he has certainly no desire of rolling about on the floor; such an action seems quite out of place there.

Every teacher should take an active part in arranging the environment that surrounds the children, so as to achieve the best results in training them to ideals of tidiness, cleanliness, and consideration for others. In this activity, teachers should take care not to do anything themselves, but to appoint two children for each activity. These should not be looked upon as tasks but as privileges. In classes where the children

are too small to do the activities themselves, they should be appointed to act as reminders to the teacher. This gives the children a feeling that they have participated in the activity themselves. The following are some instances of what can be done :—

- (1) Ugly litter should be removed from the tops of cupboards.
- (2) The contents of cupboards should be neatly and systematically arranged.
- (3) A few pictures should be tastefully hung on the classroom walls. These should be pretty pictures and should be changed periodically.
- (4) Hats, umbrellas, etc., should be neatly placed in a suitable corner of the room.

Teachers should also pay attention to things that are not seen, but nevertheless influence character-building in children :—

- (1) Teachers should themselves be punctual and should enforce punctuality, (don't punish unless the cause of late coming is known).
- (2) Cut out jarring noises. Teach children to close doors and cupboards gently—see that windows are properly latched when open.
- (3) Teachers should have a smile on, and should encourage children to be bright and gay.
- (4) Teachers should speak clearly and modulate their voice to suit the size of the classroom.
- (5) Don't allow children to shout, mutter answers, or answer in chorus.
- (6) Teachers should write neatly on the black-board ; practice is better than precept.

Question 19: Environment may help a great deal in maintaining discipline; but is it not the fear of punishment which really does the job?

This is a wrong attitude to adopt. You are taking it for granted that children, as a rule, like to be disorderly. The experience of good teachers shows the opposite to be true. Children like order; and if the environment is well arranged and teachers do their part by preparing the lessons and planning out the day's work, the children co-operate splendidly. Enthusiasm begets enthusiasm, and teachers who are enthusiastic about the lesson will find keen rivals in their students.

Of course, I do not deny that there is always the exception to the rule; in such cases the teacher has to resort to punishment.

Question 20: Is punishment necessary? If so, how and when should it be administered?

Taking conditions as they are, we must admit that all teachers have recourse to punishment in some form or other. The test, however, lies in the choice and manner of applying punishments. The bad teacher punishes haphazardly and without any aim in view; the good teacher observes the following rules:—

(1) Punishment should never be administered when the teacher is angry.

(2) The teacher should never punish a child for a failing that is the result of poor natural endowment; such children need kindness and encouragement and not blame or punishment.

(3) Children should know why they are punished and how they can avoid the same punishment in

future. If they are not told the offence for which they are punished, they are likely to believe that the teacher punished them unjustly ; besides they don't know what to avoid, so as to escape punishment.

(4) The teacher should punish a child only when the wrong done is deliberate and with the full knowledge of guilt ; ignorance of the law is no excuse in court, but it is certainly worth consideration in the classroom.

(5) The teacher should never give a punishment which humiliates to such an extent as to severely undermine or destroy self-respect. In school-life, the prime object of punishment is the reformation of the offenders, and as such, anything that tends to destroy their self-respect is likely to do more harm than good.

(6) The writing of lines is a useless form of punishment, which psychologists tell us has little or no deterrent value ; and the copying of poems or pieces of good prose from class-readers is not only useless as a punishment but is a bad practice, inasmuch as it creates in the child a disgust for something that is otherwise beautiful.

(7) Punishment should be proportionate to the offence.

(8) Punishment should be suited to the offender. It should be so chosen that it stimulates the child to do better in the future, rather than make the offender merely regret what has been done badly in the past.

(9) Corporal punishment should be avoided as far as possible.

Successful teachers agree that punishing children by depriving the offenders of some privilege or pleasure, rather than by making them write lines or stay

in after class, has better effects in preventing a repetition of the offence. I have known primary teachers who use the group method of punishment with good effect. They promise to tell the children a good story in the last period, if they carry out all instructions and give full satisfaction during the day. An occasional reminder is sometimes necessary, but for the most part the children themselves keep a likely offender within bounds by the remark: "Stay quiet and get on with your work or we shall miss our story this evening."

She Didn't Know Why! A little girl once wrote in her composition, "I have went home." The teacher was annoyed. "That is wrong," she said. "The correct form is 'I have gone home'; you shall stay after class this evening and write fifty times, 'I have gone home'." So that evening the little girl sat and wrote her lines as she was told. When she finished writing, 'I have gone home' fifty times, the teacher was nowhere to be seen. The little girl waited for some time more and then growing impatient decided to go home. She placed her written punishment on the teacher's table and added a footnote: "Dear teacher, I waited for you after writing fifty times 'I have gone home,' but as you did not come, I have kept my work on your table and I have went home."

Question 21: What is meant by: "Punishments chosen should be a deterrent to the child being punished—not merely a deterrent or example to others"?

Some teachers try to enforce discipline by the short-cut method of punishing students who offend

in the first week, very severely, with a view to impressing upon the children once and for all that "crime" does not pay. Such a policy is not only foolish but brutal. Punishment should always "fit the offence" or "should be a natural consequence" of the offence. Besides, a punishment which may act as a deterrent to one child, very often has not the slightest restraining effect on another. Some children enjoy staying late in school, because they avoid tedious work at home, others glory in being given a few strokes of the cane, because they like to show that they are hardy and "can take it." Hence, if punishments are to be used with benefit, their deterrent value at least *must* be suited to the individual needs of the case.

Cyril Burt sums up thus : "Punishment, as a rule, proves far more effective with mild impulses than with strong : as a mode of determent, it is like a blast of the wind, which will extinguish the flickering taper, but may only fan the burning coals to hotter flame."

Punishing Tom to cure Harry : Once a judge said to the criminal : "You are to be hanged, not for stealing sheep, but in order that sheep may not be stolen." This is equivalent to "We forgive you, but we are going to hang you up as a scarecrow." This is deep injustice indeed, which demands the punishment of Tom for the benefit of Harry.

Question 22 : Can you give examples to explain, "Punishment should be proportionate to the offence" ?

If two children play in the classroom and break a glass tumbler worth six annas, granted that they

should receive two strokes of the cane or be fined six annas, what punishment should two other children receive who, playing in the same classroom, break the glass top of the teacher's desk, worth five rupees? For the punishment to be proportionate to the offence, the second pair of children should also be given two strokes of the cane, or a fine of six annas. This is so, because the offence in both cases, consisted in playing in the classroom instead of on the playground; the breakage was accidental and not intentional. If the second pair were punished more severely, it would mean that the punishment meted out was not proportionate to the offence but to the results of the offence.

On the other hand, if a boy insults the class monitor and deserves five strokes of the cane, how many strokes would he deserve if he insulted the teacher? Obviously, his punishment would have to be more severe, because an offence varies in gravity according to the person offended.

Parents: Cases of injustice under the above heading are very common in the home. Many parents punish a child more severely for breaking an expensive porcelain jug than for breaking a common glass one. But such cases are not so difficult to distinguish, and to practise the necessary restraint when punishing, as cases which involve the conduct of children towards visitors and strangers. The adult's standards of right and wrong which govern social behaviour are too subtle for the understanding of children.

Question 23 : When I spoke about punishment, you said I was adopting the wrong attitude, and that the wrong-doer is the exception, not the rule. Well, you have spent so many pages talking on punishment. Is that not proof that my attitude was right after all ?

If you mean that your attitude was a popular one, I agree; but it certainly was not the right one. You see, it is so easy to rule by fear or "govern," as we should call it. But it seems so difficult to control by discipline that most teachers choose to "govern," and make themselves believe that children need to be ruled by fear, not love.

A teacher can reach his end in two ways : by means of praise and encouragement or by means of punishment. Punishment is only meant to be a deterrent ; and like the brakes of a car it should be used sparingly and only in emergencies. It should be the exception and not the rule. Hence the teacher who uses punishment too often is like the man who drives a car with its brakes on.

Another thing to be considered in punishment is that it is so much simpler to punish without troubling about the motives behind the child's action. It is so much more troublesome to question the child sympathetically, and to act according to the results of the interview. It needs so much restraint, time and effort on the part of the teacher that most of us choose the easier alternative of punishment.

*Parents :—*What has been said with regard to teachers, holds equally good in the case of parents as far as the infliction of punishment on children is concerned. The trouble usually arises when punishment

is inflicted by the teacher, and the child complains to the parents who often act hastily and blame the teacher without hearing the other side. When parents are satisfied that the action of a teacher is just or at least not rash, they should explain the case to the child, in supporting the action of the teacher.

A famous educationist has said, "There are two types of parents: the one who says, 'Punish my boy as much as you like'; the other who remarks: 'My Jimmy is very touchy and sensitive; if he should do wrong, just slap the boy next to him, and that will be enough to frighten my Jimmy!'"

Question 24: Is it true that children steal or disobey for the sake of doing so and not for any benefit they might gain thereby?

In the matter of stealing, many educationists agree that this statement is true with children of middle-class or rich families who have most of the things they need. They could easily get the things they have stolen by asking their parents for it. But an examination of the articles stolen reveals that many of these objects are pet collections which are not available for sale on the market. Generally, however, it may be admitted that some children steal and many children tell lies, disobey, etc., because it gives them a certain sense of power. Children sometimes break an order or command, only because it makes them feel greater than the person who issued the order or command.

In some cases, children have been known to steal merely for the sake of stealing. The lure of forbidden fruit has come down the centuries without losing any

of its appeal. Augustine of Hippo describes how in his boyhood he stole pears from other people's gardens, not on account of the fruit, but just for the sake of stealing ; in fact, he says the fruits were hardly worth eating and he generally threw them away after stealing them. He explains that he and his companions stole because it gave them a certain sense of power—the power of being able to do the forbidden, which made them feel greater than those who issued the orders and commands.

In view of these statements, teachers should strive :—

(1) Always to explain the reasons for instructions that are being given to students, or orders being issued by the Principal for general observance.

(2) To try and convince the children that these orders and rules are not meant to curtail their freedom or to deprive them of any pleasure, but are necessary restrictions on the individual for the benefit of the student-population as a whole.

(3) To show the children that the rules they are asked to obey are framed for their own good, and that they will only harm themselves and their own welfare if they disobey them. If this is done, teachers will succeed in obtaining the co-operation of the students better, than if they merely kept the threat of punishment hanging over the heads of would-be offenders.

The ideal could be reached if teachers and Principals of schools could succeed in getting the students to frame their own rules and regulations under proper guidance and direction and even, if possible, to allow enforcement of these rules to be conducted by the

students themselves. Such systems where junior courts sit in judgment over their own school-mates are practised in many western schools.

Question 25: Do you agree with the modern method of correcting children by giving the culprit an individual chat instead of scolding him in the classroom in front of the others?

I not only agree with it, but I feel it is the only proper thing a teacher should do. Here again, as in the case of punishment, mentioned before, it is so much easier for you to lose your temper and shout at the child, thinking that that is the quickest method of correction. This is a grave mistake; for the teacher who tries the method of individual chats is following the age-old advice that the teacher is *in loco parentis*—in the place of parents. Besides, children always like to be treated as adults and, generally speaking, children between the ages of 12 and 16 usually believe that they have the same rights as adults.

You must have surely seen Mickey Rooney in the "Hardy Family" film series and heard his very serious remark: "Dad, as one man to another," or "Let's have a man-to-man chat." The majority of adults in the picture-house have a good laugh when they hear Mickey say this; but if you could watch the children in the theatre, you would see how they brace up, as if to say, "That's the spirit," and when Judge Hardy consents to the man-to-man chat, every child in the house feels a sense of pride and satisfaction.

Another advantage of this individual chat method of correction is that it shows the children that the teacher has a personal interest in them. Not only

have you spared their feelings, but you have also proved your concern for their individual welfare.

They Beat Their Own Record: One year, I had two very clever boys in my class. They had both been promoted to the Sixth Standard. At the first examination, the bigger of the two boys stood first in class. I called the younger one to the office for a chat. "Damascene," I said, "who stood first in the Fifth Standard last year?" "I, sir," was the reply. "Then how is it that you have allowed Frank to go ahead of you this year?" He put his head down and answered softly, "I am sorry, sir, but I will try harder at the next examination."

At the second examination, young Damascene kept his promise and stood first. Then I turned to Frank. "See me in the office after class," I said to him on the day of the results. I put it to Frank that, as the elder of the two, it was a shame to have allowed young Damascene to usurp his place as first boy in the class. Frank agreed and determined to get back his place in the third examination.

Astounding as it may seem, I can vouch for the truth that in the third examination both of them got an equal number of marks, in the total, and both stood first. "That may be a mere coincidence," is what you might say. Agreed! But surely there is something to be proud of in the fact that their individual totals in the third examination exceeded Damascene's previous total by 100 marks!

Question 26: This is certainly a very good example showing the value of the individual chat. You succeeded in getting the boys to score very high marks; but while the end was good, the means you used were undesirable. Don't you think there is too much of this competition spirit prevailing in schools? Far better to have told Damascene to beat his own score than to have pitted him against Frank, and have the satisfaction of beating his rival.

You are quite right. The incident related took place many years ago, and when I mentioned it to my former professors of the Training College, they made exactly the same remark. Another disadvantage, in pitting one boy against the other instead of asking each boy to outbeat himself, is the dissatisfaction and chagrin that is very likely to arise if the attempt ends in failure. In the case cited, I urged Damascene to beat Frank in the second examination. He promised to do so, worked very hard, and stood first. Let us imagine that Frank had also worked very hard and had once again succeeded in standing first and beating Damascene in the second examination also. This would surely have had very bad results on Damascene's self-confidence and might perhaps have resulted in the building up of an inferiority complex which might have affected him all his life.

In any case, it is always advisable to get children to be their own rivals. In the words of Ballard: "The only boy that the John of today should try to defeat is the John of yesterday." This may not seem so exciting at first, but it is the proper attitude to adopt, and will make the school a much more pleasant place to work in, and school children a much happier community.

Question 27 : What is your opinion about the giving of homework? How should failure to do homework be punished?

Among parents there are two camps: one believes that homework worry their children and themselves, and should therefore never be given; the other looks upon homework as an indication of the teacher's efficiency—"If my child does so much homework, it means so much more must be done in class," is the argument of such parents.

While homework is a very valuable aid in teaching, it must be admitted that most children get an overdose of it. One way of avoiding this is to set each day of the week for homework on different subjects—Monday : History and Geography ; Tuesday : Composition and Languages ; etc.

Failure to do homework is never to be punished severely. Before punishing always remember to find out the reason for the failure. Experienced teachers say that children like to do homework which is interesting and within their power to do. When there is no good excuse for a homework not done, children should be made to sit after class and do the homework; or if the next day is not already full-up, the unfinished homework may be completed the next day. Children soon learn that it is best to do the homework for the day appointed, if do it they must.

He Sold Newspapers! Bijoor one day omitted to do his homework and I asked him to stay in that evening and do it. At the recess, one of Bijoor's friends approached me and asked me to excuse Bijoor and not to keep him in after school was over. "But why?" I asked. "I am sorry,

sir," answered the boy, "but I can't give you the reason. All I can say is that it is a very good reason, and I hope you will make an exception in his case." "I am sorry," I replied, "I cannot make an exception unless I know why I should do so." Hours passed and just before closing time, Bijoor's friend approached me again. This time he saw he would have to explain, and in an undertone he said: "Please let Bijoor go. If you keep him in, he will be late for his work at the railway station. You see, sir," he added, "Bijoor sells the morning and evening newspapers in order to earn enough money to pay his school fees."

Question 28: What is the difference between Order and Discipline?

A disciplined class is a class of disciples. Just as a disciple sits at the feet of the *Guru*, learning with eagerness and rapt attention, so also a disciplined class is a group of willing and eager learners. "Discipline," says Professor Hughes, "is a state of mind; while Order is a state of affairs." A disciplined class is always orderly, not because the teacher rules with an iron hand, but because a teacher who is a good disciplinarian knows how to get the pupils to submit willingly to disciplinary influences. A good disciplinarian is one who knows the art of making disciples of the pupils.

Order is of two kinds. It is undesirable if pupils are forced by external authority into unwilling submission. It is good if it is the result of pupils willingly submitting themselves to certain external influences.

An orderly class of the undesirable type consists

of pupils who sit quiet and strive to be attentive, because they are afraid of being punished if they are noisy or inattentive. An orderly class of the desirable type consists of pupils who sit quiet and strive to be attentive, because they believe that if they do so they can learn better.

A disciplined class consists of pupils who are so eager to learn that they never think of making a noise or allow themselves to be distracted. Discipline, as we said before, is a state of mind, and the active co-operation of the pupils is essential, for true discipline is in essence self-discipline.

There is one thing which is worth remembering, but which many teachers consider rather trivial. As you know, nagging is considered the chief cause of family discord. A wife who nags a husband, or the other way about, usually does so on some trivial matter—in fact the characteristic of nagging is to find fault and to repeat that fault-finding with reference to some minor defect or shortcoming. It is this that annoys the person nagged.

So also in teaching. Children don't mind if teachers find fault or correct them when they do something really wrong. But when a child in class is guilty of just a whisper or turning a head, it is surely not enough cause for teachers to lose their temper and punish the child. Yet there are many teachers who believe they are good disciplinarians when they succeed in making the children sit like wax dolls while the lesson is going on. This sort of teacher never gets the co-operation of the children. They sit quiet, but they might as well have been replaced by Prof. Lele's Wax Dolls!

You can achieve much more success as a teacher in maintaining discipline if you overlook the trivial offences and be very strict on the major ones. Teachers who do this often hear the following conversation during the recess of the first day of school :

"How is your teacher?"

"Awful! Does all the talking, and won't allow us even a whisper."

"And how is yours?"

"Oh, pretty strict, but such a sport! Does, not keep nagging on the little things."

Speaking of discipline, you must remember that children may try to be disorderly for a time if they get a chance, but no class as a whole enjoys continued disorder.

Do not confuse a disciplined class with a silent one. A class may be disorderly in appearance and yet well controlled; and remember that if you want children to remain quiet you must always keep them busy. If you don't do so, you surely can't expect them to stay quiet. Children who stay quiet without having something to do are unnatural and will certainly never make good citizens or develop initiative and character.

The Teacher Took the Blame.—One day the school *mali* came into my class with a note that the Scout Commissioner, who was visiting the school, wanted to see me immediately—he was standing outside my door. I asked the visitor if he could wait for five minutes so that I could give the boys some work to do, while I attended to him. "That's not possible," he replied, "I have to go away immediately, but I shall not take more than a few minutes of your time." It was past five

minutes before we had got anywhere to the end of our talk, and by that time the boys were already getting noisy. "I see your class is not able to keep quiet in your absence," the visitor remarked. "I am glad they don't," I retorted. "I would never care to teach boys who could keep quiet doing nothing." The visitor took the hint and departed immediately.

Question 29: What would you suggest as a good method of curing late comers?

Lack of punctuality seems to be the bane of every strata of society. It is so difficult to convince children that they must be punctual when we ourselves are often late at school. Then there is also the bad example given by public speakers, presidents at school and outside functions, etc.

Nevertheless, something can and should be done to cultivate punctuality in children. One way of doing this is to make children feel that they will lose something if they come late. The present attitude of most late comers is: "The later I go, the less I shall be bored."

Some teachers succeed in having all their children in class at the stroke of the bell by making a habit of telling a short story or a good joke before beginning lessons. Some others do still better by getting some of the children to give two or three jokes before lessons begin. Few children would miss such a treat through their own fault.

Another way of curing habitual late comers is to give them some job to do, like arranging the flowers in the class-vase, or seeing that students place their

hats in a neat row on the window-sill, umbrellas in place, etc.

Making Himself Useful. Harry lived next door to the school, but always came late. There seemed no way of curing him, for Harry was well known as a "problem" boy of the senior section. One day I said to him : " Harry, don't you find the room stuffy every morning? It seems such a pity, since we have large ventilators to the windows, but the *mali* is too lazy to open them every morning as it saves him the trouble of closing them at dusk. You are living very close to the school, and I shall consider it a favour, if you would come a few minutes before the bell and see that the *mali* opens the ventilators, or if it is not too difficult, open them yourself." "I could easily do that!" asserted Harry—and he did it. Harry knew he was coming to class five minutes before the bell to open the ventilators. He does not know even till today that he was opening the ventilators in order to be in class five minutes before the bell.

Question 30 : What is the best way to deal with "problem" children ?

Many people are under the impression that problem children are either mentally defective and hence abnormally mischievous, or sullen. This is not at all the case.

Those who have conducted specialist schools for problem children tell us that most children who are put under this class are really quite normal but grossly misunderstood by their parents and teachers.

In the lower classes it often happens that a child acts sullen or rude, because he wants to draw attention to himself. This is often the result of neglect at home and many cases have been cited, where a newborn absorbs all the attention and affection of the mother, with the result that the bigger child is neglected. This leads the child to feel that he is not being treated fairly, and it often happens that when he acts naughty or out of the ordinary, he finds that people fuss after him, which is exactly what he wants. If the teacher would look into the case and inquire from the mother, she would not only have one less "problem" child on her hand, but would be doing an invaluable service to the child and the parents.

Mischievous children who are considered "problem" children can often be made useful by giving them responsible tasks to perform. The bully is asked to keep bullying out of the classroom; the boy who splashes ink all over the floor and walls is asked to see that ink-splashes do not disfigure the classroom, etc. In other words, the "problem" child is asked to help the teacher to solve the very problem which that child previously created.

Parents. Cases have been known of children who are very fidgety and restless. These are not to be confused with what are generally known as problem children. Many parents and even some teachers try to repress this excessive activity by continuous scolding and even physical punishment. The best way to keep such children out of mischief is to give them a number of easy but definite jobs to do. It is not an easy task to provide such jobs always, but it is the only solution. On the other hand, medical science has now revealed

that many of such cases are really due to worm trouble and can be easily remedied by prompt treatment.

Set a Thief to Catch Himself: The school concert was in progress. The seniors were standing at the back of the hall as there were not enough chairs. In the middle of an item one of them whistled. A teacher was sent to investigate and stop a repetition of the nuisance. He suspected three boys, Robert, Feroz and Rustom. They were standing together when the teacher went up to them and said, "There is a silly boy in this hall who just whistled. He may do it again. I am busy on the stage. Will you boys keep a watch and see that it does not happen again? Thank you!" Needless to say, it didn't. For if the whistle was repeated, it would mean, either that one of them had done it or that they were not clever enough to catch the culprit.

Question 31: I have often found that some of my pupils give undue significance to their achievements and failures. They think that the whole class and even the whole school should applaud or console them, and feel quite hurt when nobody seems to notice what they do or suffer. What should be the teacher's attitude to such children?

This trouble is not confined only to children, as you seem to say. Adults have the same failing. They all come under one class of people popularly called "World Shakers"—people who think that the world cannot get on without them, and that whatever they do is being noticed by everyone else. If they mispronounce a word, they think they have made fools of

themselves, whereas hardly anyone of those present may have noticed it. It often happens among athletes and members of the school-team; some of them purposely don't turn up for a match in order to prove that they are indispensable, and that without them the school is sure to lose. They are very much cut up to find that their absence was hardly noticed and that the team got on quite well without them.

One thing you should remember is to treat such cases gently. Have a heart-to-heart chat, if possible. In any case, do not be harsh; and whatever you do, don't say to the child, "I told you so." That never cures—it only makes the hurt more sore.

Question 32: Praise is little known in our schools even to-day. Is this because children who are praised easily develop "swell heads"?

While we certainly admit that the bestowal of praise must be done with caution and prudence, we can see no excuse for the niggardly way in which it is doled out at home, in school, and in society. The saying, "No man can be a prophet in his own country" might well be changed to read: "You cannot get the flowers till you are dead!"

Many teachers withhold praise of a good answer or a splendid achievement, because they are afraid that the would-be recipient might grow conceited. Psychologists and psychoanalysts have proved it otherwise. Just approbation and sincere congratulation can never result in harm; they are powerful incentives to further accomplishments.

Life would be so much brighter and happier if we were as ready with our praise as we are with our criti-

cism. It always pays to use praise instead of blame. It is so much better to encourage children at every stage of their learning instead of waiting for them to slip down, and then blaming them for it.

Timely bestowal of praise is more valuable than eulogies delivered in the doer's absence. The following lines are very apt :

*“ If he earns your praise, bestow it ;
If you like him, let him know it ;
Let the words of true encouragement be said.
Do not wait till life is over, and he is underneath
the clover,
For he cannot read the tombstone when he's dead ! ”*

ABC OF SUCCESSFUL TEACHING

- A for the Aim of education. Not to "prepare them for future life," but to equip them for living their present one well and joyfully. "Education should aim at nourishing the mind, not exercising it."
- B for Books. Do not read good books—life is too short for that—read only the best! The real purpose of reading is not to accumulate knowledge but to use it.
- C for the Children, the *centre* of your Universe. *They* have to learn; so let *them* think, speak and do. You only plan and direct *their* activities.
- D for Defective and Deficient children. Don't pity them; they don't want pity. They want understanding, sympathy and encouragement.
- E for Examinations, the bane of Education. If you teach for the examination, you make learning a task: lessons become work. So take the irk out of work, and make learning a game; each day a new mystery; each problem a battle; each failure a challenge; each lesson a conquest; each success a step to joyous victory.
You can't control Examinations but you can stop them from controlling you!
- F for Failures. They come to everyone. When they come your way, don't take them too hard. A failure can let you down, but it can't keep you there. If you stay there, it is *entirely* your fault. Many a failure can often be prevented by a little forethought—a little preparedness. A

study of psychology can and does prevent most failures.

- G for God. Children love to hear about God. But it is not enough to talk to the children about God ; talk to God about the children—"More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of."
- H for Habit. Habits are only semi-permanent and there is no human habit however strong or ingrained, which cannot be unmade. We say unmade, not broken, because habits which are broken, in the sense of forcefully and radically suppressed, only result in harm. Get the children to start forming as many good habits as possible, then there will be no vacant rooms for bad habits to creep into.
- I for Instincts, the handmaids of every good teacher. Every success whether in or out of the classroom depends upon proper and timely appeal to the children's instincts.
- J for Jokes—use them freely. Nobody likes a good joke better than children. A two-minute joke can refresh and relax tired children more than a ten-minute rest.
- K for the milk of human Kindness. There can never be too much of it. If ever you think you are being *too kind*, remember there are others, three times your number, who are being *too harsh*.
- L for Learning. No one can ever have too much of that either. Read magazines and books on your subject, on general methods, school organisation and psychology. Keep young by keeping up with the times. If you are too old to learn more, you are old enough to retire.

- M for Method. There's a right and a wrong way for everything we do. It is always better, and often easier, to choose the right way.
- N for Noise. Teach children to avoid making harsh noises. Show them, by example, how to close doors softly, latch windows that rattle, etc. Don't expect them to learn such actions by themselves.
- O for Order, the natural result of happy activity in the classroom. Also for Orders which teachers must give. See that orders are few but well obeyed. Good teachers seldom find it necessary to give orders beginning with "Don't."
- P for Preparation without which no lesson can be successful. A good preparation seeks to rouse the interest of the pupils in the lesson. A preparation that is unnatural or far-fetched may be striking in itself, but because it attracts undue attention to itself it fails to direct the attention of the pupils to the subject of the lesson.
- Q for Questions. Children ask questions mostly to satisfy their curiosity; sometimes they do so as a means of making conversation, or attracting attention to themselves. An impertinent question calls for a rebuke; a trivial or thoughtless question is best answered by another question; a sincere question deserves a sincere answer.
- R for Rivalry. Keep rivalry between individuals at a minimum. Comradeship and co-operation should replace competition. Pupils should be taught to be their own rivals, to beat their own previous records, to progress every day, turning better into best.

- S for Self-expression of instinctive interests. The denial or repression of these interests makes normal children into difficult or problem children. Self-expression does not mean that children must be merely left free to express themselves. Their interests must be directed towards the ideal, which is to do something that is both beautiful and useful.
- T for the Teacher—guide, philosopher and friend. The good teacher does not count success by the amount of knowledge imparted to the children. The good teacher is more concerned with the development of the children's intellect, character, sociability, skill, and taste.
- U for Understanding. Because children listen to a lesson, it does not mean that they understand it. Hearing is not learning. Understanding aids learning, speeds memorizing, and helps to change fact into faculty.
- V for Variety, the spice of life. Variety of matter prevents inattention in the children and boredom in the teacher. Variety of method makes teaching effective and learning interesting.
- W for Writing. More things are lost by bad handwriting than this world dreams of.
- X for the Cross-roads at which we must ask ourselves: "Shall we live to teach, or teach to live?"
- Y for Yesterday, gone beyond recall. It is no use regretting what we have done badly in the past; let us use that time more profitably by planning to do better in the future.

Z for Zeal. Those who do not love teaching should not dare to become teachers. Books can be bought ; but love of books only a zealous teacher can foster. It is zeal that makes an instructor a teacher ; it is zeal that converts students into disciples.

BOOKS YOU SHOULD READ :—

Groundwork of Educational Psychology by James Ross.

Bearing of Modern Psychology on Educational Theory and Practice by Christabel Meredith.

Changing School by P. B. Ballard.

Safeguarding Mental Health by R. McCarthy.

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