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THE SCHOOL

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Prestolee is a Lancashire County School for children from three to fifteen years, combining with
it Play Centre, Youth Centre and Community Centre Headmaster: Edward F. O'Neill, M.B.E.

THE IDIOT TEACHER

A Book about Prestolee School
and its Headmaster
E. F. O'Neill

by
GERARD HOLMES

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‘We had the best of educations – in fact
we went to school every day. . .’
Alice in Wonderland

Introductory

This is quite an exciting story in many ways. It is the story of a school.

That there is something wanting in Education is generally agreed. Just what that missing ingredient is, is not easily stated.

That it can be stated will become clear as this story unfolds.

This is the story of a school. But it is also the story of the man about whose wits this school formed itself and grew. It tells of its growing-pains—and of his—as well as of its growth, and his.

That there is something wanting in Education today is evidenced by the state of mind of the vast masses of people. Here, there, and elsewhere populations live on the verge of disaster. Everywhere conflict is evident. It shows its hand in wars, strikes, vetoes, go-slow movements, working to rule and the like, and indicates the inability of large masses, who have to live together, to act together amicably and helpfully and unselfishly. In a few words it indicates absence of discipline—the absence of that state of affairs in which a number of persons of different nationalities, ranks, ages, and inclinations are able to act together as a combined whole.

It seems that never have so many young people been taught so much to so little purpose as is the case today.

The teaching of 'subjects' has, of course, usurped the time which might have been devoted to 'Educating'. The Ministry of Education has proved to be a Ministry of Subject teaching. It has organized the training not of Educators but of subject-teachers. The driving force behind all this resulting activity is the passing of exams in the subjects taught. This passing of examinations in selected subjects is no training for disciplined communal life.

Even the technique adopted is unfortunate from this point of view. In forcing the child to compete with his class-mates for prizes and other marks of distinction, teachers have tempted him to regard his comrades as rivals and possible enemies: to pride himself on his petty achievements and to look down on those he may happen to surpass. They have exploited his selfishness, his ambition, and his vanity. By making him over-dependent on themselves for instruction and guidance they have tended to paralyse his faith in himself.

Can a better use be made of these formative years?

As this question is often in the air, it seems that the time is not inappropriate for telling the story of one man who, during the past thirty years, has patiently and courageously brought into being a school in which children are able to develop their innate characteristics—trustfulness, truthfulness, helpfulness, discovery, activity, initiative, concentration, gregariousness—and grow into well-informed, conscientious, resourceful companions—sensitive to Goodness and Beauty as well as to Truth—and healthily disciplined, in that it comes naturally to them to act together

for a purpose when—as is so constantly the case—well balanced, disciplined action is the very essence of civilized life.

CHAPTER I

A Preview of a School

All the roads to the village lead down long, steep hills and the School is at the bottom, in the valley. There is much else besides the School at the bottom of the hill.

There is the river—brutally sullied by the great industries on its banks—a meandering flow of stinking scum, nosing its way past the ruined bridges and beneath those few which are still intact. Whatever Authority has had charge of their maintenance has neglected these sandstone bridges, for they stand today with broken arches and fallen parapets. Only the steel girder bridge which gives access to the School and the buildings around it can be used today, and it looks far from safe, for it is eaten into by rust.

These huge buildings you can see from this bridge are the mills where raw cotton is cleaned and spun into yarn in a hot, damp atmosphere where the machines work with ceaseless energy and a handful of men and women stand and nurse them, sweating in the damp, sub-tropical atmosphere which keeps the staple pliant. Time was—and not so long ago—when small children from the School, working as 'half-timers', sweated here with their elders, watching and feeding the busy machines which are the true workers in these great, seven-storied factories, until it was time to return, through the chill night air outside, to their homes—begrimed with the soot and ashes which the lofty chimney eternally showered upon them.

The great concrete erection on the opposite bank of the river is the new cooling plant of the paper-works which spreads its tentacles of buildings, tanks, storehouses, and yards behind and amongst the houses in the village. Here too men must watch and machines must work. From its front gates there continually issue lorries laden with bales of the finest quality paper, of which the village is justly proud; while from its backsides it ceaselessly evacuates its own contribution of filthy waste to add to the river's scum.

But it is the seven vast concrete condensers which tower into the air at the gigantic power station—overtopping the sides of the valley and eternally saturating the nearby houses with synthetic rain: and the growing mountain chain of ashes from the furnaces, where so lately all was green meadows: and the vast power house itself, which houses the mechanically stoked boilers and the spinning generators: and the new lattice bridges across the river which carry the pipes to and from the great cooling towers: and the complex skeletons of metal which hold the insulators around the transformers: and the long lines of pylons striding away, northwards, eastwards, and southwards, carrying the slender conductors along which the rushing electrons speed under high voltage into the 'grid':—it is this titanic installation, with its minimum of quiet human watchers and servers, which dwarfs the village, dwarfs the paper-works, vying in mass with the mills themselves, whose engines and magnets throb and hum and pulsate with energy as does no other unit of industry in the village unless, indeed, it be the School.

As you approach the School you become conscious of its atmosphere of energy.

Cross the bridge—there is always a smell of escaping gas at its further end—cross the road which leads right and left to the cotton mills: pass the begrimed church, architecturally ill-proportioned: and, immediately, you feel a change. This is no longer the hum of machines which

work while humans watch. Here humanity is 'live' and active. Here are lovely gardens, playing fountains, flower-clad buildings, and busy, purposeful children.

There is the sound of music, and occasionally the strident screech of what might be a circular saw; and no doubt it is, as some boys issue from the building carrying some rustic wood-work and join others who are building a bridge across a miniature valley down which a streamlet trickles through a series of pools which mirror the lupins growing on the banks.

In the distance is a structure which seems to support four separate swings which are, at this moment, all in action: but not one is colliding with another. The red mass which covers this erection is evidently a mass of rambler roses.

Apple trees, pears, plums, and cherries are in bloom in every direction, and on the school wall—here in Lancashire, midway between Bolton and Manchester—a peach tree is aglow with blossom.

Upon the many seats and lounges sit children, some reading, some writing, others busy at some kind of needle-work.

The lofty jets of the fountains meet overhead and shower raindrops on to the surface of some sort of bathing-pool where children splash about.

Several unusual structures stand here and there. They are slightly reminiscent of air-raid shelters, but their walls are clad with roses and there are gardens and bowers upon their roofs, whence plants hang down. 'The Hanging Gardens of Babylon!'—the words come readily to one's mind. One of these little buildings is the back scene of a kind of stage for there is, before it, a dais upon which is proceeding a Shakespearian rehearsal.

Animals have their dens built here and there in shaded corners where they are being cared for and fed.

There is a constant coming and going through doors of the school building, but it is purposeful, as you can see by watching those coming and going.

Go inside. How unusual it all seems. Passing along a corridor lined with lovely aquaria and vivaria one finds oneself in a busy world.

It is at once a scene reminiscent of a big business office, an art school, a reading room, a workshop, and a studio for music and dancing: for there are children actively engaged in painting and drawing, in quiet study and writing, in making all sorts of objects, in playing and listening to music, at gymnastics, and upon less obvious but evidently serious occupations. It was not always so.

Some thirty years ago, before Teddy became headmaster, the building stood lone and bare on two tarmacadam yards, surrounded by spiked railings: one yard was for boys, the other for infants and girls. The spiked gate between these was both chained and padlocked. Between these deserts and the tangle of shrubs round the church lay the 'school garden'. Here the fact that, if a

suitable slice of potato is buried in dirt, it will grow in just the same way as it does in the adjacent fields, was formally verified.

The yards were mainly available for children to rush about and scream in, but a more spectacular event was the periodic operation of getting the children into the school. In those days this was considered to be a formidable problem, and was accomplished with the aid of bells and whistles. On the first peal or blast the children were supposed to become instantly statuesque more or less facing the siffleur—and most of them did. On the second, all dashed to places in prearranged lines. These lines tended to sway and oscillate under internal stresses and would occasionally eject a member with explosive violence if the parade was becoming organized by a subordinate. Then came the marching in—left, right, left, right. . . . There was evidently a theory that whatever the age or height of a child all should, during this operation, take steps which were exactly the same length and should take exactly the same number of these steps per unit of time.

They were marched into a bare and empty hall. In wet weather this wholesale introduction of muddy foot-marks—the road outside was 'unadopted'—infuriated the caretaker. Some children—naughty little devils—would delight in throwing the column into a bottle-neck jamb by trying to wipe their feet, in passing it, on the door-mats placed there for this purpose, thereby infuriating the teacher in charge of this mass migration.

On reaching the hall they formed into another pattern of rows and so came to rest, after being ordered to stand at ease.

The presence of the Headmaster now became evident and soon commands were given to secure that they assumed that stance of complete inanimation called through some fallacious nomenclature 'standing at attention', for there was, in reality, the minimum of attention even when, upon coming completely to rest, they took part in an antiphonal recitation known as 'Prayers'. Their progress to and fro was generally aided by the use of a musical instrument which was called the 'school piano' but would have been better named the 'school forte'.

The advantages secured by handling children in this way will be evident to anyone possessed of the minimum of intelligence.

There followed a distribution of this crowd of automata into classrooms, sixty or more into each, where they were jammed together into rows of long desks and fed with standardized information and trained and tested in memorizing.

Here life was simplified by obedience to orders: 'all stand', 'all sit', 'sit straight', 'pencils up', 'pencils down', 'open books', 'close books', 'pass books', are such as may remind many of the happiest days of their lives.

Lest some child might be actually starving for information and might become engrossed in the subject which was being spoon-fed to the class, the teaching was deliberately interrupted every thirty-five or forty minutes throughout the nine or so years the child spent at school, by the ringing of a bell or other means, and a shift of interest compelled. Thus was secured a complete inability to concentrate on anyone's part, teacher's or child's.

Teddy disliked all this for he had ceased to be an Idiot Teacher when fate had compelled him to teach idiots, for, judged by present-day I.Q. ratings, the pupils of the first school of which he became headmaster could hardly be otherwise described when he first came to their help.

CHAPTER II

Introducing Teddy

But the time has come for a 'flash back', to use movie parlance, and you are wishing to know who Teddy is and what his background was.

He was born in a back street of what is now a slum area in Salford. Whether it was so regarded in 1890 when this addition to its teeming population was registered may be doubted, for opinions on housing change from age to age. Row upon row of long two-storied blocks of brickwork with alternately a door and a window, a door and a window fifty times over. Each couplet is a dwelling. Each door, opening from the pavement, gives direct access into the front room. Behind this is the back room, a combined kitchen and scullery and eating place. A narrow and almost vertical staircase gives access from this apartment to two rooms on the floor above. All is very cramped. One can emerge from the kitchen part with its sink and wash boiler into a minute backyard where there is an outside closet. A door in this backyard gives access to a passage, hardly a yard wide, common to all the back doors in this block and the block which backs against it. Next door is the same, and next door and the houses opposite and those behind and beyond and across.

The end house of each block of dwellings where a crossing street forms corners is a pub or an off-licence shop—the former the social terminus of the street. Teddy was brought up in a succession of pubs and off-licence shops kept by his mother, nine in all, in an atmosphere of bar-parlours, vaults, tap-rooms, cellars, and backyards. His father, when employed, worked in the abattoir near the river, or at the docks. When unemployed, his *pied-a-terre* was likely to be his wife's place of business or some rival parlour. There still festers in Teddy's mind the memory of a day when there were ructions—the father returning home the worse for drink and wanting more: the mother refusing and padlocking the trap-door leading to the cellar: himself sent by the father to another off-licence down the street and coming back, crying, with beer from the beer-shop, but tripping over a projecting doorstep and arriving home with a jug nearly empty and terror in his soul, only to find that the man had now fallen asleep. He rushed to bed, to cry and listen for what might happen downstairs. Years later came the crisis. The father, coming home over-late and in just such a state, found himself locked out. He tried to climb over the backyard but was finally driven away even though he brought along a policeman. There came a separation order. Failing to pay his ten shillings a week for his two children, he was sent to jail. Then he got lodgings in a pub, sleeping on a seat in the bar parlour after closing time. Here Teddy visited him, but the boy's legs had grown and he wore a straw hat and was not recognized by the man: 'You have the advantage of me', murmured the father to the son. Tuberculosis set in: he was taken to hospital where he spat himself to death.

Teddy's mother was of an altogether different type. To her he owes much. Though he first saw her in these sordid circumstances she had known another life. If she was not an adventuress, she had had adventures. She had made the long journey to Jerusalem, riding much of the way on donkey, and among Teddy's treasures were some dried flowers which she had picked and brought back from Gethsemane, with a chip of the Wailing Wall and a paperweight of olive wood. But she was unfortunate in her choice of men and found herself having to do more for them than they were willing to do for her. And so we find her tenant of Salford pubs, working hard to keep her home together: and in this home was this one boy who was clearly feeling out towards things beyond his reach.

And, in truth, though Teddy was a child of the slums he was no slum child.

There is a photograph of him at the age of twelve. That must have been about 1902. He is shown in his second-hand suit sharing a corner of a writing desk with an aspidistra, his elbow resting upon what appears to be a telephone directory, but is more probably the photographer's studio Bible. Portions of a wicker-work armchair upon the seat of which is an object which might be a bloodhound or a cushion fill the foreground, while a draped curtain and an area of calm space complete the artistic side of this pictorial composition. But the arresting details are the boy's head and hands. The head is well-proportioned, the forehead broad, the dome spacious. As is often the case, the two sides of the face differ in character, though here the difference gives one a sense of harmony rather than conflict. The left indicates the inquiring, speculating, and searching mind; its key note is questioning: the right reveals the interpreter and memorizer. The two combine to form a face of unusual interest, calm and arresting. The hands, too, differ: the more powerful right suggesting the practical constructor, the left is rather that of the artist—a hand of less power but greater delicacy.

A later photograph, taken at about the age of twenty one, shows a definite development of all the earlier promise with an added brilliance suggestive of a happy sense of humour. It is the face of a man who is in love with a purpose which he is embracing. Women who have visited his school and are less interested in Education than in Educators have noticed that he is handsome. Others are less conscious of this in their amazement at his achievements.

It is not surprising that the mother of this one of her children should have had dreams for his future.

Of his early recollections one of the first was of the garden he made in Tintern Street. There was a 'nick' along the closet wall about three feet long and two inches wide where the paving stone did not quite reach the wall. Some soil lay exposed. He dug it up with a table-fork. Armed with a jam jar and a spoon he followed sheep down the road to the abattoir and collected 'black currants' which he made into manure for the plants—peas, beans, Indian corn, picked up round the feeding bags of the horses, apple pips and later nasturtiums and scarlet runners. Soon there were two boxes on the scullery window-sill filled with soil stolen, a sugar bag full every day, from the park by the docks. He put his hand through the railings where little seemed to be growing, avoiding the patches covered with spit. In these window-boxes, protected from the cats by black cotton, marigolds, mustard and cress, potatoes, carrot tops, and turnips flourished from time to time. Indoors a geranium and some fuchsia cuttings fought for life. His mother and his aunts had all been brought up at Mobberly in Cheshire and talked at times of the moss rose, the pink hawthorn, the lilac and laburnum, and their talk did not fall on stony ground. And there were sometimes day trips to Cheshire—to Mobberly, to Pickmere, to Great Budworth, and he remembered, too, the Salford Dock Mission Sunday-school outing at Whitsuntide when, in lorries drawn by horses, he went for a half-day to Unniston and was nearly pulled out of the lorry through grabbing at a spray of laburnum, to take home to his mother.

Scattered here and there in this grid of cheap dwellings are sundry larger and taller factory-like buildings. They are schools. Several which Teddy attended still stand, and here his education began, not so much through his teacher's efforts as through a chance friendship with Albert, in whose cellar he was allowed to hide when there were drunken ructions at home. Albert's parents

kept an off-licence shop like his mother's, but they sold cakes and many a time he was consoled with stale ones left over. But there were books and magazines at Albert's and Teddy saw and felt love and kindness in this family. A wonder of wonders was the Encyclopaedia Britannica in its special bookcase, but this he was not allowed to touch. There was a piano, a zither, and musical boxes, and on the sideboard an aquarium filled direct from the tap through a hose pipe and emptied by a siphon. One made toffee on a stove in the beer cellar and roasted chestnuts and potatoes and made pop-corns from Indian corn. One drawer in that house was full of bricks and odds and ends for building: and there was a toy stage. Though he little knew it this home was to become the model from which his own school was to grow in years to come.

At the age of twelve he was put in for a scholarship examination and although a fearful writer he won it, possibly due to the small number of entrants. The scholarship school was at the end of a dark alley behind the Education Office—a set of dingy rooms.

It now became recognized that he was to become a teacher, though no one had the least inkling of what was actually to follow.

Probably nothing would have followed worth recording had this boy submitted himself in the usual way to his masters. But Albert's home had fired his imagination and he began to buy and read books for himself. He discovered the Everyman's Library series: he chanced upon second hand bookstalls and barrows. His Shakespeare Plays cost him two-pence apiece. He began re-reading works and marking them in blue and red pencilling—an idea which he got from Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies* and which remains with him till today. All this needed pocket money, but he earned four pence a week from his mother for the job of diluting the beer by putting six gallons of water coloured with six glasses of stout and sweetened with brown sugar to every thirty-six-gallon barrel. This was his first activity in temperance reform and on the strength of this good work he was doing at home he signed the temperance pledge at the Band of Hope. He also started chopping up wood for firewood and selling farthing bundles—'big ones'—at the shop door. For some years he flourished as a manufacturer of firewood bundles, later sprinkling the wood with paraffin and guaranteeing instant burning.

At the age of sixteen Teddy became a pupil teacher, spending half his time as a student and half in teaching at Ordsall Lane School in Salford, a school of several hundred boys, several classes in a room, sixty in a class. The school was run on piece-work in so far as the teachers were concerned, as their salary increments depended upon results obtained in local inspectors' examinations. The teaching method was spoon-feeding and swallowing. Everything was simultaneous—the yelling of multiplication tables, spelling, poetry, caning, thumpings, the use of closets and latrines. There were printed schemes of lessons for all of Salford. Teddy was set to work to write on the blackboard in chalk, thick and thin strokes. When the command went forth 'show slates'—the 'stationery' consisted of slates and slate pencils, spit and coat sleeves—the children turned their slates round and the budding teacher threaded his way through the rubble of clogs 'ticking' and 'crossing'. It was mostly for arithmetic that the children 'got if: one for one sum wrong, two for two, three for three, four for four, with additional thumps on the back for being noisy in crying. Teddy had learned his arithmetic in a more practical way in his mother's shops and pubs. He knew all about gallons, tundishes, counting in dozens and scores, weighing half ounces of thick and thin 'twist' and tobacco, how many half-ounces made a pound, how to make up pound bags of stuff, how to count up takings and give change. We shall see how in time to come he developed realistic arithmetic in his school which was still to be. As the youngest

teacher on the staff it fell to his lot to supervise the closets at 10.50 a.m. when four hundred and fifty boys were turned loose for simultaneous pissing—the only exercise in that school which gave them scope for individual technique.

He was sensitive. He used to shiver when the stick came down crack! The headmaster baited him before the class. 'Edward doesn't like to see you caned.' He didn't. He didn't like to see a head gashed and when he had to wipe up the blood he went very white.

The children found him interesting however as he often reached school with a pocket full of strange exhibits, some beetles maybe or a mouse. They left their places and crowded round him and he could not dissuade them, and the headmaster saw him as unable to maintain order; and at the end of his two-year apprenticeship he was listed as no good for a teacher. He was neither accepted as an un-certificated teacher nor for admission to a training college although he had passed the preliminary exam.

There followed six miserable months during which he began to help more in the pub, and play in bar parlours on Saturday nights for convivial singing. He once earned five shillings in one night for 'Sweet Genevieve', 'Bill Bailey', and 'I'll be your Sweetheart'. He earned a shilling or two a week by giving piano lessons. He tried his hand and ear at piano-tuning. Finally he bearded the Director of Education in his den and was shown the unsatisfactory report of the headmaster. 'Under suitable guidance', so it ended, 'he might develop into a capable teacher.' He asked if he might be sent back to the man who knew him and was taken back for three months' trial. The blind boy was to be led by a blind man: and both were already in the ditch.

Indeed Edward returned minded to do as they do in Rome. He went back with a cane hanging from the breast pocket of his overcoat. He was placed in charge of a class of sixty, as an un-certificated assistant. The cane became a conjurer's wand. His class marked time, and marched down stairs excellently, they did good figures, good writing: they were caned for sums wrong, for misspellings, for speaking, for shuffling. He learned to bring the cane down on the desk with a bang and make the class jump. The class yelled their tables and when they could not hear him speak because of the noise of other classes he had them recite 'Rats, they fought the dogs and killed the cats...' The three months became nine and Edward's control excellent. He knew the tricks of the trade—fold arms, hands on heads, stand, sit up, sit straight, arms round, feet together, stand one, two, sit one, two. Here in Salford, the place of his birth, this teacher had at last mastered what Education was not. At the end of nine months he was given his second class, this time of sixty-five.

It was at this moment that he made a good investment. He spent seven shillings and sixpence on a book. It was called *Life in Ponds and Streams*. He read of water fleas and spiders, fresh-water shrimps, newts, frogs, water-boatmen, leaches, American pond weed, water starwort, duck weed, and weeds with long Latin names. He went in search of these things on Saturdays and Sundays and presently was taking some of his boys with him. Jam jars with living creatures began to make their way on to his classroom window-sills. They found a shop in Tibb Street, Manchester—an amazing place full of lizards, grass snakes, salamanders, slow-worms, tortoises, goldfish, white mice. He too made an aquarium, and a vivarium. Teachers as well as children sneaked into the room to see the things. Even the headmaster, now that orderliness was understood, paid a daily visit to 'see the menagerie'. But all this preparation was done after school closed in the

afternoon, while the caretaker filled the air with dust around him. Teddy had begun to be himself again.

And then one day there came an Inspector.

At that time there was no Nature Study included in the scheme of lessons laid down by the Salford Education Committee, apart from a common printed course of 'object lessons'—'Things that Grow', 'Things that Float', 'Evergreens', 'The Bee'—and here was something live. The Inspector suggested that Teddy should teach Nature Study.

You must recognize this young man of twenty as now a competent teacher, able to control a class of sixty, able to entertain his class with blackboard tricks, who knew how to flog and how to get annual increments. Remember, too, that he neither knew of nor yet even dreamed about any other teaching technique than that through which he had lived and which he had now mastered. Salford was his birthplace, his home, and his place of employment. He was a very ordinary young man. But he differed from quite ordinary young men in four respects. He had discovered for himself a joy in literature and was amassing an embryo library: he had stumbled upon the interest of wild and country life: he was a garden maker: he desired to share his interest with the boys entrusted to his charge. Yes, and we must add to these the fact that he had taught himself to play the piano.

But one doubts if one would have heard of him at all or if he would have become, as he has, one of the greatest Educators of all time, had it not been for the merest accident. It came about as follows.

CHAPTER III

Crewe

The Inspector who was impressed by Teddy's menagerie happened to have been at Borough Road Training College as a fellow student with Teddy's headmaster. They were almost life-long friends. To talk over Teddy's position was easy for them; and when this man learned from the headmaster that this young man was not yet even a certificated teacher they agreed to urge him to apply for admission to a training college.

As luck would have it, their thoughts turned to Crewe, as the Principal of that training school for teachers was not only specializing in the making of men and women who would be competent teachers in rural schools, but he too had been a fellow student with both of them at Borough Road. So Teddy was advised to apply for admission to the Crewe Training College and was accepted there, doubtless through this happy relationship of the three men.

Thus in 1911, as a result of his purchase of a seven-and-sixpenny book on pond life, he entered a new world. The place might have been specially prepared for him and he for it. It was as if a long-dormant seed was suddenly in rich, warm soil.

He fell in love. He fell in love with trees, their boles and branches, leaves and blossoms, their perfumes and their shapes. He fell in love with the wild flowers. He discovered birds and beetles, butterflies and moths. He began to photograph. He cycled far and wide and found loveliness everywhere. One day he saw the beauty of the shafts of sunlight clothing the smoke and embellishing the ironwork in Crewe junction. For the first time in his twenty-one years of life he was meeting informed and cultivated people. He lived in clean surroundings with the care of kindly landladies. Here handicrafts were the order of the day for men as well as women—basketry, raffia, modelling, light woodwork, metalwork—each a new experience and a new dexterity. He heard and learned the meaning of new words—originality, spontaneity, initiative—and they became new ideas to him. He was in good company, informally meeting growing minds: he was conscious of amenities: there was fresh, clean air, and this countryside, and the suggestion that they were all there to learn, and the realization that he was himself enlarging. And he formed friendships. In particular there was Isabel Hutchison whom he was presently to marry, and there was Mac.

It was in Mac's digs and in Mac's conversation that he found the means to clarify the multitude of notions that were coming to life in him. Here, one evening which extended past midnight and was terminated by the landlady's request that they should put out the light, he was told about famous pictures and famous galleries and shown postcard copies of many. He began to visit art galleries, searching the countryside on his bicycle. Here, too, in Mac's digs, he first learned of the Greek myths.

And one day they got hold of a book. It was a most inspiring book by a man, Edmond Holmes, who had been H.M. Chief Inspector of Elementary Schools. It told of how this experienced official, late in life, had come to realize that the whole system of teaching as practised in the schools of England was stultifying and repressive and destructive of the natural spiritual and mental powers latent in young children. And it told of a real school where an altogether different and supremely successful method was practised by an enlightened woman. It was very disconcerting.

He began to sniff a rat in the educational world: to distrust teaching by spoon-feeding: to be drawn towards learning by doing. Had he not himself learned all that was worth knowing in this way? Was it reasonable to stop work merely because it was 10.50 a.m.? Would it not be much better to stop when it was finished, or when one was too tired to continue? This Edmond Holmes had got something. And so had Teddy, but he was by no means clear as to what it was. He cycled far with Bell Hutchison and they wrestled with these new ideals. With Mac he discussed them far into the nights. A time was coming when he was to be brought face to face with the fact that the ordinary school regime was failing him and when he bravely broke away from it and began to adopt methods of his own. And we shall tell how he was found so doing and how this same Edmond Holmes came to find him and to be greatly impressed by him and of what resulted. But of that later.

He began to be noticeable while still at College. His growing ideas were voiced by him, sometimes with vigour. So much so that, when in 1913 he left College, a certificated teacher, the Principal's testimonial included the prophetic assertion, 'No new developments in Education will find Mr O'Neill unprepared'.

It was, as it turned out, Teddy himself who was to originate the new developments, but not yet. For a time he was destined to be disillusioned and indeed to throw up his job in a pet.

One of the discoveries he made at Crewe was Salford. He came home after his first term at College to find a Salford he had never seen before. It stank. The dirty, graceless streets were unbearable. The river was a sluggish sewer. In his mother's pub he smelt the spit and beer. The din got on his nerves—the rattle of pint-pots, the raucous noises, the coughing and spitting, the silly arguments in the vault all about nothing at all. The whole life of these hard-working, ill-rewarded people revolted him. He refused to help to wash the pint-pots and glasses or play on the piano in the bar-parlour while a singer murdered 'Bonny Mary of Argyle'. His sister found he was 'stuck up'. His mother complained that he was 'taking the bread out of his own mouth'. He told his mother she should not have educated him. There were tears on both sides. He had refused his mother even though it was impossible for him to complete his college course without the profit made from the sale of this adulterated beer and life in the bar parlour. The shock was inevitable: he had begun to see Salford.

But it was too early for him to see clearly. The missionary spirit which for the past thirty or more years has burned in him as a power giving fire, was not lit during that first holiday from College. The spark that lit it was struck later. For the time being his five pounds a month arrived regularly and continued till he left College with flying colours, mother and sister working to keep him there in the Joiners Arms. Though she sold the stuff, his mother never drank and, when he left College and was earning pay as a teacher, she cleared out of the pub world for good and retired into a back slum, living with a poor sister who was fading away with cancer in the breast. Her last kitchen had a clothes boiler in one corner, an old-fashioned mangle in another, a slop stone, an old couch, and a stone floor. Aunt Emily, with one hand pressed to her breast, mopped this floor with the other. She managed the mangle, but with growing pain.

Only when she began to stink was her malady discovered. They got her to bed and to die.

There too his mother died. It was a stroke that laid low this hard-working woman just after she received her first five-shilling Lloyd George pension. She died, her daughter holding her hands together as she murmured the Lord's Prayer, paralysed in the side and throat. They reached 'Thy Kingdom come'. The spark was struck. Teddy could stand no more. 'Oh! please God: may It come in Salford' he sobbed, and that has been his prayer ever since.

CHAPTER IV

A Flop and a Footnote

It was, indeed, a very different man who, coming back from College in 1913, was appointed as a Certificated Teacher to Saint Luke's School in Salford.

For one thing, he was just married.

He had collapsed insteps and was lame through long and excessive cycling.

He was alive with Educational vision: cultured: well informed and eager.

Of Isabel, his wife, there will be much to tell as this story further unrolls. You have met her as a fellow student with him at Crewe Training College. She was Scottish though she had been born in England and her outlook was practical and her make-up intellectual. Early in their talks on Love she had told him not to 'talk rot'! She was a successful student, getting all the distinctions while he scraped through. During the early part of their married life she was devoted only to motherhood and the making of his home. Later she was to join him in teaching, and seldom can a marriage have been happier, for here was a case in which wife and husband were devoted to one interest. They played foil and counterfoil, for every idea of his had to run the gauntlet of her fire and criticism, a purifying, simplifying, and clarifying treatment. It was she who was to be the sea anchor to steady him in gales of excitement or dejection.

It was she who, time after time, patiently consolidated the work which he achieved by vigorous experiment. When, later, cruel and senseless attacks came near to wrecking him completely, it was she who kept her head and it was she who would stand no nonsense. When he took his stand, there they stood together.

The collapse of his insteps caused him great physical pain. But here again Fate was favouring. It was, you remember, 1913. Next year was to be momentous. And had it not been that this man was totally unfit he would have been sucked into the conflict as a combatant and this story would not have been written. But he was exempted and his work was able to begin.

And, as you know, he was full of 'What might be'.

But he took one clean on the corner of the jaw when he joined Saint Luke's staff and met the headmaster. This individual, who walked round the school in a billy-pot hat with a cane under his arm, promptly put this young idealist in his place—or out of it—when he rapped out 'None of your college slops and plaster here'. To Teddy it must have sounded as if the creature was sinning against the Holy Spirit. It was 'Hands up', 'Hands down', once again, all the time, with questions and answers, tables, spellings, grammar. Being a Church School face to face with the Diocesan Scripture Exam the stress in English was on Scriptural Compositions and even Scripture-grammar; and it was forced upon his consciousness that 'Lamb of God' was a common noun, and here, too, he parsed and analysed the Lord's Prayer.

For two years he had this to endure, for he had promised to stay for that period, and perhaps it was all to the good for him; for though frustrated in school he began to take boys and girls, after

school, to art galleries in Manchester and, with Bell's co-operation, to his home to show and talk to them about books and pictures and to charades.

There exists a letter he wrote to a friend describing an event which happened during this period which was destined to grow to very full stature. It is an account of an excursion from the slums of Salford.

'I arranged a trip into the country, taking with me a party of twenty boys, away into Cheshire, to Pickmere Lake—to fishing pits, to apple trees in fruit, to country lanes and woods—to places where my mother had taken me for holidays as a boy.

'We left Salford-on-the-Sewer, each equipped with a quarter of a pound of gingerbreads —one penny: a quarter of fig-roll biscuits—one penny: a buttered tea cake—one penny: and a bottle of ginger beer or lemonade—one penny. Some of us had home-made fishing rods, penny fishing nets and jam jars for frogs and fish and snails and shrimps and water-beetles. We got out of the train at Plumbley Station to walk across fields and past farms for Pickmere. The excitement was intense. We fished, we found water-lilies and we passed apple trees in fruit.

'Now no boy in the party had ever seen an apple tree with apples on it and when we had passed that orchard a boy was missing. We retraced our steps and found the boy. He was in the charge of a farmer with a gun under his arm. I had to pay for those apples, not only for those in the boy's pockets but also for a large number on the ground.

'Little more than a boy myself, I thought things out. Education should be more than sums in school and nature study on evergreens for "ever greens ". Why had these boys never seen apples on trees?'

The time was to come when this seed of thought was destined to bear fruit and when many such boys would. Then, in 1915, his promise of two years' service being fulfilled, the war being on and men teachers scarce, he heard of, and applied for, and got what seemed to be a post with prospects.

The headmaster of Saint Philip's was in a dodderly condition suffering from blood-pressure and waiting for his pension. He wanted someone to help him to tide over this waiting period. Here there were three classes and Teddy had to take two of them, his own and the old man's.

Looking back on that brief episode, Teddy's memory is mainly concerned with rats, and the care of this old invalid. Next door to the school was a rag and bone yard and its denizens, doubtless anxious to enjoy the warmth of an open coke stove in the middle of the school, scaled the high surrounding walls. One of his assignments was chasing these vermin round the school with a cane and hitting them out of the coats in the cloakroom, to the joy of the children and the terror of the woman teacher who stood on the table holding up her skirts, as was the fashion with rat-hunting in those days.

The headmaster generally reached school about 9.15. If he did not arrive by then Teddy would send out boys to look for him and bring him in. He generally had his lunch tied to the middle button of his coat. He would sit at his desk in a slump. From time to time he would rouse himself and get the whole school reciting tables and poetry; but for the most part he left things to Teddy

who was thus able to have a real fling in many directions, only holding tight to the old method in regard to the three R's.

The end was soon and the old man passed away. It was but natural that Teddy should expect to succeed to the vacant post. But a new headmaster came and Teddy was not even considered. Among his first orders was one instructing Teddy to give the aspidistra on the desk one pint of water each day. His balloons were all bursting. He felt pressed in on every side. He asked at the Education Office for a small headship. 'Not inside ten years', was the official reply. So this young man, now the father of a baby girl and with no means, apart from his earnings, gave notice, without a job to go to, and resigned. Crazy! Wasn't it?

And now, as this is a short chapter and Teddy is for the time being high and dry upon the rocks, you may like to hear about the activity which was soon to flow in his direction.

In 1914, while he was still being crushed between the upper and nether millstones of Saint Luke, there met, at Runton, an informal association of friends of education sharing the same views and sympathies. It named itself the Conference of the New Ideals in Education. It discussed Madame Montessori's *Methods in Education*.

Proving to be a great success, it assumed the character of a permanent Council governed by a definite constitution. It did not come into being to voice the opinions of any particular pedagogical School or to give exclusive assistance to any sectional propaganda. Its members determined, indeed, to work together upon the basis of a common conviction that a new spirit, full of hope for this world, was stirring in education; and the purpose of this Council's activities was to aid that spirit wherever and in whatever form it was striving to express itself. The essentials of this new spirit, as the Committee conceived it, were reverence for the pupil's individuality and a belief that true individuality grows best in an atmosphere of freedom. The object of its Conferences was to draw together in fellowship, under pleasant holiday conditions, all who were seeking to embody this spirit in their work, to offer them a platform for the discussion of difficulties and the communication of the results, of experience or reflection; to bring isolated experimenters into touch with one another, and to give pioneering work the encouragement of criticism and recognition.

It met again the following year at Stratford-on-Avon, and in 1916 at Oxford, and was destined to meet on many subsequent annual occasions.

The eight members who formed the Executive Committee, four of them men and four women, were all experienced and respected in educational circles. One of these, and perhaps the nucleus member who mainly energized the whole undertaking, was this same Edmond Holmes, lately Chief Inspector of Elementary Schools for the (then) Board of Education, whose book *What Is and What Might Be* had already influenced many of its readers, Teddy among the number.

CHAPTER V
Oswaldtwistle Knuzden Saint Oswald's

The euphonious title of this chapter is the beautiful name of an ugly little place on the top of a hill between Blackburn and Accrington—two names far more in keeping with the locality as far as phonetics are concerned—which advertised for a temporary headmaster.

Teddy heard of the vacancy: applied, presenting his good testimonials and weak feet, and was then and there appointed, the war being on and there being no other male applicant.

This village was very isolated and the school premises looked shabby as the doors were regularly kicked in every Sunday by the Sunday-school crowd. There seemed to have been considerable intermarrying as everyone appeared to be related to everybody else.

There was a school house next door where, due to dampness, the ceiling paper hung down to touch the floor. Into this Teddy, Bell, and baby Margaret entered.

He found the children apathetic and listless in school and apparently impervious to all oral lessons. There was much evildoing: no background whatever of information, either from books, teaching or experience.

Outside school he became conscious and later appalled by the great gulf which lay between the people's mode of life and that of educated people. Why did they buy no books? Why have they these hideous pictures? Why do they lounge and idle at street corners making obscene remarks and noises, smoking and spitting and insulting? Why do they scrawl on walls and doors? Their faces, their lives mock at us and our teaching. These people were children once: now they are the debris of our system of schooling.

Little Bessie Milton, a twelve-year-old half-time worker with a squint, did not like her work. 'Please, ma'am,' she told Teddy's wife, 'I don't like sweeping looms. I has to go right under to sweep them while they is going. She stops them when the manager is there and when she sweeps them herself. She kicks me heels.'

Herbert Frankland got up at 5.30 a.m., worked at the mill till 12.30, attended school from 1.30 till 4, and then, till dusk, cleaned out a shippon. One morning Mrs. Frankland went to the mill at 6 o'clock. She had to leave at once. She had her baby at 10 that morning. The baby slept with the parents and two other children in one bed, while four others, including a boy of fifteen and a girl of seventeen, slept in the other room. One brother, little Willie, a ghastly-looking child, said, 'I don't like to go to bed somehow'.

John Lightbourn was another boy—undersized, without a roof to his mouth, unable to eat solid food, to speak plainly, to read or to write—a half-timer, but dismissed from the mill at last for continual sickness.

Certainly Teddy had landed himself in a difficult school, in a difficult locality. Inside—apathy, listlessness, and ignorance: outside—the dross of circumstances. What was the matter? He and Bell long talked it over. It was clear that education had not shown them how to live. If it had taught them how to read, it had failed to make them want to read or know what to read. If it had

taught them how to add up £ s. d. it had failed to show them how to spend wisely. It aimed to teach them how to think but did not reveal to them what to think. That forty minutes spent in talking at the Class: was this a worthwhile harvest?

These two good people determined to do something that would alter these people's lives. Though Bell was not a member of the staff they decided that she should teach with him. They were prepared to risk getting no 'results' in the old sense, if they could better their children's lives. They set to work with no fixed theory.

As a boy Teddy had always been happy when making and tinkering with materials of all sorts. He had by him many odds and ends of nails, saws, hammers, and gadgets, and a vast fund of ingenuity.

Almost furtively, at first, he brought out these things and with some old boxes for timber set to work to make things. It was almost magical to see the appeal to the children: it was clear that in doing things and making things he was reaching the real child somehow. There was no scheme of work. Everything they made was needed by the children either for school or home. Here there was no determining by the teacher whether the child had reached the stage to attempt some specified work in a progressive scheme. Nor was it then apparent to the O'Neills that such progression substitutes another person's ideas for the child's own and does away with imagination. There was none of this assessing. They just went ahead. They gladly let the child's reach exceed his grasp. They had no workshops, no benches, only cheap saws, hammers, and boxes, but they planned and schemed and made for themselves cutting-boards and planing-boards, vices, planes, and benches. Most of these things they made by breaking down old school desks. Then they set to work to make dainty desks and seats, fit for a home, to replace the old pitch-pine ones. They made beds and cots for the overcrowded, ill-furnished homes, chairs, cretonned ottoman stools, bookcases, sideboards, armchairs, all of which sold readily.

At first workmanship was crude, joints uncertain, and grace absent, but the work went on and boys began to feel the need for set-square work and good joints and neat finish. Smaller boys kept up as well as larger: a Standard III child completed a rabbit hutch with a run, in every way equal to one made by the oldest boy, and had a real rabbit in it.

The activity did not cease at the school door: 'I got up at five o'clock to make one of those seats'—a margarine box padded with old rags and camouflaged with cretonne—said one boy. 'You see, sir, we have only two chairs at our house.' Half-jestingly Teddy said, 'You'll have a house full of furniture when you get married', and he replied quite seriously, 'Yes, and I'll have made it all myself.

Perhaps a list of what they actually made will indicate how far they went: these were real things, full size, which each fulfilled its purpose. Weighing machines to weigh an adult: large scales to weigh an adult sitting in an armchair or to weigh coal in a pan: large weights which were boxes filled with stones, old iron, and other junk: small scales with saucer pans and sets of weights made of lead: height measurers giving height in metric units as well as inches: yard rulers made from blind sticks: large toy-shops with real shelves, counter, drawer, and chair for the shopman: large dolls' beds: babies' cots: single beds: armchairs: sideboards: bookcases: table book-racks: plant stands: ottomans: large boards and easels: spelling boards for backward children: inkstands: wooden paint boxes: overmantels containing copies of famous pictures: tables and chairs:

hutches. And parallel with all this came the idea that the School itself need not be a pitch-pine barracks but a refined, charming, and convenient well-furnished home.

But though, at first, he seemed little more than a handwork lunatic, it soon became evident that handwork was leading to other considerations. Having made bookcases, the children wanted books; having made a rabbit hutch they needed a book on rabbits; after fitting up a home-made electric bell, a book on electrical gadgets; and soon, in addition to the literary books, they had a library of books scattered on the tables for reference and research. When they made overmantels and picture frames, they wanted pictures: why not paint them? Much material had to be bought. Far better to buy it in the neighbourhood than to have it requisitioned. Such buying stimulated local interest and education began to be a topic of conversation in the corner shops and pubs.

From time to time Teddy was able to introduce a new idea, a new subject. No need to teach a class. He showed it to one or two children and they taught it to others and soon the whole class knew the method. His first care was to get the children to love literature, so he filled long tables—long desks back to back—with books of his own, including story books, catalogues, tourist guides, and such periodicals as Bibby's Annual. The children were asked to subscribe for more and they did so, regularly, week by week. Eventually they provided about one hundred books in all.

As soon as a child could read properly, in whatever class it might be, he dropped the teaching of reading for that child. Henceforth that child read as you or I, for leisure and pleasure and information, sitting in a comfortable position where and how he liked. Teddy would find boys at 'night school'—for they had soon begun to return to school of their own accord in the evening—worn out with sawing, lie on the floor by another boy's candle, to read. He saw Alfie Bentham, surely the dullest of his boys, driven at last by physical exhaustion to take to reading, pick up a book and become so interested in it that when Teddy stumbled over his feet he never even looked up. He recognized the time wasted at Saint Luke's and Saint Philip's whilst teaching reading—'Don't take your eyes off your book', 'Don't turn over those pages', 'The next word, you?' 'Stop looking at the pictures'—and all sixty reading the same geography reader, which we ourselves would never read, when each could have chosen a different book sixty times over. The more books in a classroom the more ideas in the room: the more ideas in the room, the more ideas penetrate to each individual child. What children need is opportunity.

Buying in the school district was a contribution to their education. The children saw where and what to buy. They went with the teacher to buy and formed the habit of buying the best instead of the 'comics'. His boys and girls found the bookshops most absorbing. They had not even known where they were before. Can you, without having known these boys before he came to them, realize Teddy's intense thrill of joy when two came up to him to say they had been to town and 'Please, sir, there's a second-hand copy of *Pilgrim's Progress* in the market for fourpence halfpenny'?

And through books they were led to poetry.

And then they began to make books.

They first made tiny shaped books into which the children copied favourite poems or fragments. Each had a suggestive title—' Pearls of Great Price ', ' Culled Flowers ', and the like —supplied

at first by the teachers and in time by the children. Then they began making book backs, cardboard covered with wallpaper or cretonne and tied up with ribbon.

Having got a pretty book back there was no lack of enthusiasm. to make a book to put inside it. Fairy stories were popular themes. These were roughly done, as authors do, on scrap paper, very full of alterations. They were corrected among themselves and then submitted to Teddy and, last of all, neatly written or printed and bound into the back. The children began to read each others' stories most eagerly, and side by side with this free reading the plot, style, and freedom from mistakes rapidly improved. It was through the shaped books that this spate of authorship spread to the younger children—"The Witch's Hat", shaped like a hat, 'The Fairy Butterfly', like a butterfly. They became wildly enthusiastic about them and never tired of making stories, the appeal through hand and eye evidently stimulating their imagination. In some specially backward cases the effect was wonderful: boys who had never written anything before, wrote now and legibly. And they were so proud to see their books on the tables and their names on the list of Authors' Latest Publications. 'Why, teacher, Tom Walsh was stupid and now he's made a book.' For fluency, the first essential in authorship, there is nothing to equal the purely imaginative story.

Geography and History were now introduced to the children by similar methods, and such books as *Farming in Canada*, by Jim Barlow, Fred Ashton's *Travels in Africa*, and Robert Broughton's *My Tour in India*, appeared on the tables. *Our Village* and *Nuts Dene* are other titles of this date.

Being himself a lover of music Teddy wished these children to share his joy with him. He would sit down and begin to play just as he might at home. He would sing them songs and they would join in, and the rest of the work would continue. A rule was made that when music began hammering should cease 'as it was rude'. He instituted a music table. Groups of children would ask him to play for them or would sit and sing without the piano through a whole book of songs. It was before the days of broadcasting, but he could judge he was succeeding as he heard Sullivan, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert whistled all over the village to the sound of clogs.

And then came the poetry of motion. That dancing should come spontaneously was natural—only stopping it would have stopped it. The girls danced first, not in couples, but singly, each interpreting the music in her own way. The boys in their ugly and ungainly clothes seemed clumsy but were soon eager to try. One night he found three of the children dancing in a country lane to the music of Beethoven's 'Adieux,' which they were singing softly.

Then one day a strange man came into the school. He stumbled over a boy's legs in coming in but the boy did not notice: like Alfie Bentham he was reading and he kept on reading. The school was alive with activities and the man was bewildered. He was one of His Majesty's School Inspectors. He was used to being shown time-tables and schemes of work and record books and to find himself surrounded by pitch-pine furniture and an atmosphere of silence, perforated by staccato sounds and, presently, to be shown rows of silent up-turned faces. He must indeed have been utterly bewildered. It would not have been very surprising if he had sent for a policeman.

But Mr. Bloom was a man of parts and these children were so utterly unlike those he associated with Knuzden and expected to find staring at him, that his heart warmed and he got to work. It must have been the most exciting experience in his official life. But he felt he must check up conventional results. They had made much arithmetical apparatus as you know. The books

pleased him—the figures were neat and the calculations had statements. Composition was good: there were original poems and the handwriting was excellent. He turned to the reading of poetry and when Ned Ashton spouted forth:

*' The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways ...'*

it was enough.

The Report he wrote reached the (then) Board of Education, and it called attention to something quite unusual. It was cautiously held up for 'further consideration', but its purport got around and reached important ears. It reached those of Lord Lytton, fresh from his work of piloting the epoch-making Fisher Education Bill through the House of Lords. It so happened that Lord Lytton, besides being President of the Conference known as the New Ideals in Education of which you read in Chapter IV, was also Chairman of its Executive Committee. A fifth meeting of the Body was due to be held in August of that momentous 1918. The Committee had set aside two whole days for papers descriptive of Educational Experiments, and on the strength of Mr. Bloom's discovery, Mr. Edward F. O'Neill was invited to read them an account of 'Developments in Self-activity in an Elementary School'. This he did to an attentive audience of between four and five hundred, who were far more impressed by his personality and his off-the-platform discussion than by his actual presentation of his theme, in the Debating Hall of the Union Society at Oxford University at 5.30 p.m. on August 16th.

In his inaugural address to the Conference Lord Lytton had used these words, '... one of the most important problems, therefore, which we have got to solve is how to make the process of learning more active and less passive '.

To many who were there that afternoon it must have seemed that this 'rough diamond' from Knuzden near Blackburn had stumbled upon an approach to the solution of their President's poser. One present on the occasion certainly thought so. This was that Edmond Holmes with whose name you are already familiar, whose book *What Is and What Might Be* had set Teddy's mind to work in Mac's digs at Crewe eight years before, and who, from now on till the date of his death, was to keep in touch with Teddy and his work. This man's encouragement, advice, and blessing were to prove of great comfort to Teddy in some ugly years which were just ahead of him.

Mr. Bloom's visit led to a further and important development. Teddy's appointment at Knuzden was temporary. The return of the actual headmaster was imminent. Feeling that O'Neill was not to be lost to the world and that he would be of great service in a populous district. Bloom advised him to apply for the vacant headmastership at Prestolee near Famworth, between Manchester and Bolton, and word was passed to the School Managers which induced them, unwittingly, to appoint him.

And so the closing weeks of 1918 saw him, at the age of twenty-eight, with his wife and their two children—he had now a little son as well as his daughter Margaret—descending one of those roads which lead down long steep hills to the village and over the bridge at the bottom to the school, where they were destined to labour unceasingly together, through storm and sunshine, for the next thirty years of their lives.

CHAPTER VI A Character Study

Let us consider, soberly, what sort of a man O'Neill had now become and just how he struck or was likely to strike people.

A wholly unexpected mantle of 'fame' had been thrust upon him. In the rush of daily work at Knuzden he had not had the time, even if he had had the inclination, to discover that he held to definable theories or had any particular belief or method. He had been swept on in the growing rush of activities and extemporizings from one development to the next, guided by his sensitive instinct rather than by any stated philosophy.

In undertaking to speak at Oxford he had been forced to attempt some statement of the principles which guided him and to try to recognize some method in his spontaneous actions. He had done so and, as a result, had suddenly found himself no longer isolated but in close spiritual contact with many high-thinking personages who understood and shared his beliefs and theories, were on the look-out for just such teachers as himself, and were prepared to back him.

But he certainly did not seem to be anything to write home about to his fellows in the teaching profession—unless in very different terms.

The man was nothing more nor less than a charlatan squatter who had seized upon an unfrequented school and run crazy. He never did his duty. He was supposed to work to a timetable, as they had to do: he ignored it. He was supposed to follow a set course of lessons, as they were: he did not. He was supposed to have children in classes, as they had: his were running all over the shop. He was as responsible for the care of the school furniture as they were: he chopped it up. He had his wife teaching in the school and she had never been appointed to do so. It was known that he had a poor opinion of other teachers: he seemed to think they were all idiots. Moreover, he was a black-leg. All teachers were expected to become members of the National Union of Teachers: he had refused to do so. Who did he happen to think he was? And how might the parents react to him?

He was coming to a mill town of rawly dealt-with people, steeped in the half-timing system, of child labour in cotton mills: people hostile to schooling because it kept children out of the mills and unable to earn money which mothers sorely needed. True that the Fisher Bill was shortly to end this exploiting of cheap child labour, but that news had not yet reached their realization, and anyhow it was not to come into force at once: in any case that was their view and the mills were their livelihood. And this man objected to child labour in their mills.

And what of the School Managers?

When his application was considered together with his testimonials and recommendations, two of them had visited his school at Knuzden. They do not seem to have tumbled to the fact that he had metamorphosed the place. They saw it as it then was, and no doubt it was particularly quiet on the occasion of the visit of these strangers. They did not anticipate that he might play the devil with the property under their Management. Moreover, there were two mill managers on the Board of School Managers at Prestolee, tough Lancashire men who had fought their way up and had interests in the mills. These men depended on cheap child labour and upon children coming

to the mills when they left school, and here they were appointing a man as headmaster to whom the whole idea of child labour was sinful—a man who was likely to turn children against the work upon which their existence depended. Moreover—another thing—when they entered the school they expected the children to jump up and stand, interrupting their work—to be taught, in fact, or fancy?—to respect their betters. And they expected their headmaster to co-operate. And there was another critic of this appointment.

The chief assistant (male) teacher had been swept up into the war but was soon due to be demobilized. He was an older man than O'Neill. It was natural that when he heard that his headmaster had died he should cherish the conviction that he—who had been away serving his country—would be rewarded with promotion by his grateful Managers. And he learned that this man of twenty-eight—the youngest man ever to have been appointed as a headmaster in Lancashire's memory—had been put in, over his head, and what's more, that the man's wife was to be on the Staff as well; and he was expected to come back and work under the pair of them, for you could bet your boots the woman would be shoving . . . (whatever it is that one shoves into whatever place one shoves it). If any one cared to have his views on the whole business, they were that it was 'bloody'.

At Prestolee the Infant Department was an independent command from the Elementary School under its own headmistress—an experienced woman who knew how to train infants to take their places in any normal elementary school. But not in a bear-garden: not if she knew it. And, of course, if there was one matter which would have helped Teddy more than any other it was that the infants should be given a sound start from his point of view and under his guidance and not embarrassed by submission to a contrary technique such as that prevailing generally at this time in Infant Departments.

And there was the caretaker, a man who took a pride in his job. The parquet floor in the Hall, for instance. The children were only allowed to walk round the edge of it. The teaching staff and the children left the building sharp on time and left everything spick and span and no rubbish lying about to get in his way. He could have it all nice in no time and locked up till the kids were marched in next morning. And here was a chap coming what was going to have them running in and out in all weathers, filling the place with muck all the blinking day; and sawing up wood all over the shop, and unfinished jobs left to go on with, and not clearing out of the building till God knows when at night and expecting to be let in next morning before he was fairly out of his bed; and how anyone expected him to do his work with all this 'ere he would certainly like someone to tell him. He was very uncertain what the world was coming to.

Well! There you are. Opinions vary. You had better form your own.

Meanwhile Teddy himself was taking stock of his position and a creed was establishing itself in his soul.

He believed in SELF-ACTIVITY, which he saw as the instinctive doing of things without being told to. Self-active people see what is to be done and do it.

He believed in ORIGINALITY, which he saw as the ability to bring things into being without being a copyist.

Believing, too, in INITIATIVE, he was convinced that the School time-table killed it.

Aware that most people can start a thing but fail to see it through owing to lack of PERSISTENCE, he believed that it was the school system of set periods of forty or so minutes of lessons, at the end of which children were forced to stop doing whatever they were engaged in doing, which virtually made it impossible for them to develop this characteristic in a healthy manner.

He believed that Education should deal in realities and not be artificial. It should be concerned with the day's work of 'Jacks-of-all-trades'—children and teachers—the response to actuality—genuine employment called for by the circumstances of their environment inside school as well as outside.

He believed that the ABILITY TO FIND OUT and the desire to do so matter, rather than any limited load of information a child can carry, remember and repeat.

He did not believe in lessons all day, every day: nor that every subject should be taken every day. For a long time one lesson per day would be ample and its function should be at one time stimulating to research: at another confirming and ordering knowledge acquired.

He believed that the function of a teacher should be to release the life force which is latent in every child: to provide opportunities for it to exercise and to facilitate such exercise in every possible way, and never withhold opportunities.

He believed that every teacher should be a research worker, with his fingers in every pie: never stuck for ideas: never lacking resource, and that in the schools they should find the rich environment which would enable them to live so fully.

He believed that teachers should do things with the children rather than for them, and that children should be allowed to work, together, to discuss their work one with another, and to learn by helping each other.

Convinced that the man who never made a mistake never made much, he believed that the school was, par excellence, the place where the making of mistakes in the effort to achieve should be welcomed: that these yards and buildings were indeed educational laboratories which, since education would be in a constant state of flux and growth, should not be needlessly swept and garnished.

Disbelieving in the division of Life into 'work' and 'play', and seeing Life as whole and joyous activity—Living—he felt that men and women would feel the surge of aliveness as they educate themselves hand in hand with their children under such conditions as he hoped to establish, and that they would come early and stay late for the sheer joy that they would experience in so doing: a joy which he had already found himself and knew to be experienced by his children.

CHAPTER VII

Prestolee : The First Phase

Aglow with the joy of widened opportunity; flushed with excitement at knowing he had the support of many, just over the horizon; thinking—quite erroneously—that the school Managers at Prestolee were eager that he should raze that lodging-house of pedantry and build in its place a home of learning; he never questioned whether his new staff and children would welcome them, but started, quite deliberately, to apply his beliefs and theories and to rouse and animate the School.

Some hope!

You will have anticipated what he himself had not even dreamed of.

He had no idea how much had to be undone. It was like writing upon paper which had already been completely covered with earlier writing in indelible ink. The prejudices against such new ideas were immense. Every change he made was a reflection on past and present staff.

On the first morning of his coming it rained. The boys huddled round the front door, the caretaker keeping it shut and batting them with his cap. The girls, separated from the boys, played rowdily under an open shed at the back. The staff sat gossiping round a fire in the staff-room.

On his arrival the children were lined up in the yards, the boys in front of the School, the girls at the back. There, after dressing, right-turning, and marking time, they quickly marched into school to a tune on the piano and stood in lines in the hall doing nothing but feeling stress while the teachers marked the registers. Then, still standing, a hymn was sung, prayers were read, and to rooms they marched, ready for a sit and a scripture lesson off a scheme until 9.30, when they changed over to arithmetic and period lessons, with breaks for playtimes and other purposes. Seven or eight lesson tablets were administered every day and then, at four o'clock, the school suddenly went silent: teachers and children were gone.

Of course he was face to face with the old dilemma which confronts all reformers. Should he go slow and explain and try to win over the staff—or should he overthrow the tables of those who gave lessons and the seats of those who had no intention of selling doves or any other peace emblem? Well—he knew the goal—SELF-ACTIVITY—and he worked like mad to reach it.

So, next day the caretaker was ordered away from the door. Children were told to come in and bring a book of scripture stories or a Bible and sit down in the hall. Seats had to be improvised: all sorts of difficulties arose: there was muddle, and wondering, and some noisiness of course, but they soon settled down.

It was difficult to break up the lessons—the sitting in rows and the formal teaching habits. By way of beating their swords into plough-shares he turned the teachers' blackboards into tables. Teachers' scheme-books were asked for and collected and got lost, which put some of these people on their beam ends. The time-table, until then displayed glazed in a handsome frame, was eclipsed by a colour print of the 'Laughing Cavalier' glazed in the same frame.

As a result of abolishing set lessons there were, for a time, mad rushes from one thing to another, but soon the children quietened down, finding individual interests and sticking longer at them.

Playtimes—as such—were abolished: teachers had tea when they liked and the preparation of this and setting it daintily on trays and bringing it to the teachers was explained as ' domestic science ' for girls.

There were difficulties and abuses without end—stealing, smoking in closets, rowdyism, activities hitherto as extensively performed behind the teachers' backs, but now reaching the surface.

The old organization whereby children were given out books and the collecting of them. again by a monitor had to go, as being better for the books than for the children.

Everyone was encouraged to go, get, and later put away things which he needed. As far as possible children were allowed to become property owners, each being supplied with his own pen and pencil, ink and paints, and considered responsible for the care of these things.

As at Knuzden, many useful things had to be made. The handicraft room, hitherto locked up, was thrown open to young and old and from the consequent confusion such articles as primitive bookcases began to appear.

Knowing, as you already do, how progress developed at Knuzden, you will be in no doubt as to the probability of parallel achievements here. But at Knuzden there had been no considerable staff opposition for Teddy to win over and guide, and here, at Prestolee, this proved to be a major difficulty. All those factions of which you are aware—the infant-school mistress, the now returned chief (male) assistant, the staff generally, and the caretaker, were irritated, muddled, hurt, and made to imagine that they were being deprived of prestige by the thuds of O'Neill's swinging sledge-hammers and by the unquestioning help he was receiving from his wife, and her obvious assumption that all he was doing was wise.

To the O'Neills themselves, embarrassed by housing problems as well as by this constant and growing opposition, it seemed to be such up-hill work that they could hardly see what progress they were making. There exists, however, an independent, recorded opinion on the work done in these early days. The school was visited by Edmond Holmes. What this ex-chief inspector saw there led to Teddy being invited, for a second time in succession, to address the Conference of New Ideals in Education which was meeting this year, 1919, at Cambridge. Edmond Holmes took the chair on this occasion and in introducing Teddy he used these words:

' Mr. O'Neill has had effective charge of his new school for only eight months. What he has accomplished in those few months borders on the miraculous. If the school, before he took charge of it, was, as no doubt it was, of the orthodox conventional type, then I can say, without exaggeration, that an entirely new school has come into being. And if I were to characterize in a few words the change that has been effected I would say that learning by doing has taken the place of learning by swallowing.

' No one in England knows better than I do what learning by swallowing means. I inspected elementary schools for nearly six years and during the whole of that time learning by doing was the very "rare exception and learning by swallowing was the almost universal rule. For the first

half of my inspectorial career, learning by swallowing was compulsory, and it was my duty as an Inspector—a duty which I discharged with much zeal and diligence—to see that it was systematically carried out. The children sat in blocks called classes, and opened their mouths like so many fledgelings at the word of command, and the teacher then dropped into their mouths pellets of information—rules, definitions, names, dates, tables, formulae, and the like. These pellets of information were as a rule either semidigested or indigestible, the result being that the young fledgelings who had swallowed them made poor growth and seldom found their wings. The child who is learning by swallowing is at best learning the one thing he is required to learn: and he is learning nothing else, or very little else. His memory is perhaps being hypertrophied, but the rest of his faculties are being atrophied, starved for want of exercise.

'But the child who is learning by doing is learning many things besides the one thing he is supposed to be learning. He is learning to desire, to purpose, to place, to initiate, to execute: he is learning to profit by experience, to think, to reason, to judge. And he is learning one other thing: he is learning to co-operate with others, to work for a common end, to feel the glow of comradeship.'

And what had Edmond Holmes seen at Prestolee which led him to take the unprecedented step of inviting E. F. O'Neill to speak a second year in succession to the Conference of New Ideals in Education?

In the first place Teddy himself. Here at any rate was the artist who understood his medium, the saint moved by conviction, the sage whose wisdom was born of experience. Here the enthusiast whose fever was contagious, the rough diamond who might make an impression on even a hardened pedagogue.

There was, too, this ant-hill of activity, this unusual state of purposeful movement. There had been a look in the faces of these children at Prestolee which he had found as pleasing to him as it was unusual in such a place. They were doing something; and whatever it was that they were engaged in—and it was not always easy to ascertain what this was—because they were doing it he felt no doubt that those qualities which he associated with learning by doing were beginning to fructify within them. They were, moreover, more polite, friendly, and natural than was usual with children in similarly located schools.

In addition, the school premises had an air of domesticity. Hand-made individual desks and chairs, bookcases and tables enamelled or chintz-covered and embellished with flowers in vases, gave the class-rooms an air of being lived in. In the concrete yards flower-beds had been made by arranging bricks in diaper curbs to hold soil in place, and in these annuals were in blossom. Here and there a hole had been broken in the hard surface of the yards, the ground excavated and filled with earth in which had been planted an ornamental tree. Some railings had been removed from one already there and a seat built to encircle it. The gate between the two yards had been unpadlocked and there was coming and going between the girls and boys. The area intended as the school garden was patterned now with private beds each cared for by one or two amateurs.

Nothing very striking of course, baldly stated in this way; but you know what 'atmosphere' means in the sense of mental and moral environment—well, he sensed a good atmosphere, and he liked it, and he did not find the same elsewhere.

So in July 1919, Mr. E. F. O'Neill for the second time addressed the Conference of New Ideals in Education.

On this occasion he revealed and elaborated the principles with which you became familiar when you read his credo in Chapter VI. He showed that in recognizing conditions of freedom for teacher and child it was not in his mind that this should be interpreted as licence, but as the removal of artificial restrictions on healthy natural activity and the facilitating of these activities by a helpful, directive environment. His was no 'do-as-you-please' school, but a 'be-happy-as-you-do' school in a field rich with opportunity, guidance, and gear.

He told of how he asked of child and teacher the development of the sense of responsibility: how each child was encouraged to have his own, self-imposed programme of work and expected to feel in duty to himself bound to carry out this scheme. 'You can only teach a child to live by allowing him to live: to be a responsible person by allowing him to take responsibility: not to steal by allowing real opportunities to refrain from stealing: not to misuse tools by giving opportunity for their use. Even a dictionary and a Bible can be misused by filthy minds, but are they therefore to be put away? There must be freedom in the school, but there must also be a directive environment, spiritual and material. Just as life does—so should the school environment disclose to us the necessity for work.'

This was no new doctrine, nor was it the simplest statement of it that had yet been voiced. Those present were not hearing it for the first time. It is succinctly and beautifully declared in Saint Luke's Gospel in the parable of the man who had two sons. These sons were both conscious of the fact that they were essentially free creatures. The younger interpreted this as a right to do-as-he-pleased in any irresponsible way he chose. He so acted, and soon came to the conclusion that he would prefer to be a slave—'make me as one of thy hired servants' was a thought which came into his mind as he approached his father. The elder, while he too realized that he was free to do as he pleased, was obsessed with the idea that his father would constrain him to act in accordance with his wishes and that any self-assertion on his part would lead to intolerable resentment; so he exercised his freedom of choice by insisting on regarding himself as one of his father's slaves: 'Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment.' He played the do-as-you-are-told-to-do game and complained that he had never received any reward for so doing. It was then that the father tried to reveal the truth to him, and this was that he, the elder son, refused to accept—refused to recognize that he is already in possession of all that the father has to give: 'All that I have is thine.' This is the father stating an eternal fact: it is not the belated offering of a vague reward. And what can 'all' mean other than moral freedom and an infinity of potentialities?

O'Neill had stumbled upon these profound truths. He recognized that child and teacher were each in God's sight Free-wills. Instinctively O'Neill respected them as such. He believed that they had it in them to develop an infinity of power and ability.

He refused to coerce them.
He hated to obstruct them.

He recoiled from the use of extraneous incentives, either rewards or punishments.

And, like the father in the parable, he desired that they should find their well-being in the natural joy of doing for the sake of doing the infinity of activities which in them latent lay.

It was nine months later that a new personality slipped into the School. He was supposed to have come to learn something about teaching. He was known, phonetically, as Colonel Omes.

Omes was forced on to Teddy in much the same way that a card is forced upon the unwary.

Of Teddy's background Omes knew nothing: of his philosophy of Education Omes was unaware: of the opposition which Teddy was encountering locally he had yet to learn.

It is true that Omes was forced on Teddy, but it is equally true that O'Neill's school was forced on Omes.

By training Omes was an experienced Naval Architect and had, in addition, been a lecturer in that branch of Engineering in the University of Glasgow of which he was a Doctor of Science. He was familiar with the building of the largest ships afloat, and the First World War found him thus engaged. When war came he volunteered for the Navy which he preferred to the Army, imagining it to be safer: but he also believed his choice was the more reasonable in view of his training. He was accepted as a Lieutenant R.N.V.R. It was rare in that war for an R.N.V.R. officer to reach the rank of commander. That Omes did this was due to his technical knowledge. When, later, the Royal Air Force came into being Omes was one of a small group of officers taken from the Navy and the Army to form a nucleus for the organization of the new Force. In passing from the Navy to the R.A.F. his rank of Commander was changed to Lieutenant-Colonel R.A.F., a designation which has since then ceased to exist in this Force but which accounts for his being so called when he reached Prestolee.

Some years before the outbreak of war, accident had given him an opportunity to organize a company of Scottish boys into a sort of Naval Cadet Corps. The company was thoroughly drilled in the kind of co-operative exercises associated with Naval training—the erection of sheerlegs, field-gun drill, battery-gun operation, getting out of collision-mats, boat-pulling and the like. Their undoubted smartness was due to drill, whereby the habit of instant and unquestioning obedience to orders was secured. Spontaneity, originality, and initiative found no place in training of this kind. Omes was a good drill-sergeant; but it must be admitted that he had 'a way with him', which had an effect on these boys' moral development.

The coming of the 1918 Armistice found this man, of such a different outlook to O'Neill's on educational matters, determined to abandon his profession of Naval Architecture and to take up Education in its place. Being untrained and inexperienced, he had some difficulty in finding a post. He was told of Teddy's work and advised to go and have a look at what was happening at Prestolee. He was told that such a visit might teach him something. Teddy was communicated with and generously agreed to welcome him. He was to spend a week at the school. He spent four years.

During the greater part of that period Omes lived with the O'Neills. It was not without difficulty and inconvenience that Bell and Teddy made room for him in their little house, in an adjoining village, with their two children, a housekeeper and the housekeeper's little girl. A tiny room had to be given up. It needed a bed and a chair. As Teddy could not afford to buy these, he made

them. But he could not make bedding. It was not until thirty years later that Omes came to know that the reason Teddy had no watch was that it and its chain went to and remained at the pawnshop in order that this should be provided. They did, however, and Omes's bedding came.

Omes's first look round the school at Prestolee filled him with dismay. This member of a cultured and intellectual class, fresh from four years of Naval punctilio wholly to his liking and with the tradition of a great public school as a framework within him and a healthy love and veneration for the old school tie in any manifestation, insisted that these children of the working classes lacked experiences. What was the good of reading and writing to such pupils who had seen nothing but crude ugliness? They had had no experiences wherewith to interpret their reading and they had nothing to write about which was real. Reality, to them, was this environment of filth, of dirty rags of clothing, of clattering clogs, the irritation of sores, and the tickling of lice—all too prevalent in such places in 1920 and not wholly banished by 1942. His immediate reaction was to suggest that the more sickening cases should be turned out of the school altogether!

Teddy explained to him that you could not do that in an elementary school although you could thus simplify your difficulties in the schools in which Omes had been brought up, and—by way of putting this man's sensitive and cultured nose to the grindstone and thus getting the best out of him—for Teddy's instinct told him that there might be much forthcoming—he made arrangements whereby Omes was allowed to teach as an uncertificated, untrained teacher. He was given a group of ten-year-old boys on whom to try his hand.

Now remember—Omes came to Prestolee fresh from an active, busy war experience, preceded by an active, busy period of shipbuilding. He knew no other than an environment of great activity and so the atmosphere of activity which he found at Prestolee did not impress him as it had impressed his uncle, Edmond Holmes, and as it might have moved him had he known all that had gone to its creation. What struck him was that the activity seemed purposeless.

This active writing of books for example.

The stories which his ten-year-olds were producing were all of one model and took ages to achieve. 'Me and my pal decided to go to Australia in search of hidden treasure . . .' They take a revolver each from the drawers of their respective fathers. This is all the luggage they take. They 'take' a ship and go to Australia. Here they are attacked by natives. They shoot down a swarm of them, find the treasure under a tree, come home and live happily ever after. Occasionally they go to America for a change and are attacked by Indians.

Omes attempted interest. He asked questions. How far away is Australia? How long does a ship take to go there? How much does it cost to go there? By what route? Does one see anything of interest *en route*? Or feel anything? Of what did the treasure consist? How did it come to be under a tree? How did the boys know where to look for it?

It was evident that such questions were meaningless to such boys. Upon inquiry it was learned that none of them had actually seen a revolver, or a ship, or a harbour, or the sea except that disciplined edition of it said to be one of the attractions of Blackpool.

Omes suggested to these boys that instead of writing about things regarding which they knew nothing at first hand, they should write about things with which they were familiar. They

couldn't. They did not want to. They had, of course, been writing to a formula hitherto. They were unable to find interest in things.

It seemed, too, to his practical mind that far too much time was being thrown away by insisting upon good handwriting and spelling. It was as if young artists were forbidden to draw until they had mastered some approved way of drawing hands. He wanted them to get on and write faster and let their handwriting be improved later on when this could be done quite quickly. He said that at the age of ten capital letters did not matter. He himself wrote with ease and speed in block capitals, having learned to do so at the age of twenty-two. Teddy told him that he spelt sox wrongly: he said he did not spell it socks and asked what sox did spell? He was indifferent to conventional 'subjects' and could take an interest in and understand anything and everything. Everything, he claimed, was interesting if you could only see. His problem was how was he to interest these boys.

CHAPTER VIII A Sudden Storm

How was Omes to interest these boys? Well—that should be an easy matter. Here was a man of wide experience—he had trod on a king's toe and was one of the only men alive who had dined at table with an unchained gorilla—who had burned his boats and come into this business of schooling because he liked teaching. Who, moreover, liked young people, especially boys, and enjoyed the feeling that he had power over them and could influence them. Who was unmarried and did not keep a dog: thinking he would find all his needs met when he took up teaching. Who believed himself to be a 'born teacher'—and it may as well be agreed that of the pellet-feeding type he was an exceptionally successful specimen, for he did fulfil with brilliance one conception of the teacher's function—he was able to keep children amused and interested, which, in practice, amounts to keeping them interested in the teacher, without whom there seems nothing for them to do. Surely such a person-cum-personality with this natural gift of doing so should be allowed to spoon-feed these raw children using a blackboard and performing cleverly with coloured chalks. He could give them far better formulae for story-writing: greatly increase their output and soon produce results which would be something to be admired—rather similar, in fact, to his own work. Why was this group of liberated children to be left buzzing about in a frenzy of self-activity in a vacuum of ideas to produce the same banalities over and over again, when a dexterous teacher was available to interest them and get results?

'I do not want *you* to interest these boys,' said Teddy.

What arrant bosh! It was their first clash.

But Teddy went on. 'I believe in self-activity, spontaneity, originality, and initiative—the sources of all human progress: the powers which make a man and which will make him a superman. These boys have their own senses. Get them to use them as tools. Get them to find out. Let this act of *finding* be more important than what is found. The child may want to know how many days there are in March. It is a quick and easy way to tell him, but it benefits him little. Get him to use a calendar. Provide the means for finding out and the child will enjoy using them.' It was Omes's first glimpse of what 'Education' really means. He was being asked to keep constantly in mind the ideal of a child active without prompting: keen to carry out work: keen to explore: finding his joy in the full exercise of every faculty.

Though he liked none of them Colonel Omes was stimulated by criticism, challenge, and opposition. It needed but a moment's consideration to decide that between Teddy's plan of 'learning by doing' and the alternative of 'learning by swallowing' there was no difficult problem of choice. 'Get them to use their tools; get them to find things out.' All right! But they did not seem to want to find things out: they felt no desire to find interest in cultural matters. 'Provide the means for finding out', Teddy had said, 'and the children will enjoy using them.' But these children were expert in detecting lack of interest.

Just how the Museum idea came to him Omes forgot as soon as it reached him. Suddenly it was with him. 'Let us start a museum in the school. But since this is not an ordinary school we will not have an ordinary museum. We will ask for exhibits but we will only accept those which strictly comply with our requirements.' 'And what are these requirements?'

'For the moment—never mind. But we shall have to have small committees of more or less experts to judge exhibits offered. The objects generally sent to museums by people who are tired of keeping their junk are stuffed animals, sea-urchins, butterflies and moths on pins, fossils and curiosities. Our committees must be able to deal with such objects and report whether they are or not—and if not why not—eligible. To do this they will need help and guidance: particularly will they need books.' And in this latter respect the class-room was empty.

A search of the school premises was organized. It produced little of value. Books there were, in abundance—sixty copies of each—sixty copies of one 'reader', sixty of another, sixty of a third: one hundred and eighty copies of three books when one single copy of one hundred and eighty different books would have been so much more useful. It was evident that adequate means were not at hand.

An appeal to the children themselves brought some books from their homes. The O'Neills contributed handsomely. Omes himself supplemented the supply. Soon it looked as if the committee might get to work.

By this time the whole school were becoming curious about the museum project. Offers were in the offing, and were the subjects of conversation and speculation. But what was this special requirement which had to be fulfilled? At last Omes felt the moment was auspicious for his definite pronouncement.

'Museums', he explained to these boys who were failing to find interest in things, 'museums are collections of interesting objects. We want something different. Our museum is to be a collection of things which are of no interest whatever. We will only accept absolutely uninteresting objects. If any exhibit offered to us has any suspicion of interest it will not be accepted. We must be polite in our refusal. We must write reports which make it quite clear to those who offer us specimens that their specimens are interesting in some way which we must state, and so cannot be accepted.'

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, all was changed. It was as if an iron curtain—an interest-proof curtain—had been raised: as if the sluices of a mighty reservoir had been opened. A flood of wonder rushed in.

As for those who had exhibits to offer, consternation overtook many. The party who had a dead cat moored in the canal, ready for the opening day, saw at once that it was alive with interest. It could not be offered. Some wits in the next class offered the broken-off neck of a bottle. The chemistry of glass proved to be entrancing: the manufacture of glass bottles entralling: their history from Greek and Roman times through the Middle Ages till today made a grand research for one committee: there had been glass bottles in Ancient Egypt five thousand years ago. Committee boys vied with each other in disclosing interest in broken tiles, old slates, stones, bits of firewood, rusted tins. . . . It seemed there was interest in everything. The means for finding out had become available and the children were enjoying using them. They were learning by doing—and so was Omes.

After the first rush of activity the museum with no exhibits existed as a figment. Its coming was like that of the atomic bomb. In shattering mental shackles it shattered itself. But it generated an atmosphere which radiated with energy both beneficial and harmful. It became evident to O'Neill

as an experienced headmaster that the avalanche of writing which had been set in motion was depositing moraines of essays which would not only fail to please a chance Inspector but would fill him with dismay. You see why?

Though speed of writing had enormously increased, calligraphy had correspondingly deteriorated—and Inspectors naturally fall for good calligraphy. Though the substance of these essays had widened in horizon and grown in volume and detail, the work savoured strongly of mere transcription. It seemed that much that they were, in fact, copying from their research books into the note-books could not possibly be understood by them at the moment', and the Inspector would be very interested in the state of matters at this moment. Ennui had given place to interest. That one could find out for oneself was an established experience. A love of writing had been born. But—though they were unearthing other people's discoveries they were initiating few through their own native wit. They were tending to adopt other people's opinions without forming their own. They were becoming far too matter-of-fact and, as a result, were growing warped. Even if the Inspector entered into the spirit of the thing and asked them questions—without recourse to their reference books they might abet him in forming wrong impressions. It actually happened—a trivial incident but illustrating an attitude of mind. An Inspector came and held up a glass of water, 'Where did that come from?' A chorus answered—rain, the reservoir, a river, a stream, clouds, the sea. No! The answer he wanted was 'A tap'. The Inspector was pleased with himself. Omes was sorry—for the man. O'Neill knew he had to be sorry for himself at the man's hands.

Of course a wonderful movement was in progress but that would be hardly obvious to an itinerant Inspector in the habit—necessarily—of taking snap-shot views. And it was true enough that this movement was at the moment the drifting of a boat in a gale. The rudder would have to be handled and the wind used to direct a course. This was equally evident to Omes and Teddy but, whereas both were confident in the movement, the latter, habituated to the coming of inspectorial hurricanes, was anxious regarding the immediate instant. And he well might be.

For some time now ominous clouds had been noticeable around the village. The storm was largely gathered by the coming of Omes. You see this Doctor of Science who had had teaching experience on the staff of a University and had for several years, prior to the war, successfully run a large boys' cadet corps, was not 'qualified' for teaching or taking charge of ten-year-old children in a Public Elementary School. He was not 'qualified' to do this for the simple reason that he had not the necessary 'qualifications'. Moreover it beat everyone who had them, to know how he had come to be allowed to do it. That he was vigorously doing so was most annoying to . . . well—take the case of the chief (male) assistant. He had served his country, and his friends felt that, as a result, he had been passed over for the headmastership. A qualified man who knew his stuff—he had returned to find the school had been turned into . . . well—he himself had never seen the like—children doing what they damn' well pleased: no time-table: choosing what they wanted to do: everyone allowed to go-as-you-please except, apparently, the older teachers. And this Omes had plunged into the place and was that busy he had hardly time to deign to speak to you. And another thing—this Omes was living with the O'Neills. Naturally his friends asked him what he thought of it. Naturally letters on the state of affairs began to appear in the local Press. Naturally the N.U.T. ought to know that the thing was happening—'scandalous if you ask me'—and naturally, as a consequence, in due course a question was asked in Parliament regarding the activities of a Colonel Omes (he was described as Holmes on that occasion if you care to look it up in Hansard) in one of the Public Elementary Schools in Lancashire.

This was no case of petty touchiness. The chief (male) assistant was profoundly moved. He could get another place any day, and did, in fact, very shortly after, get a good headmastership. He and his friends, especially the headmistress of the infant department, had nothing personally against Omes. But they could not stand by and see the children 'suffer' and do nothing about it. If you were in any doubt, go to the school yourself and look at their handwriting and their spelling and compare these books with those they were writing before Omes got them all excited over his screwy museum. In a case like this surely any right-minded person ought to do something and every decent parent ought to realize what was happening: and what was happening was this—the children were allowed to go-as-you-please and they were becoming illiterate, and as to their arithmetic—Omes seemed to think that his boys would choose to do some as soon as the excitement of scribbling illegible essays on dead cats had died down—but ask yourself ...! Not a hope! And meanwhile they were doing none. Oh yes—they were weighing and measuring their 'museum' exhibits and measuring up the stuff they were making in the manual room: but that was not arithmetic: it wasn't in their books.

So the number of letters in the local Press increased and found their way into nearby papers and the stress was on 'Go-as-you-please' and the resulting illiteracy. Parents read them: were alarmed: and some actually withdrew their Children from the school at Prestolee. That precipitated the storm.

It had always been recognized by the Education Authority that O'Neill had a difficult task and should be given a fair chance, unhampered by inspectors whose duty was to see that a school was conducted on the lines approved by the Board. Prestolee was recognized as an experiment, justified by the Knuzden Report. A period of three years had been agreed upon for him to get his scheme working and more than two of these had now elapsed.

But the storm which had now risen to full blast could not be ignored by the School Managers and these promptly asked the Lancashire Education Authorities to hold an immediate and searching inspection. And so the Inspectors came.

Had it not been for Omes's zealous desire to speed up reading and writing and to broaden outlook and arouse interests all might have continued well for the O'Neills. Teddy knew the ropes: he was watching the three R's. He would have been ready on time with a wealth of progress to show and satisfying writing and arithmetic as well. When they were turned over to him Omes's ten-year-old boys' writing was beautiful enough to look at and a perfect example of slow motion: their output was meagre, their composition trite, and their resourcefulness nil. Now they were writing quickly, were themselves able to read what they had written and their style was increasingly benefiting from this larger output and a growing habit of research. Omes knew quite well that for the moment calligraphy and spelling—what a spate of new words!—were suffering. But he did not wish to interrupt their new-found activity in its formative period. When a reasonable speed had been attained it would be easy to get them to concentrate on legibility and spelling by the simple device of becoming unable, himself, to read what they had written. As for Arithmetic he reckoned that these ten-year-olds had anything from two to four years in which to catch up on the fifteen or so forty-minute periods they had, undoubtedly, missed as a result of their newfound interests; and with their rapidly advancing mentalities and zest they would take to it readily when arithmetic reappeared in their consciousness. Is it not taught much too early in life in any case?

But of course the Inspectors came to judge what it was their duty to adjudicate upon, and from their point of view they found themselves in Omes's group in a field rich in shortcomings. Handwriting utterly unusual in such a school! No copper-plate, no script, no reasonable cursive—stuff that looked more like ordinary adult handwriting than anything else. As for spelling—it was largely phonetic, but not even American for the Lancashire lad has a phonology all his own. Arithmetic was not being touched sometimes for days on end. They should have been doing four sums a day. And of course, with uncanny inspectorial second-sight, they spotted a boy who had been laid up with sores on his hands for several weeks, whose handwriting—perchance in consequence—provided wonderful examples of poor calligraphy; and in him they took a prolonged and kindly interest. The bulk of these shortcomings were found to be in Omes's group.

Had their Report been confined to these standard matters which they were trained to judge it might have been sufficiently damning to cause grave concern. But it was not thus confined. During their prolonged visit to the school the Inspectors had sensed something entirely unusual. They could not shake off a feeling that there was something strangely healthy in this ant-hill of activity. Surely these children looked bright and happy: surely they were honestly busy at honest work: certainly they were polite and friendly. Of course they ought to know how to spell—you can't get away from that. But there was something happening here and there was no getting away from that either.

However the Report showed that some illiteracy existed and it was decided to hold a full inquiry into the progress and present state of the Experiment, so that impartial educational experts might advise the Director of Education.

' They are going to hold an inquiry into that " Go-as-you-please "School."

Naturally the O'Neills were profoundly disturbed. The recognition of illiteracy in a school spelt disaster to the headmaster under all ordinary circumstances. The dark clouds of professional hostility with which their work was constantly threatened had become charged with electric fury. They were pretty well bound to be told to return to orthodox methods, even if they were not given the sack outright—for in all of this they stood together—man and wife deeply in love with all they believed in. The sack would mean the end of all—for ever. Should they not at once, of their own accord, reintroduce a large and satisfying measure of orthodoxy, and hope, later on, to creep back towards their dreams which had—perhaps too rapidly—come true?

To whom could they turn for guidance while this whole matter was *sub judice*? Almost everyone was involved.

What added to their distress was the attitude of Omes who was largely responsible for supplying the bait wherewith they had been caught. Omes did not seem to the O'Neills to recognize the gravity of the issue. He just kept on merrily and confidently with his programme and assured them that all would be well.

They decided to put their doubts before him and ascertain what he advised when he was made aware of their proposals.

Omes was no ordinary school-teacher who had been brought up in a schoolroom to return to it as a teacher with no knowledge of the world or of men of the world. In his University work he had been the trusted assistant of Professors. In ship-building he had been in close personal touch with the directors of one of the most important ship owning companies and with the management of the yard in which their vessels were built. During the war he had become the confidant of some members of the Board of Admiralty and had been entrusted with the job of getting the Commander-in-Chief to change his mind on one important issue. He had lately gained the entree, through the New Ideals Conference, to several of the leaders in Education. He had no influence. He could pull no strings. But he knew that those at the top were always men of fine calibre; and he had come to realize that O'Neill's work was of prime importance: he knew that the result of this inquiry must reach those at the top: and he was absolutely certain in his mind that, by some means or other, the fly would be fished out of the ointment and the work which mattered would be encouraged.

But the O'Neills were evidently afraid and contemplated action and they were asking for advice of a higher order than mere tactics.

Like all men who do not simply live from hand to mouth, Omes had come to know the guidance of Prayer. In the quiet of a lovely nearby church he earnestly asked for Spiritual guidance. He left that beautiful building absolutely certain that the O'Neills should take no action and continue in their course. He gave them this message and they accepted it. In the end all was well.

The findings of the inquiry reached headquarters, and in so doing made contact with that invisible fleet of battle-ships which was cruising below the horizon—the leaders of the New Ideals in Education—which proved a powerful supporting force. Thanks were dished out to those who had called attention to the deficiencies in the school: some assurances were given to reassure any who were genuinely perturbed: it was made clear to Teddy that never again in any part of the school must basic subjects be neglected and, that understood, the pioneering work should continue for another two years.

The ruling was received with mixed feelings, but it was certainly welcomed by all decent-minded people and it was reassuring to the majority of parents. But the school had professional enemies and they were later to return to the attack.

By way of a coda to this cacophonous symphony you might like to hear of a pleasant outcome of this inquiry.

Under the guiding work of Teddy and his wife, Omes had developed a love for the children which overcame his antipathy to some of their particularities. He combed lice out of their hair and showed them the catch under a microscope. He prevailed upon some of them to make small betterments in their clothing and to submit to shower-baths which he devised with a pail in the laundry section of the cookery room. On the grounds that the resulting foam was amusing he introduced them to spirit shampoos. And on Sunday evenings, with Teddy's blessing, they began to explore the evening services of churches in the district. Usually coming away bored, they at length happened upon a vicar they liked in a church which had the added attraction of an organ, which was played by means of remote control prone to sudden paralysis. This vicar chanced to be a local Councillor and Chairman of the Education Committee in the area in which his church

was situated. From Omes and the boys he learned more of the School at Prestolee than he had gathered from the correspondence in the local Press. He visited the school and, when the storm broke, he generously gave O'Neill a platform in one of the schools in his area from which to voice his aims and confront his critics. This authority had recently completed the building of a Grammar School which was, for the moment, too big for the local needs and had many vacant places. The headmaster was anxious to increase his numbers. Both Teddy and Omes felt the Prestolee children would learn quickly and at the suggestion of the vicar, the headmaster offered to take some of O'Neill's boys. Five were sent. They were taken from Omes's suspect group. On admission they were placed below what was normal for their age, as they had not been taught what was normally taught at that age. They rose rapidly and soon passed boys of their age. One became head-boy, took up teaching, and is now a Director of Education. A second who took up teaching is now a headmaster. Both have their University degrees. Of the three remaining, two are successful business men with refined homes and charming families. Three of the five served through the recent war, rising to commissioned rank and—oddly enough—were all assigned to particularly difficult single-handed jobs in distant countries and under conditions utterly strange to them, which they handled with success.

All of which proves nothing: but it is interesting, isn't it? And you have lost track of the fifth, have you, in this slightly confusing tail-piece?

And so the storm was dispelled.

It was, of course, due primarily to human frailty. Fresh from his personal successes at Oxford and Cambridge and his discovery that he was by no means alone, but well supported in his fundamental ideas, O'Neill had seized upon several opportunities offered to him to address teachers. His is a mind that recognizes no nuances. He told these teachers what he thought of them and it was not far removed from the title of this story. He saw them—too sweepingly—as idolaters, for he saw all that they pinned their faith to as of false value. And there were those amongst his listeners who saw him—not as an iconoclast—but as a cheat who had gained position by breaking the rules which bound them, an upstart war-profiteer who had dodged service to pocket a headship, a bumptious coxcomb too almighty to join their Union. These had been primarily responsible, by their agitation, recruiting, and correspondence in the Press, for throwing suspicion, doubt, and distrust on the whole conduct of the School. Who knows but that they acted in good faith or, at least, were able to rationalize their action to their own satisfaction.

All this became patently evident to those wiser men who piloted it as the inquiry proceeded.

Some step should be taken to protect the work of the school from what might easily become a wrecking force of chronic pettifogging.

The step which was taken was at once helpful and effective. The School was placed in a kind of Ward of Chancery under the Wardenship of two men whose qualifications in Education were high enough to be unassailable. One was the Professor of Education at Manchester University, the other the Chairman of the Lancashire Education Committee. Thus, not only was a buffer formed and placed between the school and hostile local partisans, but also official recognition of and support for the experiment was openly declared. Teddy received a message from the Director of Education himself, giving him a free hand for a further period of two years, and from Edmond Holmes who had, as it were, watched the engagement from the bridge of one of those

units of the educational battle-fleet cruising in the offing, he received a letter of advice as to his future conduct: 'Lie low', wrote Edmond Holmes. 'Lie low. Play Brer Rabbit. Say nuffin.' And Teddy, being in salutary mood to consider this to be sound advice, took it.

CHAPTER IX

Seed-time

We are now at the dawn of 1921. Following the Edict of the authorities a period of peace was promised and further progress confidently expected. The local opposition had to accept a status quo and those really anxious could gain confidence.

All this had happened during Omes's first year in the school. For three more years this story will revolve about this man's personality and his reactions with the O'Neills. He is then destined to pass away and his exit to be followed by a quarter of a century of steady and amazing progress.

To understand this great subsequent development it is essential that you should be told in considerable detail about the clash of ideas between these two men during the next three years—between Omes with his knowledge of the conditions of living in a wider world, and Teddy with his genius for education but narrower outlook and marked bias for the interest of the 'under-dog', for it was during these three years that the great harvest which was to come was really sown.

That these men had differences is natural. That each was able to learn from the other was both fortunate and unusual. Had jealousy ever come between them this would not have been possible. It never did; and though their quarrels were sometimes passionate they were both loyal to the one ideal and each was able instinctively to recognize, appropriate, and interpret the best he found in the other. Omes was the older man and his birth and upbringing gave him a forcefulness which Teddy was reluctant to challenge. But Teddy was captain and Omes lieutenant and, in his inmost soul, Omes's naval experience held good. It is almost thirty years since these two men were thrown together and a quarter of a century since they worked together, but each remains, of all other men, the other's best friend.

The prime difference which arose between them was relative to discipline—that state of affairs in which a body of people of differing ranks, ages, and inclinations are able to act together as a combined whole.

Teddy was hardly conscious of discipline in this sense. He regarded the children as individuals.

Omes was profoundly discipline-conscious. He saw the children as members.

Teddy stood for open doors and free circulation of individuals, each growing towards personal perfection in his own particular way through his own personal effort. Omes, though he hated drill, was strongly team-minded.

It became increasingly irksome to Teddy to find that the door of Omes's class-room—for Omes had established himself in a sort of headquarters when he ought to have been circulating far and wide, helping anyone who might come to him for aid—was generally shut.

Teddy desired freedom for every child to go where the spirit moved him and to seek help where he could find it; but peripatetic children were not welcomed into Omes's class-room even by Omes's class.

Now a year older, Omes's boys were becoming a coterie. They were claiming exclusiveness. A school was forming within the School. Teddy appreciated that this coterie was developing a sort of corporate spirit, apparently without its members sacrificing their individualities as he feared would be the case when gangs formed. In this respect the phenomenon was interesting to watch. Nevertheless it grated against his impulse to find an aristocracy growing where no class distinction should, he felt, prevail.

The first definitely co-operative activity which this new clique undertook was the making of 'the valley'. It was excavated by the boys in the potato patch where, from time to time, personal garden plots flourished. It was a work deliberately undertaken with the definite object of offering a sop to the Headmistress of the Infant School by giving her something pleasant to look at. Omes felt she might be won over: he had already taken to eating his lunch in her staff dining-room and she, while probably suspicious of this move, was not unwilling to make him a cup of tea. It was located opposite the central window of her department.

It was a slightly sinuous valley of considerable extent, with wide, sloping banks, and a path meandered along its bottom. It took some making. Its banks were planted generously with tulip bulbs and as the spring of 1921 came into being, it burst into a glory of colour.

Now digging a ditch in a potato patch is not, in itself, a matter of educational moment. It is navying. And when Teddy, seizing the opportunity presented, got children on to the wheeling away of the soil and piling it up to make flower-beds on the concrete surface of the boys' yard—that, too, was not necessarily an important educational achievement although it resulted in the desert flowering as the rose. The making of this valley was important, not in the actual performance of the work, but in the moral preparation of the workers. It was in this that Omes's attitude towards discipline asserted itself.

For days before the work began the idea that the whole group should combine in some such effort of goodwill was canvassed so that the thought in each child's mind was that something was about to be done through co-operative activity.

When the operation was completed, the group were collectively as well as individually elated because, working as a team, they had quickly and effectively done what, working singly, would not have been done at all. There was, moreover, the certainty in their minds that they might do much else in the same spirit; and they soon had the chance.

Omes saw in it that the valley made the boys. The casual sightseer saw that the boys had made the valley, and this school—now famous—is visited by many sightseers who are, alas, devastatingly blind.

Teddy himself had become duly impressed by this disciplined activity. He felt it should not be confined to any neo-aristocracy but be part of the make-up of all. More than ever he was bent on getting the door of Omes's room to open.

The idiot headmaster—and there are several about—would have experienced no difficulty. He would have opened the door and have told Omes to keep it open. But here again, as in the coming of the valley-makers, you will be sensitive to subtleties. Teddy did not want to open the door; he wanted it to open.

The action, he took showed his genius.

Omes's coterie had begun to amass, for their own convenience, by raiding the rest of the school, such books and gear as they found they wanted. Much of this was not elsewhere required, but some was and this acquisitiveness became a nuisance to other people. Some book was wanted: where was it? Probably in Omes's class-room. Theoretically anyone who wanted it could go in and get it. That was the law. But there was no doubt that entry into that sanctum was defended by a heavy barrage of frowns. Suddenly Teddy acted.

His policy was as simple as it was sound. He generalized Omes's own procedure and decreed that all gear should forthwith be cleared out of every class-room and assembled for general use in the Hall.

Thus came into being the Lending Department, the most far-reaching social and educational advance which Teddy had yet conceived.

The Plan? You borrowed what you needed from the pool —used it—and brought it back.

Its effect on Omes and the new aristocracy was trenchant. Not only did Omes recognize it as the logical product of his own, narrower technique, but he saw it, at once, as the answer to a thousand social questions. Here was Communism as it might be practised in Heaven. If it questioned the individual's right to his private possessions as outright owner, it did not in any sense deny him those possessions as a steward and trustee ever conscious of and sympathetic to the well-being of others. Teddy's invention of the Lending Department has profoundly influenced Omes's outlook on Life. It guided him in the organization of two schools of which, in turn, he later became Head. It is still the magnetic principle whereby he seeks at all times to put his possessions at the disposal of any who may be able to gain by using them, now that he is nominally 'in retirement'. And so it was not long before a lorry was driven up to the school to unload a pianola, a model theatre, many books, a telescope, a microscope, and some useful furniture—all his, and at once to be put at the disposal of the Lending Department. The seed was sown and some fell upon good ground and sprang up and yielded. . . .

Had Teddy been prone to dreaming rather than to impulse one doubts whether in his wildest dreams he would have had visions of such an immediate and discerning reaction to his creation. At the time his mind was probably working on the supply of drawing-pins and ink-erasers. But it is illustrative of the way in which each of these two men was able instinctively to recognize, appropriate, and interpret the best he found in the other, to note that, although, when two years later the older man, on leaving, took with him his well-used possessions for the further service of those for whose well-being he was to become responsible, the gaps were more than filled through the understanding sympathy of the younger. Today the school has two pianolas, a wealth of apparatus, and instead of one pleasantly furnished class-room, an assembly of lovely corridors and chambers.

But to return to the birth of the Lending Department.

As soon as the edict went forth that all gear was to be cleared out of every class-room, cupboard, cubbyhole, and chink and assembled in the Hall, books, stationery, notebooks, blotting paper,

pencils, pens, ink reserves, paintboxes, paint brushes, art paper, drawing-pins, rubbers, rulers, compasses, set-squares, T-squares, knives, sewing materials, handcraft apparatus, toys, bricks, tools from the manual room, nails, screws, nuts, bolts, garden implements, magnifying glasses, music, gramophones, records, all had to come. It was amazing to realize the school's equipment even at that early date. To house, display, and issue and receive back, count and check all this gear required a vast activity of organizing and hard work.

Omes promptly moved out of his class-room and into the Hall, where he established himself in a central position available to give advice and help to any, just as Teddy wished to have him. His clique were rapidly absorbed in the general confusion but, having by now an experience in disciplined activity, were at once to the fore in giving orderly structure to this figmentary creation. And, indeed, the need for that state of affairs in which a number of people of different ranks, ages, and inclinations were able to work together as a combined whole—the need, that is, for discipline, was soon abundantly evident. The Hall looked like a junk store.

The gear had to be classified. For each class suitable arrangements had to be devised and fittings made or extemporized: an organizer had to be appointed whose function was to know what gear he was in charge of, lay it out each morning, issue it as required, know to whom it had been issued, see that it was returned, keep it in good serviceable repair, and stow it away at night.

A rota was arranged whereby organizers passed from section to section so that soon most of the children were familiar with every article the school possessed: knowing its name and purpose.

That Teddy's regime had developed capability and resourcefulness in the individual children was evidenced by the speed with which this ever-growing Department Store—for Teddy's passion was to constantly add to its stock list—achieved orderly form and smooth working. The junk store vanished: something uncommonly like a branch of Woolworth's had been formed in its place.

You came in in the morning, decided upon your work, borrowed the necessary books and gear as you required them, returned them at once if you were not using them. If you got stuck over some aspect, you inquired of the chief organizer for the means to overcome your difficulty. When your job of work was completed you returned all that had been lent to you to the various branches concerned. If your growing needs could not immediately be met, Teddy saw to it that what you needed was obtained somehow or other.

Finally—taking the tip from Omes's immediate response —Teddy put all the other teachers into the Lending Department, announcing that they were available as tutors to any who desired their help.

If it had had no other outcome at all the effect it had on the life of one boy would have made the Lending Department worthwhile. He was a skimpy, colourless individual who wore a made-up bow tie. He had managed to keep out of Omes's clutch and established himself among the girls. It seemed that the Lending Department was created specially for him and he for it. He took to it at once: established himself as unquestionably the chief organizer: showed energy, foresight, and resourcefulness, and devised ways and means without end. He began living when Teddy gave birth to the Lending Department and he became its nurse. He never looked back. He has become

a successful business man, was a capable Army officer, made a sound choice when he married, and is a wise, firm, and loving father.

Thus were born two ideas exemplified by the valley and the Woolworth's which were destined to bear much fruit.

They were sacraments, and the whole of this account of them will lose its meaning if you lose sight of that. Their importance lies in the fact that they were the outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual graces—the valley of premeditated co-operative activity for a generous purpose: the Lending Department for the better understanding and administering of personal property.

Were you to visit the school today, you would neither see the one nor the other. Objectively they are no longer there. But there is something in their stead, and in seeing this you will be able to perceive them still.

As for the valley—in the opening pages of this story you enjoyed a glimpse of the lovely gardens around the school which are its eventual progeny, and in perceiving them you will be sensible of the fact that a body of people working harmoniously together can better their surroundings; and when you look at these children you will note that in so doing they enjoy a sense of well-being that can come to them in no other way.

As for the Woolworth's—it vanished from the central Hall almost as quickly as it came into being. The school's equipment—now greatly augmented—is dispersed throughout the rooms to the greater convenience of all. It would have been as incongruous that it should remain centralized as it would have been that Omes's clique should have remained segregated. But though the outward and visible sign of its existence in the Hall is a memory, the inward and spiritual grace of its brief residence remains. Today every child is really free to borrow, use, and bring back any of the abundant equipment without let, hindrance, or frown, and all but the youngest have some measure of responsibility for the care, cataloguing, and upkeep of some section of this communal property; and a rota still secures that they pass from section to section, so that all become familiar with all that is available.

Yet one more development took place during this pregnant period which was productive of lasting expansion in the school life. It was also the unwitting cause of the holding of the second of the three inquiries into the conduct of the school. But the story of this development—Omes's decision to start a Brigade—had better be reserved for a later chapter as you ought, first, to be made aware of some important developments in the technique of teaching which were being evolved and put into practice while the more spectacular operations—the making of the valley and the coming of the Lending Department—were in progress. Indeed, these activities were largely the outcome of a new technique for the development of character through the pursuit of English.

CHAPTER X

What Tools are Available?

When, presently, the Inspection and Inquiry were over and while the ultimatum was still pending, a desire was felt to face up to such criticism as seemed inevitable.

In English composition, in particular, the field seemed to present opportunity.

The essays resulting from the Museum *plaisanterie* were too matter-of-fact. They expressed, or tried to express, the view of the Sage—whose criterion is Truth. Those other criteria. Beauty and Goodness, were dimly presented or absent altogether.

Teddy, recognizing that every time a child made an essay that essay did something towards the making of the child— recognizing in fact that there was inevitably a reciprocal process—argued that if composition was always matter-of fact writers would tend more and more to turn into Sages and less and less into Poets and Saints.

Yet there are these three categories of humanity—the Sage, the Poet, and the Saint—yes—but should there be? Should there be these three differentiated types? Are not all of these creatures really ill-balanced, pig-headed idealists? Biased by their singleness of outlook?

Some words of a poem came to his mind:

*The Sage, the Poet, the Saint—we have given to each his name:
But if they have all one goal, then all are—at last—the same.
For we speak, and we needs must speak of mind and heart and soul,
But Spirit is ever One and an undivided whole.*

Could it be that boys and girls might be helped to become as sensitive to Beauty and to Goodness as they were becoming to Truth—to grow to be intolerant of ugliness and cruelty (or would you call it selfishness?) as they were becoming of error? Could it not be that School, which occupies such a major portion of their primary existence, should be concerned with the growth of their Heart and Soul as well as with their Mind: that they should grow in Unity—intolerant to ugliness and cruelty as well as to error? Such a target, once sighted, could in no wise be lost to view.

You are about to read of a development in the school work by means of a technique which, in spite of its merits, you would not expect to find being introduced into the school as you now know it—a school in which individual freedom is respected and venerated. It amounts to a rigid routine of ordered exercises, to be performed by those concerned, with periods of complete rest from these exercises interposed. And all with the aim of fostering a latent intuition.

That Teddy countenanced this technique was due to his own intuitive ability to sense the direction in which a process is moving. He can feel if it is rightwards through a feeling of intense well-being. He can feel if it is retrograde by a profound disturbance of his emotions.

Many people fail to understand Life because they have the 'snapshot' habit of mind. They see events as incidents.

To use the phraseology of the film industry, they see events as 'stills'—like the framed photos in the entrance foyer— not as 'frames' in 'sequences' as they see them on the screen in the auditorium. Life is moving, and unless you see it as a motion picture you fail to understand events. Such people see a strike of railwaymen or others as an incident in today's paper. They are puzzled. They do not understand the strike because they fail to recognize it as an event in a sequence of events. They are unable to sense all that has inevitably led up to it and all that must inevitably follow if the course is pursued.

Some people have the power to make such judgements intuitively. Teddy is one of these, and that is why you are about to find what you least expect in the following pages.

He and Omes worked the scheme out together.

The ostensible aim was to get better composition—the real, to get better boys and girls—not better boy and girl writers, but better people; better in the sense that by becoming sensitive to Beauty, Truth, and Goodness, and intolerant of ugliness, falsehood, and selfishness, they would be poised, forceful, well-balanced members of society.

And now for the technique.

One is going to write a story or essay on some subject—say a glass jar filled with photo mountant such as one buys at a photographic dealer's for sticking photos on to mounts. An examination is conducted by means of all five senses—seeing, feeling, hearing, smelling, and tasting—to scrutinize the object, guided by a code or list of topics.

It sounds silly, doesn't it? Never mind—go on: it is rather important.

This scrutiny is deliberately engaged in three times, from three different view-points—Truth, or the collection of facts, Beauty, or the analysis by 'taste'. Goodness, or the observation of relationships and interrelationships. All this is done gradually with the guiding help of the code.

The code is simply a list of topics. Here are some of these topics to bear in mind when the scrutiny is proceeding by means of any one of the five senses, and every one of these five senses has to be tried in turn, seeing, feeling, hearing, smelling, tasting.

Inventory	Mechanism	Scent
Form	Design	Taste
Measuring	Construction	Colour
Proportions	Movement	Chiaroscuro ¹
Pattern	Action	Aim
Symmetry	Rhythm	Function
Composition	Melody	Classification

¹ *Chiaroscuro*—light and shade. Always a popular word with young people owing to the fun of pronouncing it, 'kyar-os-koor-o', and of spelling it.

Materials	Harmony	Definition
Weight	Sensitivity	

Does it sound frightfully complicated and unnecessary?

Get your mind off the essay writing by the boy and keep it on the idea of boy-forming by the sustained effort of writing the essay. This essay which he is bringing into being is changing him.

Now read these. They are three essays on a pot of photo mountant. The first is matter-of-fact: it is the work of a Sage. The second fanciful: it is the work of a Poet. The third has the outlook of the Saint, sensitive to relationships and interrelationships. They were actually written by one person—one of those authors to whose tales of treasure-hunting you have already been introduced—after a considerable period of training.

A POT OF PHOTO MOUNTANT—FACTS

Here on the table is a pot of photo mountant. It consists of a cylindrical glass vessel closed at the top by a screw-on metal lid. It bears a label and is half-full of a white paste. It is three inches high and two and a half inches in diameter. The top of the vessel is slightly contracted, this portion forming a neck on to which a screw thread has been moulded to take the cap or lid. The glass, generally made by fusing together sand, limestone, and carbonate of soda at high temperatures, is of poor quality as it contains some bubbles. The glass when hot is a flexible, amorphous material which can be blown out like a balloon. Judging from some lines on its surface this bottle was blown into a mould consisting of two halves which could be separated afterwards so as to get the vessel out. The screw-on cap or lid appears to be of sheet iron which has apparently been dished under pressure and contracted on to some screwed die from which it could be screwed off. It has been later sprayed with enamel. It has serrations like the milled edge of a coin to give one a good grip for unscrewing it. The cap is fitted internally with a mill-board washer so that an airtight joint may be formed to prevent the paste from drying up.

This white paste is stiff, clean, and very smooth, showing no granules even when magnified ninety diameters under the microscope. Its constitution is made difficult to determine as it has been strongly scented but it gives a colour reaction to iodine which is suggestive of starch. It is soluble in water and it becomes semi-fluid when spread under the natural heat of the finger. It is strongly adhesive and dries quickly. The label gives directions for its use.

BEAUTY OR MATTERS OF FANCY

This outfit is well designed.

Being circular in cross-section and having rounded corners externally and internally at the base there is no difficulty in removing the paste as would be the case had it square internal corners: nor is one likely to cut oneself when holding it. The neck is amply large for the insertion of one's fingers and the vessel is not too deep for them to reach to the bottom. The glass is strong enough to resist any ordinary fall and being clear allows one to see how much paste is in the bottle without unscrewing the lid. The screwed-on cap and the bottle are comfortable to hold and easy to screw apart. The washer is pliant and waterproof and well suited for its air-excluding purpose. The smell of the paste is pleasant and the paste is most delightfully smooth and clean.

*Teach us—good paste—your lesson
What part you play in life;
When sheets of paper drift apart
You heal their scar and strife.*

*Though to themselves they never can adhere
They both can stick to you and have good cheer.*

*In such a way two mortals
Somehow asunder feel:
No common aim does bind them both
To join hands seems unreal:*

*Until, like paste, there creeps between the twain
Some high ideal at which they both can aim.*

INTERRELATIONSHIPS OR GOODNESS

As one regards this pot of paste one's thoughts go out to realize the way in which its parts fit together to form a whole.

Each is contributing its bit to make a success, and if any part was missing 'sorrow would overtake me' it seems to say. 'Without my strong bottle or my millboard washer, or my metal cap, my contents would dry and perish. If I was not transparent the boys would never know if I was getting empty without the labour of opening me. My label tells the ignorant my name and the wise how to use me.

'I come of great parents. Many minerals have been used in making me and these God Himself created. Rare metals have been mined to make my cap. Earths have been quarried to form my glass. My paste has life in it; it grew, and the infinite stream of life flowed in its granules.

'Twice, while making me, the furnaces have been kindled and the sheet metal of my cap has run at white heat into bars and at red heat through the rollers. At great temperatures the three minerals which made my bottle were married together and became one and as a palpitating redhot bubble were forced into the iron prison which gave my belly its present form. From earth, from mine, from cauldron and furnace my parts have come together. 'I have been born indeed. 'For a time I have my life to run.' But my release is sure.

'Gradually my paste will be spread and, carried away on sheets of paper and on pictures, will at last be thrown out by man and, lying in middens, will be washed out into the soil, by gentle rain. Here its particles will be taken up again by plants and will once again return to life.

'My empty bottle will be thrown out, broken, and tipped into the river to be ground by rocks and gravel, and become the sand it was.

'My tin hat, rusted now by rain, will dissolve back into the earth, whence it came.

'And then, released from their labours, my parts will rest till the call again goes forth for us to play another role in the infinite scheme.'

*So, boys and girls, respect this pot
And all that it contains.
'Tis made from truly Royal stock
And Royal stock remains.
The Lord Almighty formed its parts:
His Will directed man
To dig and mine and smelt and cast
And form it, as he can.
And so, from earth and mine and plant*

It came to serve God's plan.

*But locked within its silent soul
A Yearning ever lives
And sighs for freedom, as of old,
The freedom which God gives
To every pot, and every thing
Which works with Him to bear
Some part in His great scheme of things
And so His might declare,
Until to earth and mine and plant
It will, at length, repair.*

These works, of better quality than the earlier story of treasure-hunting in Australia, reveal the author as a finer boy than he used to be. He has become sensitive to a wider horizon by searching for detail. As a result of his drill with the code he has not only introduced a wealth of facets into his writing, but he has become subconsciously alert at this range of detail to which he was previously blind. He is no prodigy. His added dexterity and new alertness are spontaneous, but as the result of hard work, akin to drill. Let us be frank: he has sat down and smelled this pot of paste—smelt the paste, smelt the enamel, smelt the photo he has stuck on to the mount—deliberately. Why? To increase the alertness of his sense of smell by consciously using it earnestly for a time, convinced, by experience, that his sense of smell will become so automatically sensitive thereby that it will bring a thousand new perfumes to his notice without effort on his part.

But really! What a life! Is one to smell the ink every time one writes a letter and listen to the nib passing over the paper?

No. Not every time. But consider.

The concert-hall pianist follows his code of exercise— scales, fingering, reading, expression, rhythm, listening— working hard for a period, resting, resuming, and resting again: but always, when working, concentrating hard upon the performance of each particular dexterity. Spontaneity results.

The tennis champion follows a strenuous course of training in the same way—playing the same stroke over and over again, his opponent a cement-covered wall: resting: resuming: and with the same result—spontaneity.

Spontaneity of reaction comes to the cyclist after he has laboriously practised riding in traffic.

The motorist, after he has earnestly practised applying his brakes, is rewarded with spontaneity in emergency.

The learning is a complex of instruction, study, practice, and rest—repeated and repeated. The result is spontaneous, instinctive facility on an augmented scale.

Omes had taught himself to paint by working strenuously for a time, relaxing, working again and again relaxing; and he had found that, in time, he became dexterous and even painted well with an ease and vision which amazed himself.

But in addition to being able to paint better he found that he was seeing more, and doing so spontaneously. He was constantly surprised at seeing so much. His eyes were more alive than he seemed to be himself and they kept tapping him on the shoulder—so to speak—and saying, 'See this?' 'Notice that?' And had he exercised his sense of hearing in the same deliberate way—listening hard to any sound whatever, resting, exercising again—his power of hearing would have become as spontaneously alive as his sense of sight. And so too with his senses of touch, smell, and taste. He would become more alive than ever before and could grow on and on and enjoy aliveness more and more abundantly. 'If you want it to go out of order, don't use it', said the mechanic of the machine. How true that is of human faculties. If you want a child to grow wise you set about training his reason. If you wish him to grow to be sensitive to beauty and goodness you must not leave it to chance. His heart and soul must be exercised every whit as much as his mind. If not—they will atrophy. That is why this new method of exercising in English Composition is so important. You use the essay-writing as a tool to build the child. The essay itself—now much improved—is a by-product.

That such a training may lead to a child becoming sensitive to Truth, yes, and to Beauty—to his experiencing, that is, a glow of joy through reasoning and through his artistic sensibility—is probably apparent to you now you have read about the paste-pot. It can be done by using 'subject study' deliberately as a means to an end and not as an end in itself. That this technique can be instrumental in character building, in fostering the moral strength of the child, may be already in the back of your mind. In that case you will be anxious to bring it to the forefront. Surely, during those formative years this is of prime importance.

Wisdom, unbalanced by Beauty and Goodness, may be a vile quality. The Salford slums were built by sensible people. The problem: to house a lot of operatives as quickly and cheaply as possible as close to their jobs as could be. The solution: the Salford slums. But had those wise men been equally sensitive to Beauty and to Goodness: had they been intolerant, through healthy growth, of ugliness and cruelty: there would have been no slums. Nor, had the schooling of the operatives been comprehensive and balanced, would the emblematic slum population of later date have kept their hypothetical coals in their baths and their lice on their bodies.

But just as the growth of wisdom can be, and generally to some degree is, fostered during these formative years in school, so, too, can the growth of the sense of Beauty and so, too, could the growth of Goodness be equally cared for.

CHAPTER XI The Third 'R'

The outcome of the first inquiry amounted to this: instructions were issued that reading, writing, and arithmetic must be regarded as primary matters, but that proficiency in the performance of these might be secured in any way that O'Neill desired. If his methods failed to secure a reasonably high standard in these three subjects his position would have to be reconsidered. Teddy took no umbrage at this ruling. He had never envisaged any eventuality which excluded good reading, writing, and arithmetic.

But there is evidence that up to the time of the inquiry and the contemporaneous activities of the museum committee, he had tended still to regard the teaching of these matters from a fairly orthodox standpoint. Certainly he hoped that children would study them from their own free choice and volition and that he would be free from the necessity of even most tactfully forcing them upon these young and active minds. But, even so, there was a tendency to get these Primaries over so that free activities might begin. The performance of the three R's was still a little akin to the purchase of a railway ticket. It entitled one to proceed.

But, of course, there were genuine enthusiasts even for arithmetic: children who loved doing sums. This, in turn, was useful. If they could be skilfully trailed across an inspector's nose quite a lot might be 'proved'. But this enthusiasm was not altogether satisfactory, nor is an enthusiasm for drinking gin. It would seem when a child sprang eagerly to the problem of simplifying $(1\frac{1}{2} + 3\frac{3}{4})(3\frac{2}{3} - 2\frac{1}{5}) \div (2\frac{1}{4} - \frac{7}{8})$ immediately after the conclusion of Prayers, that his mind must be in an unnourished state bordering on semi-starvation, eager to catch at any straw of interest. Nor should the discovery that in its simplest form this expression is just short of six cause the child to experience undue elation, because the fact is not really very interesting. Neither is the process:—

Turn all the mixed numbers into improper fractions, keeping everything inside its own bracket for the present. Deal with the first bracket by turning the $\frac{3}{2}$ into six quarters which can then be added to the other fifteen quarters, making $21\frac{1}{4}$ in the left-hand bracket. Deal with the middle bracket by turning all its contents into fifteenths, as fifteen is the lowest common multiple—or if you think you understand this better, the L.C.M.—of the two denominators three and five: you will thus have fifty-five fifteenths from which thirty-three have to be taken away, leaving therefore twenty-two fifteenths in the centre bracket. Deal with the right-hand bracket in the same way, turning the nine quarters into eighteen eighths: take seven of them away: so the right-hand bracket contains really eleven eighths. The whole expression can now be written down without brackets, thus:

$$21\frac{1}{4} \times \frac{22}{15} \div \frac{11}{8}$$

What? Oh! about the multiplication sign. Well, that is a matter of fashion: when you wish to divide one bracket by another you indicate the fact by putting the sign — between them; if you wished to add one bracket to the other you put the sign + between them; if you want to take one from another you put the sign - in front of the one you wish to take from the other; but if you wish to multiply one bracket by another, for goodness' sake lie doggo, put no indication of your wishes. What? Never mind 'why?': do as you are told, it's quite O.K.

Now we come to dividing. Don't do it: it is fatal to try and divide one of these vulgar fractions by another. Turn it upside down and multiply by it. It's all right: do it, and don't waste time arguing about 'why?'. It works, so do it, or we shall get nothing done.

The whole expression is therefore rewritten thus:

$$21/4 \times 22/15 \times 8/11$$

Now for multiplying: you do this by dividing to begin with. This is called cancelling, and why shouldn't it be? After that you can multiply and you will find you have twenty-eight fifths, or in more ordinary language, $5 \frac{3}{5}$: or as was stated earlier, a little less than six. It seems a pity that it got so 'twisted up to begin with. Remember all this.

Yes, this is an exercise in obedience, memorizing, and faith.

In that it is an exercise in obedience it may be justly claimed that it will result in an increase of that most dangerous idiosyncrasy—blind obedience. And, of course, it tends towards the hypertrophy of memory and the growth of superstition.

The idiot maths-teacher will always seek to secure his own standing by asking the child if he 'understands' the work. *Experientia docet*: the child tells a white lie and they can mutually abandon each other

This sort of subject-teaching is not good. It can have no place in the school which uses subjects and subject-teaching and study as tools for the purpose of character-building.

CHAPTER XII

The Last of the Cliques

In 1921 the School at Prestolee still closed, its doors as a day-school between four and five p.m. and, although there was no longer a rush to get away, the place was locked against the day-children round about that time. Thereafter it reopened for a short time on certain evenings to house an ill-attended night-school for children who had left the day-schools and had gone to employment.

From five o'clock onwards the day-school children would play about in the streets, the backs, and on the tips by the river, finding interest where they could. Their homes were very crowded.

So, too, was the O'Neills' small house. This married couple, after a day of hard work, were glad to spend their evenings with their two children. Alec and Margaret. Besides themselves there lived in the house their housekeeper and her little girl. And now there was Omes in addition. After working with them all day Omes had either to impose himself further upon them in the privacy of their home or find something else to do.

Omes had heard of the Boys' Life Brigade before the war. It was an organization which had originated in Manchester and had become world-wide. It had altruistic aims with regard to boys. Later it was to be absorbed by the older organization, the Boys' Brigade.

Were Omes to run a Company in the village, reasonable activity would be provided for himself in. out-of-school hours and new interests for some of these loose-enders, locked out of the school premises. He talked the matter over with the O'Neills.

As things were at this period, the plan offered several advantages. If the out-of-school activities of some of these boys were to be organized there arose the problems of authority and responsibility. Teddy would have liked to tackle this but his home conditions made it less easy for him to do so than it was for Omes. As Captain of a Brigade Company Omes could be accepted as responsible for the safety, behaviour, and well-being of the members of such a Company, while such acceptance could hardly have been granted him had the activity been a School activity conducted on behalf of the headmaster by an assistant teacher.

There was, moreover, the problem of these boys' clothing. These village boys were, at that period, very ill-clad, often in torn and dirty garments which had passed down to them. The O'Neills were anxious to see this bettered. In the stormy atmosphere which then surrounded him, Teddy, though he sometimes felt compelled to do so, was not anxious to criticize the parents in this respect. But if these boys were to join a Company of the Boys' Life Brigade parents might be persuaded to buy them its uniform. 'Of what does it consist, Mr Omes?'

In its simplest form the Council of the Boys' Life Brigade had decreed that it consisted of a cap, belt, and haversack. This was considered to be sufficient to meet the case where boys came from the poorer homes. Rather paradoxically the Council prescribed a far more serviceable outfit for better-dressed boys. This consisted of a dark blue shirt, shorts, and dark blue stockings with red tops in addition to the forage cap, belt, and haversack—just the outfit for the badly clad.

After talking the matter over these plotters considered it might be as easy to kill a lion as a lamb and Omes, presenting himself as the liaison officer between the Council and the parents of those anxious to enrol explained that the boys would need to have blue corduroy shorts, a blue shirt for winter and a white one for summer, and that a grey woollen sweater would be required as well as the stockings, cap, haversack, and belt. It had been ascertained that one or two parents would set the ball rolling and when Mrs O'Neill persuaded the girls in her group to knit the grey sweaters and Teddy advocated the wearing of this outfit in school during ordinary school hours so that it became a useful rather than a merely ceremonial outfit, many others agreed to join in.

There was, however, a profounder purpose behind this move than just the better clothing of these boys and their occupation in hiking, nature-study, scout-craft, knotting and splicing ropes, team activities, folk-dancing, listening to music, attending concerts, seeing plays, visiting art galleries, sketching, seeing over works and factories, and later, perhaps, exploring the countryside and observing habits of life further afield and camping out. It concerned their religious experience.

Teddy was not alone in being profoundly dissatisfied with the provision made officially by the Education Authorities for fostering and developing the children's Spiritual alertness. This provision is confined, as you know, to a short opening ceremonial of hymn singing, the reading of some passage from the Bible, and the reading of some prayers. Should one of the School Managers visit the School officially he was supposed to do so in time to verify that this ceremonial was being carried out and to make an entry in the Log Book that this was the case.

Almost inevitably this service, generally timed to occupy half an hour, seemed detached and apart from the bulk of the day's work and activity. This rushed into full swing immediately 'after prayers'. It was prescribed. It was not orientated. It was not followed up.

Apart from this short and formal period of 'Prayers' at the opening of School, the God-conscious development of these Lancashire children was left mainly in the hands of the local Sunday-schools. One hour per week was devoted to this under conditions which were not always favourable to spiritual growth. Many children never went to Sunday school at all, not even rising to the lure of the Sunday school trip.

In and around the village the usual Religious Denominations had their pitches and ran their own Sunday classes.

The conspicuous red-brick building adjacent to the play-yards of O'Neill's school was the Church of England Sunday school. Here, in its huge hall (available for entertainments and dances) four or five classes met simultaneously, their four or five teachers competing to gain the attention of their respective groups of 'scholars' against the combined noise of the other three or four.

The non-conforming sections—Wesleyans, Baptists, Congregationalists, and others—had their own separate Schools and meeting-places.

The purpose of these Sunday-schools was, presumably, to disclose to the children their Oneness with God, the glorious prospect of spiritual life, and the joy of membership of Christ's Church in one or other of its diverse manifestations.

Now, it was a *sine qua non* with the Council of the Boys' Life Brigade, as it has always been with the Boys' Brigade, that every Company must be based upon some local church and that the Parson or Minister, as the case might be, should associate himself and his congregation with the Company, become the Company's chaplain, and undertake to organize and supervise a programme of religious instruction for the officers and boys.

You probably know the kind of thing that results. It seldom works wonders: it is a wonder if it works at all. It is all so difficult. Jesus, generally spoken of as Christ, presented as a perfect friend of boys, is also God. The boy should love his friend and try to be good. But the parable of the Prodigal Son and the twenty-third Psalm comfortingly assure him that this is not frightfully important. He can get out of trouble. His copy-book can be de-blotted. He can arrange things so that he can be forgiven. It is fairly O.K.

The life and teaching of Jesus is, of course, too profound to be appreciated by children who have, as yet, little experience of the artifices of the adult community and who are living vitally adventurous lives in a thrilling world of make-believe, the scenery of which seems to a well-intentioned social worker to consist of a smelly scum-laden river and some heaps of refuse. Into this wild west of theirs these children have difficulty in fitting their pious and loving friend or, for that matter, any other grown-up. 'Cheese it—here's a cop!'

You probably know O'Neill sufficiently by now to suspect that he was not enamoured of this Boys' Life Brigade for its own sake. It and similar organizations seemed to him—as indeed they are—intrusive, gap-fillers. Well-intentioned bodies engaged in fragmentary remedial efforts, complementary to the educational programme; while his own aim was comprehensive, total.

But he found himself entangled in barbed wire, and he needed a wire cutter: he felt imprisoned, as Peter had been, and he needed keys to open the first and second wards and the iron gate beyond. And here, in this chance discovery by Omes of the Boys' Life Brigade, he sensed that the means to attain freedom were available. His instinct—Peter would have recognized this as his angel—told him to put the means to the test and see if thus the bolts would slide and the wire be cut through and give him access to that freedom which would allow him to arouse their God-consciousness as well as their sensitivity to Beauty and to Truth throughout the whole of his school of children.

But when it came to attaching a Prestolee company of the Boys' Life Brigade to one of the local Churches—well! Which would you suggest? Keep O'Neill's point of view in mind. Difficult, isn't it?

Omes, as you know, had had experience which led him to believe that if you could get access to the top of the tree you would find there the nests of the clear-thinking, open-minded powers who waited and waited for 'right men' to turn up. He had met some of the executive of this Boys' Life Brigade. They had won his respect. It was decided that Omes should go and see these people, speak quite fully and frankly to them about the whole matter and ascertain their views. He went. He told them what was afoot. He prevailed upon them to return his visit and come and see the school, the O'Neills, and the village. They came, and they saw.

They saw, of course, that the situation was full of an unusual kind of promise. They were greatly stimulated by all they saw and by many whom they met. They returned to London, and in due

course they waived the condition that the Company should be attached to a Church and agreed that it should be in O'Neill's keeping and attached to his school; and that O'Neill should be accepted as *locum tenens* for 'the Parson or Minister' whom they had hitherto considered essential for the guidance of their companies. It was agreed, moreover, that Omes should act as his deputy and that, for the time being and for the reasons with which you are familiar, the bulk of the work involved was to be carried out by the deputy.

And so 'The Brigade'—it was always locally known as that—came into being, and the bolts did begin to slide back and the entanglements to be cut.

We can review quickly the foreground details in picturing this new clique—for it was a clique, at any rate for the time being. It carried out just such a programme as has been outlined already: hiking, nature-study, appreciation of the Arts, visiting works and factories, seeing plays, sketching, and so on; at first near home, then, with the aid of trams and buses, further afield until, presently, a baby Austin having been added to their growing equipment, the range was increased and they discovered the Peak of Derbyshire, the coast and mountains of North Wales, and the English Lakes. Their team-work—they devised a rather spectacular way of building towers with broom-sticks and lashings—took them in time to the Crystal Palace in London, where they performed their stunt at the annual Display of the Boys' Life Brigade, in the presence of Royalty. Later they marched past the Cenotaph in Whitehall, out of step with each other and the rest of the Brigade, quite unaware that it was there, and without 'eyes righting', their interest having been aroused at that moment by a rumour that Scotland Yard was about to be passed on their left.

They went to camps. Their first was among the caves and chasms in the limestone mountains of the Craven district of Yorkshire. That was before 'pot-holing' had become the sport it is today. It was O'Neill's first experience of camping and his first contact with belligerent midges. Their next was on the Scottish Island of Arran, nature's most perfect school of geology. They were sick on the steamer crossing from Ardrossan. They had to walk fourteen miles through pelting rain over a moorland road to reach their camp site.

For several this was their first contact with the sea, and, for all with the beauty of tidal rock-pools. One chose to have an epileptic fit on the top of 'a mountain, and another had his bottom bitten by a donkey which left an interesting horseshaped bruise, a pleasant subject with photographers. 1923 saw them in France, encamped at a farm, near Dieppe, where they were introduced to home-brewed cider with pleasing effects, and whence they made a strenuous trek to Paris and back, travelling for two consecutive nights in crowded trains. They reached the city in the small hours: saw the markets come into being, function, and vanish completely while they ate their *petit dejeneur*. The day became hot. They had never experienced continental heat. They refused to be interested in any examples of architecture apart from drinking fountains. Their financial resources melted as quickly as the 'glaces' upon which they were expended, and proved wholly insufficient to meet their demands. They were prostrated. On the way back from their nearest station to their camp at Ouille-la-Riviere they walked for some miles through the night and those who were not performing somnambulism saw glow-worms for the first time.

But the Brigade's background impact upon the School's development is worthy of careful consideration.

The appearance in the School of a number of tidily and serviceably dressed boys—the blue corduroy shorts, opennecked shirts, and grey knitted sweaters proved to be an attractive rig—caused a general feeling of mild uplift, especially among the wearers themselves, most of whom had never been so pleasantly turned out before. Necks, ears, feet, and hair sometimes failed to be in the same trim, as baths were still primitive in the village at that time; but Omes, in his capacity as a member of the school staff, was given access to the cookery class-room where, in his office as a company officer, he was soon pailing out shower-baths in the laundry section and introducing his Brigade boys to the magic foam which came and vanished with the application of dry shampoo. The girls had generally been cleaner and better-dressed than the boys, but now even those boys who were not in the Brigade cleaned up, and the lad who still had his underwear sewn on for the winter and carried a collection of cast-off, ill-fitting, tattered, and odoriferous garments such as are popular with scarecrows, became conspicuous for the first time, even to himself.

Of greater moment still was the decision of the School Managers to grant the request of the Brigade that they should use the school premises at out-of-school hours for their meetings and parades. Little can anyone but Teddy have imagined with what effect the wedge whose thin edge was thus inserted was to be driven home. This was, in fact, the first move in that progression which, during the coming decade, was destined to realize his as yet vague dream of making the whole school that centre of day-long animation, learning and beauty which, through its interests, facilities, and generous provision of stimulating apparatus, it has become today for the whole of this village community.

The most important outcome of this step of attaching a Brigade Company was due to the Sunday Bible Class. The holding of this class at all was begirt with difficulties if further difficulties were to be avoided. The boys were severally members of various other such classes, but a few were not and could form a nucleus. But where were they to meet? The School Managers were reluctant to grant the use of the Day School for such a purpose on a Sunday. Such recognition would have been a challenge to all the existing Sunday-schools. You will remember, no doubt, that the biggest of these was actually next door to the Day School. If you cannot see how awkward this made it, the Managers could. Most unexpectedly the Chairman of the School Managers who was the Managing Director of the great cotton spinning mill which overshadowed the school in so many senses from Teddy's point of view, surprised Teddy and probably his co-directors and quite possibly himself, by offering to let the Brigade meet on Sundays in the Board Room of the mill. It was a remarkable gesture: but it was no less provocative. Yet it could hardly be refused. So, on the understanding that the formation of this class was still under consideration, and not yet a *fait accompli*, the offer was accepted as *in esse*, with a display of gratitude which was certainly felt; but details, it was agreed, should be discussed at a later date when the proposal was more advanced.

Meanwhile another avenue existed and was explored. At its end was an inconspicuous and out-of-the-way door into the Day School. The key of this door was in the headmaster's custody. What more to be desired? And so—entering quietly and inconspicuously in ones and twos—the Bible Class began appropriately enough in the school to which the Company was attached.

Having got these boys there what was one to do with them?

Well, what would you have done with them?

Let us put it this way: suppose that you were to find yourself singularly well placed, as Teddy undoubtedly was, to organize the whole education of some children, well placed in the sense that you had the matter very much in your own hands.

Suppose, further, that you visualize these children as Free-wills having bodies, rather than as Bodies having free wills.

Further, that you see the Poet, the Sage, and the Saint as paragons, sensitive respectively to Beauty, Wisdom, and Goodness: and that, given a well-thought-out education, each child might develop all these three sensitivities, combining in his person Poet, Sage, and Saint.

May we take it that the Day School, working on him for seven Or eight hours a day for about eight years, has a chance to develop in him the sense of Beauty and Reason, but that it is not fully organized to deal with his God-conscious development and expects you to do this in your Bible class—how are you going to do it?

What thoughts will be in your mind? You feel, one imagines, that these children ought to be as sure that God exists as they are that they exist themselves: that they should feel as confident that they can hear God as a voice as they are that God can hear them: that they should be as certain that God knows each of them personally as they are that they know God: and that unless they have these convincing experiences they are doomed to be guided by their wits and idiosyncrasies and the constraints which circumstances bring to bear upon them.

How better could these children be led to these experiences themselves than by becoming familiar with the stories of those who had had just these experiences?

It chanced that about this time a copy of Richard G. Moulton's edition of the Revised Version of the Bible came into Omes's hands: it is known as The Modern Reader's Bible. It is, to use the words of its title page, presented in modern literary form. The usual editions of the Bible may be justly described as the best-written and worst-printed book in literature. When we open these editions we look in vain for the usual form of chapters and paragraphs and for visual indications of lyrics, epics, dramas, essays, and sonnets, and the eye catches nothing but a monotonous uniformity of numbered sentences. Yet the sixty and more separate volumes which comprise the small library known to us as the Bible can be grouped under such definite headings as History, Poetry, Prophecy, Philosophy, and Drama. In The Modern Reader's Bible this grouping is done and the text, which is the unaltered text of the Revised Version, is printed and displayed as is usual in modern books; the History in chapters with suitable cross-headings; the Poetry as poetry is usually displayed; the drama with scenic notes and the speakers indicated, and so on. The resulting edition is at once readable and interesting. Of such interest did he find the historical account that Omes decided to introduce this edition to the boys.

Success was immediate. The leader read, and the boys, each with his copy open, followed the story as it unfolded Sunday by Sunday. And the story, the history which they read was of how Man came to know and later to lose touch with God.

For the first time they learned that Man has come to know God as a Voice, and that Man has never known God in any other manifestation. They read how Man had heard 'the Voice of the

Lord God ' walking in the garden: how God said things unto Noah: how God said things unto Abram: how God called to Moses and how Moses became so conscious of God as a Voice that the story is able to tell that God spoke to him ' as a man speaketh to his friend '. And then they were listening to a change of motif in the music of the story: of a growing inattention on man's part to the Voice which is God to Man. They watched the organization and regimentation of a separate priesthood and came with dramatic suddenness to the child Samuel's experience and the priest Eli's inability. Those were the days when 'the word of the Lord had become precious'. They learned of Saul's descent to Endor: and so to the coming of the prophets who, able themselves to hear God as a Voice, became the bearers of God's messages to those to whom they were really addressed but who were so busy with mundane matters that they had no longer the inclination to listen to or speak with God themselves. ' When David rose up early in the morning the Word of the Lord came to Gad, David's seer, saying "Go and speak unto David, thus saith the Lord" ...' And so to the final collapse and debacle when 'The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent to them by His messengers, rising up early and sending: because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling-place: but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets, till there was no remedy '.

What an engrossing story!

As in the cinema, when the 'bad men' triumph, they jump in their seats in their eagerness to see the sheriff and his posse mount and gallop to restore order and confidence, so these boys, eager to go on with the story and on fire to know what happened, found themselves longing intensely for the coming of a Saviour, and they were on the point of reading of the coming of Jesus, when, suddenly, Omes left.

He answered an advertisement and was appointed to take charge of an 'approved school'.

He cleared out, taking with him his pianola, his furniture, his model theatre, his microscope, his telescope, his books, his active, stimulating mind, and leaving his Brigade company and Bible Class high and dry. That was in 1924.

CHAPTER XIII

Sunshine and Storm

The passing of Omes terminated a 'movement' in the composition of the 'symphony' to which the creation of Teddy's School may be likened. The Omes episode had something of the character of a scherzo, in that it introduced a lively and confident touch: it had, too, some of the characteristics of the cadenza, in that Omes was apt to perform as a soloist, filling in much as he liked while the orchestra sat silent, at least to his ears. Nevertheless his contribution was both provocative and stimulating, and it was clear that the themes which he introduced were worthy of consideration, development, and interpretation.

This Brigade of his was unquestionably a school within a school and if Teddy kept it in being it would remain a school within the school. That seemed wrong. On the other hand, if this Brigade stood for anything worthwhile the whole school should be in it. If the Brigade Bible Class was bringing God-consciousness into being in its members, the whole school should have membership. If the Brigade Camps, by teaching them to live and work together as a combined whole, had built into these boys a sensitivity to discipline, then camping should become available to the school as a whole. Omes had, in fact, been finding areas left vacant at the moment in the School's make-up and he had been filling them in. But Education should be continental in character, not an archipelago. The school should have no gaps. But in rampaging about he had also found veins of unsuspected quality in the children. Writing of him at this time, Teddy related: 'His influence on boys is shown in the straightness and cleanness of their lives, their sincerity and their cultured tastes.' Nevertheless, with his strong personality, wide experience, generous upbringing, class glamour, and friends at court, Omes had been throwing the school out of balance and his boys were followers rather than pathfinders, insufficiently self-reliant, too devoted to and dependent upon their leader. Teddy's debt to him was the debt than an astronomer owes to his telescope. He had enabled Teddy to see more and to see more clearly. His debt to Teddy was that of the convert to the apostle: Teddy had enabled him to understand. For four years these two men had worked side by side. Each with a profound respect for the other, yet quarrelling incessantly over almost every problem that arose, they had together hacked loose one adhesion after another in the rigid complex of school life. Each had absorbed into himself what was best in the other. Each had become aware of the existence in himself of what was worst in the other. Each had called into being in the other traits which neither had hitherto suspected that he possessed.

What, now that Omes was gone, was Teddy to do about this confounded Brigade?

He did not hesitate. He scrapped it. Once before Teddy thought fit to kill one of Omes's cliques, and he had done so by making generally available all that the clique was making exclusive. That first Phoenix had burned with good effect and a clutch of birds had arisen from the pyre. Here was a case for a similar conflagration. The School must absorb into its entity any excellencies and privileges which up till now, while enjoyed by members of the Brigade, had not been generally available to the rest of the children.

To tell you how the O'Neills, husband and wife, carried through their task, how, step by step, they did this, gave up that, bought this, made that, thought of one thing, scrapped another, built here, pulled down there, organized, reconsidered, would profit you little; for the course of progress is like that of a river, sometimes meandering, sometimes short and direct: an established

stream may suddenly flood into many branches and, as quickly, a maze of runnels may combine to form a strong current which, in turn, gradually losing itself in obstructive mudbanks of its own making, may reassert itself after subterranean oozings as a pellucid and vigorous flow. Such was the kind of thing that happened.

In 1924 the O'Neills had been at Prestolee about five years. They have now, at the time of writing these memoirs, been there for thirty, and you are inquisitive, I hope, to hear the story of a quarter of a century of growth and progress. It was not all plain sailing.

It is possible to divide this long period into four clearly defined episodes.

The first, of nine years, was one of sunshine and storm: of success and near and terrible disaster, when dishonouring and death itself clutched foully at him, and all seemed fatuous and cruel, and the cause lost, and Teddy, suffering great agony of soul and body, gave up hope. And it will tell how help came from an unexpected quarter and he slowly fought his way through to a new world where he met with friendship, gratitude, and support such as he had not up till then experienced.

There followed a period of steady progress made easier by the removal from his path of an obstacle which, up till now, had embarrassed greatly the School's progress. This was the period during which his plan for a school which should be the vital centre of village life was advanced to a degree that prepared it to triumph over the difficulties of the next period. But it was darkened by a great anxiety, as during it his dear wife and constant supporter was to undergo a major operation.

Then came the Second World War. To many forward and idealistic movements this was a period of frustration and procrastination. To the school at Prestolee it was one of release and opportunity, when every difficulty was turned to advantage, every call answered a hundredfold, and every obstacle taken at a stride. It was now that the castle in his dreams became a reality exceeding his wildest imaginings. When, at length, the war ended in our triumph over world-wide disorder he, too, was able to celebrate his own V-day while joining heartily with the rest of us in celebrating ours.

A pentad of years has passed since then. It has been characterized by a spread of recognition of Teddy's achievement and of the vital work he has done for Education. Nor has Prestolee suffered as most of us have suffered from austerity, for its resources are of the spirit and it has continued in its material and spiritual advance. While these words are being written the school is engaged in festal celebrations which are to last for a full fortnight in commemoration of Teddy's sixtieth birthday and the completion of thirty years of service spent in making the school. One thing only seems wanting in the school's equipment and that a flagstaff from which to fly his 'flying colours', and this, I trust, this volume may prove to be.

Now for the story.

When in 1862 Dr. Hely Hutchinson Almond opened the Loretto School at Musselburgh with only twelve boys, he had already worked out in his mind a scheme of Education. He considered that five matters must be kept in view. He is said to have arranged them in order of importance. His order, beginning with the most important, was as follows:

- (1) Character
- (2) Physique
- (3) Intelligence
- (4) Manners
- (5) Information

O'Neill, in groping his way through the labyrinth of Education, was guided by a natural instinct rather than a considered plan. Even today he might be unable to see these five as separate aims. A recent visitor to his school at Prestolee who took both time and trouble to apprise all he saw and heard has recorded his impressions.

He feels that O'Neill would certainly agree with Dr Almond that Information, for its own sake, comes last. On the other hand the desire to gain information, the ability to do so, and the determination to stick in till you have done so, are matters of prime importance even if the information gained has only interest value. Put simply this amounts to saying let us use the process of getting information as a tool for developing Character and Intelligence, and let us avoid stuffing the child with information for the sake of stuffing him with information or just for the sake of enabling him. to pass an exam in that stuffing! '

With regard to Physique O'Neill was positive. ' Children must move', he explained. 'Having to exercise them as a relief from sitting upright for two or three stretches of forty-five minutes is as unnatural as forcing them to sit in that way. They should not be immobilized to the extent that they require to burst out into violent activity at "play times" and "breaks". Let them move about during their work and fix or change their position as Nature demands.' As regards 'manners'. Dr. Almond was dealing with the sons of well-to-do people, O'Neill with the children of Lancashire working classes. For the most part these latter children behave civilly to their teachers because they are told to do so, but react in another way behind their teachers' backs and when out of school. This observer was able to watch O'Neill's children under both conditions and his opinion of them agreed with that of H.M. Inspectors, that these children were extraordinarily polite and well-mannered in a perfectly natural and engaging way. But O'Neill does not ' teach ' them manners: he allows them to be naturally polite and he is seldom actually rude to them himself.

Let us, then, go into the school. It is over a year since Omes left: there is no longer any sign of the Brigade coterie as such; the school has no doubt a better poise. Certainly it is humming with the sound of activity. The hall is quietly filling with chairs and benches but no one seems to be giving any orders. If it seems to be all a little bewildering, you are the only person who is bewildered. And, as you watch, the chairs are filling. Most people seem. to be reading quietly. Here and there a teacher is now to be seen, evidently marking a register, inquiring from time to time if some one is present. The piano is being played. It is Teddy: you had not noticed his presence? He is suddenly in the midst of us. And now with a rustle they are finding the hymn or maybe have no need to, for it is one well-loved and memorized. Suiting his touch to the words, Teddy draws the music from them as they instantly respond. Here and there, maybe, a boy is silent—not swept in—playing with something or just fidgeting. He is certainly the exception. Yet these children have had no 'singing lessons'. Suddenly Teddy stops abruptly and launches upon some comment on the words ' .. Loving Shepherd of Thy sheep, Keep Thy lamb in safety keep.'

'Frank and Laurence, go and bring in Nancy.' There is a stir and presently the boys return from the yard leading in the goat, one of the school pets. 'Now, again "Loving Shepherd ..." Let Nancy hear our prayer.'

And presently the scene changes around us and the hall is no longer as a church but a lounge with pleasant tables here and there, with flowers and shaded lamps and many books: and seated at these tables are boys or girls, reading, writing, sewing. . . . The chairs and benches have vanished. The class-rooms round the hall are no longer empty. People are moving about dusting and arranging. Yet no bell has been rung: no whistle has sounded: no orders have been shouted. It is, though, time for organizers.

You see, there is here an unusual amount of gear, and it is all in use. So there are 'organizers'. Each organizer, or more probably pair of organizers, takes care of something— a bookcase, a tool cupboard, a stationery cabinet, cooking utensils, musical equipment, Nancy's quarters, and so on in some room or other. It is their business to know all about everything for which they are responsible—where it should be, where it is, who has borrowed it, and to keep it in serviceable order and repair if necessary. As these organizers go from time to time from job to job according to a rota, all the children become familiar with the whole of the school's equipment, and that alone is a polite education in this school, packed as it is with amenities and apparatus. It is now that Teddy may be introducing some new books which have arrived, or new gear he may have found was needed. But they are just finishing and are at the final dusting, the tidying of their own personal desks, the washing of hands and the drinking of milk, and so to the 'Lesson ' for the day.

There is a Cycle of Lessons. On a notice-board, which gives full information about the whole cycle, that for the day is indicated by means of an arrow. Note-books and textbooks are out. No one is waiting for the teacher to begin for there is a prearranged plan to be got on with. The next chapter is the place for starting. Careful reading, the making of notes, the drawing of maps or illustrations, accompanied by the using of dictionaries for word meanings, and quiet discussion of difficult sentences—all this can go forward till the teacher indicates that he is about to begin the oral part of the day's lesson.

How long will the lesson last?

That will vary from teacher to teacher and from subject to subject and class to class. Certainly there will be no arbitrary interruption because 'time's up'. Concentration will be allowed to continue and the work in hand to be finished when each finishes. 'Any fool can start a thing,' says Teddy, 'but it needs character to finish it and the finishing of it breeds character.'

'I have been told', said the visitor, 'that young children cannot concentrate for long.'

'Have you ever seen a boy arranging and cataloguing and identifying his stamp collection?' asked Teddy. 'Don't interrupt him and see.' What is the subject of the daily lesson?

Well, you may have chanced into the National Gallery and noticed a group of people clustering round a speaker. They move from picture to picture, and the speaker is interesting them in this and that, introducing them to artists and dates and themes and subjects and methods and techniques, and telling them how and where they may learn more. These lessons are somewhat akin to that. There is much in this world which is of interest: much that cultured people find

engrossing. Once a day, and once only, and following always an advertised programme detailed on the ' Cycle of Lessons ' notice-board, the teacher stimulates and amplifies their interest in some topical or cultural matter, be it what you will. On this the lesson is given and the ideal lesson never finishes. Its oral part acts as a stimulus to research ad infinitum, in and out of school, opening up new paths of reading and observation.

Suppose the child is not interested? Should one compel him to become so? It is a silly question, isn't it? You cannot compel him to be interested. You may be able to force or scare him into saying that he is. But you will not believe him, and he will not believe that you do. Leave it as it is for the time being. He is interested in something. Allow that interest to be the tool to develop his character and intelligence and help him to use it. When his character and intelligence are further developed, maybe he will no longer reject the interest which has failed at the moment to hold him: and maybe he will!

But surely there are matters which everybody must learn and, if necessary, must be forced to learn, the three R's for example?

Certainly. At Prestolee these are now known as the Primaries. These Primaries were instituted at the school soon after the first inquiry. They have to be done daily, before any self-chosen activity is engaged upon, but not before the Lesson for the day. Here again there are definite assignments) calculated to secure that literacy and ability which are needed for the gaining of scholarships; but the actual execution of this work has developed in ways peculiar to the spirit of the School. Children may work together, for example, and help each other; this is usually regarded as 'cheating', but why? They may even come to quarrelling as to how a sum is to be done, and bring their differences to the teacher for arbitration. What could be better? They are thinking and they are in earnest. In addition to the available teachers, and any of these may be consulted by any of the children, many kinds of help suitable to the work are provided, and if some further aid seems necessary it will be devised or obtained, if this is humanly possible, by the man who most wants it—Teddy on behalf of all.

It is this informality in discussion and execution of work which is of educational value, and which formal class-teaching misses. The insistence that the consignment of Primary work must be completed before any self-chosen activity is embarked upon is no more repression than compulsory breathing. 'Something attempted, something done'—that earns a night's repose. 'Finish it first', says O'Neill. The habit of finishing a job is a valuable educational aim. Who wants a surgeon to stop operating because it is his tea-time? Who wants a workman to leave his job half-finished merely because it is 4 p.m.? Why then interrupt a busy child because a 'period is up'?

Note too that the day does not open with the ' Primaries '. It opens with the 'Lesson'. This avoids the tendency to rush through the Primaries as if they were less pleasant, to get on with the Lesson, which may be considered more so. The Primaries are ordinarily tackled when the hungry interest in the Lesson has been satisfied for the time being, and a change is needed. Nevertheless, some children like to do Primary work well in advance, perhaps even the evening before, so that they may be free to arrange something they have in mind—a party perhaps on the following day. And why not? Such is planning, and why not plan?

Following upon the Lesson and the Primaries, the remainder of the in-school-hours activity is at the children's own disposal, and just how they make use of this time will become apparent later on.

It will be readily appreciated that in such a school as this where mental, moral, and aesthetic bias is to be deplored, and a healthy, happy, and unbiased approach is desired and encouraged, the preliminary ground work is of considerable moment. In common parlance, one would like to catch 'em young: before, for example, they had been trained in the Infant Department in the conventional way, passively awaiting events. You have probably taken this for granted, and have assumed that Teddy was in control of the Infant Department in the school of which he was headmaster, from which children flowed to him. That infants should get the wrong kind of start would be a definite, and might be a serious, drawback to these children.

Unfortunately, at Prestolee the Infant Department, though housed in the same building, and though feeding the rest of the school, was not under O'Neill's control, and he was permitted to exercise no authority over that department whatsoever.

Moreover, the Headmistress of the Infant Department, who had seen the confusion which had attended Teddy's rush tactics on his arrival, and was not surprised when the suggestion that some of his pupils had been found to be illiterate called for the first inquiry into his methods, found herself opposed to him. She was shocked at the informality of the mixed school. She found it noisy and disturbing. She agreed with the sentiments expressed at times by the chief male assistant when he returned from his war service.

It must have been irksome to this lady, who was conducting her department according to her own lights, and in accordance with all the wishes expressed explicitly and implicitly by the Education Authorities, to notice that the 'pandemonium' which seemed to her to characterize O'Neill's side of the school appeared to be getting favourable publicity in certain quarters, and that O'Neill himself was in growing demand as a speaker on Educational matters who might be relied upon for 'fireworks'. On one of these occasions O'Neill, prone to volcanic eruption, was indiscreet enough to get reported as having remarked that 'the children coming from the Infants' Department in the school where I now am, can do nothing with their reading books but bang one another on the head with them'. True that, or whatever it actually was, was said in public by him away back in 1919. It was, without much doubt, taken to be a declaration of war and was, apparently, accepted as such. You may remember reading in Chapter IX how Omes had become aware of these hostilities and how he had made some attempt to win the Headmistress of the Infant Department over to a more sympathetic interest in Teddy's work. While Omes was at the school little was done to fan this war into some degree of heat, but that was now to happen. The spark was fanned into flame by the development generally thought of as the Evening activities.

In 1924, which year our story has now reached, the O'Neills' two children were old enough to make it possible for Teddy to devote more time to out-of-school-hours activities than he had been able to do when the Brigade idea had started. The spreading of the Brigade's advantages over the School as a whole developed gradually but, by way of a start, Teddy now began to return to the school immediately he had finished a hurried meal and reopen the buildings and allow children to come in. His aim was 'to provide anything decent for them to do, trusting that association, observation, and environment would stimulate these rugged souls and beckon them towards the useful and the good'.

At first only schoolchildren returned. Then came some older boys and girls who had left school and were now at work. Then parents. Their children failing to return home because they were so engrossed in work of all kinds, the parents began to turn up to look for them, and these, after a while, came earlier and got into the habit of staying and watching the children at work and play. The habit spread with the older people and the school became for some an alternative relaxation to the local pubs. Refreshments were offered and parents and children got busy cooking and soon there were regular supplies of tea, cakes, biscuits, cocoa, minerals, potato-crisps, lollipops, and even ice-cream.

With a general improvement in teachers' salaries, Teddy benefited and there is no doubt that his school began to share his better fortune, for soon a player-piano arrived to take the place of that one which had gone when Omes, its owner, departed. A radiogram appeared and boys were busy rigging up extension loudspeakers throughout the buildings and outside. With music in the air, spontaneous community singing came, and ballet and country dancing was an incident in potato-pie suppers, garden parties, and the like. Wave upon wave of activity developed, passed, and returned.

As older people came, often with paunches which could not be comfortably supported on school furniture, old furniture was given and purchased at jumble sales, until all kinds of informal seating and working arrangements became naturalized in the school. Swinging couches, easy chairs, games tables, lounge furniture, because they were needed, now began to be made in the school itself.

In increasing numbers people moved about, talked, sang, sewed, sawed, read books, made pictures, while Teddy continually added new amenities, helped by children and watched by tired parents relaxing after day-long toil in the hot spinning mills.

There were times when Teddy could not come or when he wished to lead theatre or concert trips with parties of children, and then he would entrust one or other of the parents or an older boy of the ex-pupils with the keys, and these began to share the job of opening the school and of exercising supervision in his absence. The whole business was reminiscent of healthy family life, free, self-active, self-disciplined. There were no formal classes, but groups having common interests would get together to help one another.

As time went on the demand to use the school in this way regularly and without fail grew to such a degree that parents living near the building and other such helpers had to be given keys to open the place earlier each evening, and these helpers, rapidly training themselves for the purpose, came and worked on an equal footing with some of the teachers who were now taking part. No one was paid for any of these services or for the extra time they were putting in, in the case of teachers. It was all voluntary: all done for the love of doing it. And, what is really rather odd, it had grown so quietly and so rapidly that no permission to open the school in this way in the evenings had been asked for from the Managers. True, the Brigade had obtained certain concessions once or twice a week, but this was all night, every night! To all intents and purposes they were acting as Educational Squatters!

The truth of the matter is that Teddy was being swept off his feet by the spate of activities which he was now trying to man. In addition to all these Evening engagements there was Plumbley.

Immediately following the Brigade's first summer camp in Yorkshire, the O'Neills made a move to provide something of that kind for the children who were not members of the Company, and when Omes left they had quite made up their minds to make camping available to all. Recalling the joy he had experienced with his mother when he was a boy and they had gone off to Plumbley in Cheshire, Teddy felt that to be an ideal spot for his purpose. It was accessible: it was lovely country: and there was farm produce available. A convenient site was secured from a local farmer, and soon parties of children from the school, both past and present, were busy making and erecting suitable huts, bungalows, and a cookhouse. This became a big undertaking, for the camp, originally planned for occasional holidays, became so popular that during many months in the year it was in constant week-end use by large informal parties, which were presently swelled by the arrival of chara-loads of parents.

It is difficult to grasp the magnitude of these events which take so little time in the telling. This Camp at Plumbley ran for eighteen years and was only then brought to a close by the declaration of war in September 1939; and throughout that time O'Neill and his wife took full and active part in its maintenance.

Nor have you yet the full tale of this couple's social service to the village. The O'Neills were now living a few miles from Prestolee School in comparatively country surroundings near fields and woods. Their house stood high and commanded an extensive panorama, when weather and industrial conditions revealed it. It was approached by a narrow lane which skirted a big reservoir on the hill-top. On the left were fields. The windows of the house looked out upon a plot of considerable size, and here Teddy had brought into being a rose garden. He had become a great lover of roses and had joined the National Rose Society before he had joined the National Union of Teachers. To him it was truly our National Flower. All people bow before the rose and handle it respectfully, for, like the British bulldog, it can bite as well as smile. 'Roses', he used to say 'can redeem people. The crown of thorns is a crown, and Lancashire people must wear theirs and redeem the industrial shame of slum life, ugly surroundings, waste land, and the murder and wanton destruction of beauty in blossom and tree. The way of "The Lord", as I see it, is lined with trees and carpeted with petals. The sound of falling rose petals is music unknown, yet not unknowable, to the madding crowd for all their ignoble strife and raucous life. Roses must be planted in the hearts of all people. We are British. We can be sweet and lovely in our island ways but, like the rose, we can defend ourselves. There are matters which we hold supreme and with regard to these we must be approached and dealt with carefully and respectfully or the invader will find, as with the rose, that we can be very sharp and pointed in our defence! 'To him, no more suitable flower could be chosen as our national emblem; loveliness in colour, in scent, in form, and in texture, full of character and able to cut and thrust if need be.

And so, upon the brow of Clarke's Hill, a great garden of roses sprang into being. He made it with the willing and joyous help of the children for whom he was himself doing so much: and when it began to burst forth in radiance his home came to be more and more freely used by children, and the evenings generally ended with suppers and singing. Then garden parties began to be arranged, not only for the children but for old scholars and parents. There was, of course, a demand on the part of the young for an opportunity to play games, so what must the O'Neills do but hire the adjacent field, which now became a sports ground, and here games and sports were held and Woolworthy prizes were competed for.

Three miles, and all uphill, was a long step for the elderly and so charas were hired by parties of parents and it was not an uncommon sight for several to be found parked in the lane. The O'Neills' piano was dragged to the door of the house, and the evening would draw to a close with song and praise ascending to Heaven from under the trees outside.

As these gatherings at this lovely house and garden grew in popularity, numbers of light seats and tables were needed, and these, too, were made in the school. And so the visitors were accommodated. One difficulty had to be met. The call of nature resulted in so heavy a use of the O'Neills' hall and stair-carpet by children and old folks passing up and down the stairs, that it looked as if new carpets would be needed every few weeks. So latrines were made at school for the use of boys and girls, and these were erected in the field: the hosts' carpets being reserved for grown-ups who still used the stairs. The latrines were large and heavy and were brought along on the school wheelbarrow, pushed by industrious and willing children up the long hill. The lane (unadopted!) proved to be too much for the barrow: the iron rim came off, the wheel was shattered to pieces, and the children arrived carrying the remains of the barrow on the latrines. The wretched wheelbarrow was dumped in the field where it happened to lie forgotten by the enthusiasts for the time being.

It was a terrific rush, this six years of ceaseless effort: but the promise that any worthy advantages enjoyed by the old Brigade should become available to the whole school was more than fulfilled; for in creating the evening activities in the centre of the village, by bringing into being the permanent week-end camp at Plumbley, and by providing the sports field and rose garden at Clarke's Hill, the O'Neills had provided amenities available without distinction, not only to the school children present and past, but also to their parents and all the school's friends. 'All the school's friends'?—but had it any enemies?

Indeed there were. There were those who, themselves living in a Fools' Hell of their own making, believed that O'Neill and those with him were creating and living in a Fools' Paradise, and they looked for its downfall. Quite a ring of hostile teachers surrounded the school ready to do some sniping if the target showed. Who can anticipate what may result when punctilio joins with jealousy and the Pharisee's eye catches the tint of jaundice?

From the professional point of view Teddy was 'a traitor to his profession': he was cheating. A salaried teacher with well-defined hours and well-defined duties, he was seeking and gaining notoriety by working overtime without extra pay, and by performing unnecessary services which savoured of stunts. He was riding rough-shod over very thin ice. The securing of suitable men and women for the teaching profession: is difficult. They need training, and the untrained, un-certificated teacher is an undesirable makeshift, likely to be characterized by incompetence or superficial charm of personality. O'Neill was not only encouraging and quite possibly scaring some of his staff to take part with him in these unpaid activities, but he was placing in positions of temporary authority over schoolchildren, in school buildings, untrained, unpaid, and unrecognized individuals, who had no experience in handling children, when he himself was anything from three to sixty miles away. They asked each other 'by what authority was he doing these things? and who gave him this authority?'

It certainly was not the School Managers. They, at least, could throw that much light on the question.

Of course their position was a little difficult. So was that of the League of Nations after Hitler had goose-stepped his army into Cologne. One thing leads to another. They ought to have jumped on him six years ago when O'Neill started doing all this, and they had not thought of it. They had missed another opportunity four years later when, in January 1926, a formal complaint was lodged with them by the Headmistress of the Infant Department, to the effect that several of her 'scholars' were found to be in no fit condition to receive instruction because they were sleepy and drowsy, as if they had not been in bed long enough. Upon questioning her children she found they had been in the main school during evening activities the previous night, and had been allowed to stay there until quite late hours—in some cases until 10 p.m.

The Managers considered the complaint, saw Teddy about it, and obtained his ready promise that he would do all he could to see that any infants who turned up were sent home in reasonable time. No reference was made by the Managers to the effect that he was acting, with regard to these evening activities, without their consent. Teddy, being in complete agreement with the Managers and the Headmistress over the question of late hours, did do all he could to send small people home in good time. But it was not so easy as all that. Parents, wishing to go out at night, would be reluctant to leave a small child alone in the house or even alone in charge of an elder child. Just across the way was the school, full of children, warm, at play, and under supervision. Far better to take the small one over there where it would be safe till called for. And it was in just such cases as this that the slip up would occur.

However, though there were clashes between the two departments, no more definite complaints reached the Managers until the Chairman, the local Vicar, inquired of the lady if all was going well. He was informed that it was not. On asking why she had not, in that case, again formally complained to him, it is recorded that she replied, 'I have complained: either the Managers have not the power to stop this going on, or, if they have the power to, they won't use it.'

This sounded like the singing sound that precedes boiling over. He sensed pent-up hostility. At any moment the Managers' authority might be further criticized. He might be told that what had been going on nightly had never been sanctioned by the Managers. He might be asked who was having to foot the bill for all the extra light which was being used. One has to guess his reaction. He would probably have administered a snub to the lady sufficient to keep her tongue under more tactful control had it not been for Plumbley Camp. On the other hand, the fact that some of his choir-boys had taken to the healthy habit of week-end camping may have had nothing whatsoever to do with the action which the Managers took when, under the lead of their Chairman, they suddenly issued orders that the evening activities in the school should stop instantly and completely.

If Teddy's opening of the school for evening activities was akin to the march to Cologne, this action of the Managers was a Pearl Harbour and resulted in just such an immediate reaction—a declaration of war and a mobilizing of forces on both sides. Broadly the issue, as it was presented, lay between the supporters of a man who, during the past six years, had thrown himself and his means, heart and soul, into the creation of social amenities for young men and maidens, old men and children, throughout the village, without distinction of clique or person, by making ample and generous provision in the school in their midst, in his own home and garden nearby, and at the week-end camps he had created, on the one hand: and on the other, the body of the School Managers, their supporters, and especially the Chairman of Managers who, as a parish priest of one section of the worshippers in the village, might have been expected, at any

rate in the opinion of those who by faith were Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Baptists, and others, to welcome and support O'Neill rather than to allow himself to be dragged through the mire at the chariot wheels of an infant-school headmistress, who had 'never attempted to render an unpaid social service in her life'.

I repeat that this was the way the issue was presented for public digestion.

It was thus presented, by letter, to Omes away in the south of England, out of a job at the moment, having himself been at loggerheads with Home Office officials and his own Board of Managers with regard to his own much less ambitious activities at the school, to the headship of which he had been appointed on leaving Prestolee, with a request for any help or suggestions he might think fit to offer. Omes, licking his own wounds, concocted a short manifesto addressed to his old friends at Prestolee (and others), in which he begged those who rallied round Teddy to be militant in their support of him. They needed no such encouragement. They had already addressed themselves to the Director of Education for the county, and were determined to press for an official decision at the highest level.

One imagines that to the county educational authorities Prestolee was ceasing to figure as a 'warning beacon' and was well on the way to becoming a 'bright and shining light'. It was evident, however, that the wick wanted some trimming and that here was a complaint which was going to be pressed to an issue. It was equally evident that a sound social and educational lighthouse was in course of erection, but the substructure seemed to have incorporated in it some irregularities. Best to act at once. So an inquiry was ordered.

The attitude now understood to be adopted by the Chairman and Managers, some of whom were believed to be rather lukewarm in his support, was: 'An inquiry by all means; but this is simply a question of whether School Managers in the exercising of their duties according to regulations and their lights could rely upon the support of the educational authorities.' That, they maintained, was no matter for a public inquiry, and the only members of the public they proposed to admit were those who were required as witnesses. The bulk of the village thought otherwise. They, the public, had asked for the inquiry. They, the public, were being interfered with by the Managers. They, the public, intended to be present and if they had no rights to be, on other grounds, they had this much right that they were all witnesses.

When the day came, the Chairman forbade entry to the public and engaged the services of the police to exclude them. One constable was stationed at the front door of the school, and a second at the back door. Within the school the inquiry began its session. Outside the crowd surged and clamoured and the officers of the law did their duty.

Suddenly the police officers noted a change of tone in the clamour and perceived a rapid thinning of the crowd about them.

Do you remember the Brigade Bible Class and the problem of finding a place for it to meet: and the 'avenue' which proved to have at its end an inconspicuous and out-of-the-way door: and in whose custody the key of that door lay? What more to be desired? And so, entering, not so quietly and inconspicuously, and in tens and twenties, the cloud of witnesses established themselves, appropriately enough, in the school from which the Managers had shut them out.

'Only witnesses should be allowed to attend this meeting,' the vicar called out.

'We are all witnesses,' the crowd assured him.

To prepare the Managers' case had been no easy matter. It was framed under the guidance of the vicar himself in his capacity as Manager.

It opened by stating that the Managers desired at the outset to make two points perfectly clear. The first, that only a stern sense of their duty and responsibility as Managers urged them to take a course that they knew full well would meet with the utmost opposition from the headmaster and his friends, for, it proceeded, 'it has been common gossip for a considerable time what was likely to happen should any such action be taken. But this in no way deterred or precipitated the Managers' action. They dealt with the situation in a way that appeared to them right and proper and they were not influenced by any other consideration.'

The second point it made was that the Managers wished to make it perfectly clear that, in taking the course they did, they were not attacking a person but were remedying things in the interest of all concerned. 'Unfortunately,' the statement proceeded, 'as I shall proceed to show, personalities have been brought into the matter, but the Managers as a body have steadily refrained from being associated with such, simply because they are assured that the step they took was the right one, and therefore they have every confidence in expecting to receive, not only the sanction, but also the encouragement of the higher authorities in their endeavours to make this school a credit to the area as well as the county in matters essentially educational. Further, in giving the reasons for the course taken, the Managers are reluctantly compelled to mention facts and incidents which are necessary for the support of their case, but they wish it to be understood that only the barest minimum of such facts and incidents will be quoted. They have no desire to present anything in the nature of overwhelming evidence simply because this would involve the witness of a number of residents in the district which, under the circumstances, is neither advisable nor is it necessary. The Managers wish to express their very great regret that the headmaster and his friends should have seen fit to have taken the course they have done. It cannot possibly do any good.'

The statement then proceeds to give the Managers' reasons for abruptly closing down the evening activities which had continued, with their implicit approval, for six years. These were given under three headings, Educational, Economical, and Disciplinary.

Under the heading 'Educational', this manifesto stated that the Managers called the attention of the referees to the report which H.M. Inspectors made on the school which revealed, they claimed, 'that there is something lacking somewhere; and I will now proceed', it continues, 'to show why the Managers are of the opinion that these activities are, in part at least, that "something" which is wrong.' You may find this rather vague, and it is difficult to guess to which report the vicar is referring. In a report made in 1923, five years back, attention was called to some important matters which seemed to be suffering neglect. But in 1927, only a year ago, a report had been issued which one could hardly regard as unsatisfactory, as it spoke throughout of 'considerable improvement' in all those matters which had been found to be unsatisfactory. There was nothing whatever in this report which could cause grave anxiety to those watching the growth of an entirely new experiment in Education. The Managers then reminded the referees of the complaint made by the headmistress of the infant department, two years back, that some of

her children were drowsy as they had been up late at the evening activities, and stated 'If then such activities are not in the interest of the younger children educationally, the same activities cannot be in the interest of the older.'

In arguing the 'Economic' issue, it produced evidence that, due to the evening activities, the school was costing a great deal of additional public money in fuel and light, and the Managers did not feel justified in sanctioning this at a time when there was a need for drastic economy in public expenditure.

In dealing with the matter from the 'Disciplinary' point of view, it stated that the Managers found that since these activities had been in progress, 'anybody and everybody had been free to do very much as they liked'. As a result of these facilities there had been times when a person in the street outside the school buildings could hear two pianos being played at the same time in different parts of the building, 'one not the same pitch as the other'. It cited an occasion during these six years when a boy had received a bad cut from accidentally putting his arm through a glass window in a door when he was being chased by other playmates. It suggested that the last straw was laid on the Managers' backs when 'the school was left in the charge of a youth of the district who had a key for the premises and opened the school and assumed control until the headmaster appeared, and failing the headmaster's appearance remained in control'.

This closed the Managers' case, or seemed to, as the manifesto continued, 'Could any Board of Management, even with the most elementary notions of their duties and responsibilities, consent to a continuance of such happenings? We could not! And therefore the Managers respectfully ask that their action in closing the school shall not only receive official sanction, but also that they should be encouraged and supported in their efforts to do their duty in the truest interests of the children and of the school generally.'

It is not for us to judge whether the vicar would not have been wise to leave the matter thus. The members of the inquiry had that decision to make, and they made it.

It was not left thus, but the statement immediately continued with what is sometimes called 'washing dirty linen in public', and, in spite of its early promise, proceeded to describe sayings and doings which followed upon the closing of the evening activities.

The headmaster is described as becoming most offensive when interviewing the vicar and the ex-chairman of Managers, and of making threats against the church's activities.

The Managers found that, in ordering the school to be closed, they had automatically closed the county library which was now incorporated in the evening activities, and the headmaster felt he could not be told to shut the place and open it in one breath.

It was told how the headmaster and his friends decided to get up a petition against the action of the Managers and how they held meetings to plan their campaign.

It told of canvassers on the headmaster's side who took the petition from door to door, and of how one of these told a lady who refused to sign that she was not a Christian, and of another who asked 'Are you for schoolmaster or parson?' It told of the headmaster's going to church and of his being invited after the service into the vestry, and of the vicar's attempt to persuade him to

drop the petition, asking him, in the presence of two witnesses, ' if it was not possible for men of education and position to settle a difference without recourse to an appeal to the mob instincts of the people by means of a petition'. It added that the headmaster ' was most profuse in his expression of gratitude and declared that, so far as he was concerned, the petition was at an end'. But so far as 'the mob instincts of the people' were concerned, this did not prove to be the case, as on 'the following day the scope of the petition was increased '.

Names were then given of several 'gentlemen holding positions of public responsibility ' whom the headmaster had ' interviewed '.

It told of the circularizing of the district by the ' statement emanating from — '. (This was Omes's contribution!) It told of ' threats of public meetings while, all the time, the agitators knew that the county authorities had their petition under consideration '.

Finally it restated its question: 'Are the Managers to manage this school in accordance with the rules and regulations governing such management, or is the headmaster to "carry on" in his supercilious manner, treating with contempt the men and women who are charged with the duties and responsibilities of managers?'

Then it was the turn of the witnesses to have a go.

The Managers' witnesses averred that parents and others were using the school tools and workshops for making and repairing things for their homes: that people and children did as they liked: that the children were kept out of their beds: and that the school remained open as long as a pub.

The 'cloud of [volunteer] witnesses', on the other side, reassured the members of the inquiry as to the happiness they enjoyed when using the school. Parents told how greatly they prized the provision made for their children's well-being: Grammar School boys how, living in small and over-crowded houses with no possible provision for quiet study, they were allowed to use the classrooms for doing their home-work at night and how this had helped them. There was, of course, much repetition.

Gradually a clear picture must have formed in the minds of the referees.

There was more at stake here than a clash of personalities, though there was clearly going to be no love lost between the schoolmaster on the one hand, and the vicar and headmistress on the other.

Some face-saving must be attempted.

The children were, in some cases, keeping too late hours, but that was rather a matter for home discipline and convenience, and provided no reason for shutting down the evening activities as a whole.

The salient fact was that O'Neill had created and equipped a youth-and-old-age centre in this cut-off village (this was long before 'Youth Centres' were talked about), and that in this school the village, as a whole, found cultural interests, healthy amusement, companionship, and warmth at

the end of a day's work. Parents knew that their children were off the streets and happy. Provision had been made for responsible people to be entrusted with the control of the building and nothing seemed to have gone wrong except that, on some occasions, parents had found it convenient to keep small children up late in the school's care when they themselves were unable to be at home to put them to bed.

True all this had been created without permission being asked. But all experienced administrators know that such an organization must grow little by little. One extension leads out from another. It is all tentative.

O'Neill was doing what every educational authority at top level wished to see being done, but generally had to wish for in vain. Was every such apostle, willing to do all this for no extra pay and often at his own expense, when at long last he did appear, to be required, at every stage, to ask permission to proceed from a committee who had no power to grant such permission, and who could only act as a postman between the headmaster and headquarters, who, in turn, were loath to be asked to give a formal ruling in a proposition which was bound to be a 'pig in a poke' ?

The attitude of any headquarters staff worthy of its position must always be: 'Do what you believe to be right without asking permission; but we will down you if you let us down.'

Late that evening the referees indicated the recommendations they would make to the Director of Education. These showed that they were well-chosen individuals possessed of sympathy, insight, and tact. The Managers were thanked for bringing their problems to the Director's notice: their doubts were allayed: the evening activities which they had countenanced for so long might continue, subject to certain regulations which would be communicated to them and to the headmaster. The meeting came to an end.

The following day the Director of Education made the position clear by sending the following regulations to the headmaster and the Managers:

- (1) That the activities arranged in the school outside elementary school hours shall be continued by the headmaster, under the general supervision of the School Managers acting on behalf of the County Education Committee, and that the Managers shall present for the consideration of the County Committee, through the local committee, an annual report on the working of the scheme, with any suggestions for improvement or extension.
- (2) That, in order that the Managers may effectively cooperate with the headmaster, a visiting rota shall be established by the Managers to ensure that monthly visits are made.
- (3) That for these activities the school may be opened for five evenings per week, commencing not earlier than 6 p.m. and continuing not later than 9.30 p.m. Children eight years of age and under shall not be allowed to remain in the school later than 8 p.m.
- (4) That on every occasion when the school is open in the evening there shall be present, during the whole of the time that the school is open, at least one responsible person in charge. The headmaster shall, at the beginning of each session, and subsequently as may be necessary, inform

the Managers of the suitable person or persons selected to act as his deputy or deputies during his absence.

(5) The person in charge of the evening school shall be responsible for the proper conduct of the evening activities, for the welfare of the pupils, and for the general care of the school premises and equipment.

It was, of course, a victory for Teddy and his supporters. It is, however, one thing to win a victory: quite another to defeat one's enemy. Indeed it is often the case that one may fail to defeat the enemy by gaining the victory over him. Such was here the case. The sequel has now to be narrated.

The knowledge that his defeated critics had come to the conclusion that they had played their hand badly but still held some rotten cards which might be used to win, came to the O'Neills suddenly and from two quarters. A letter from the Director of Education for the county, dated 20th January 1930, informed them that complaints had been received by the local educational committee from the staff of the infant department with regard to the relationship between that department and the mixed school; and that the local committee had appointed a special sub-committee, also local, to inquire into the matter. The Director, at the time of writing, had no information as to the nature of these complaints, but desired to know if O'Neill would appear in person before their sub-committee or be represented 'by a friend'.

At the same time a member of this special sub-committee came to O'Neill and asked him if he knew what was afoot.

O'Neill was in complete ignorance.

The gist of what he now learned amounted to this. His critics, twice defeated in challenging his educational activities, now proposed to attack him personally. He was to be accused of ten misdemeanours, one of which was that he was a thief, and several that he was a slanderer. This time the critics proposed to keep the inquiry in local hands. It seemed to be the case that O'Neill could rely upon headquarters' support. Moreover, the attack was not to be left in the hands of amateurs, but the critics had engaged counsel to pilot their case. Such was the news which reached the O'Neills.

One of John Heywood's 'Proverbs', published in 1562, states 'There is no fire without smoke'. John Lyly in his *Euphues*, published a few years later, re-expressed this idea, changing the wording to 'There can no great smoke arise, but there must be some fire'. It is in this latter form that the adage generally comes to mind today. It may have entered your own mind as you read of the above events. But it was probably the original statement which filled the O'Neills' minds with dread and led soon to Teddy's complete breakdown in courage and health. In this world there is often more fear of one infuriated enemy than confidence in ninety and nine friends who cause no anxiety. The smoke was evident to many. What this man and woman feared was the intensity of the rage which was burning below the smoke. They felt the hot attack of jealousy. They began to fear that by keeping this attack in local hands, the players might be able to pack the cards against them. Even if it did not actually succeed, any attack upon a headmaster's morals would harm him. If, by some mischance, it did succeed, it would so discredit him as to end his career as a teacher. He would be thrown out of employment, and to what?

The news that the matter was being elevated to legal status by the engagement of counsel showed the O'Neills that they, too, would need such aid to meet this attack. After consulting his friends, Teddy approached the National Union of Teachers and they quickly decided to give him legal assistance.

The inquiry was held in the latter half of March 1980, and it dragged on for the best part of a month. The subcommittee's final conclusion and their recommendation had better be stated verbatim. It read as follows:

' The sub-committee, after very careful deliberation, have reached the conclusion that there is an entire absence of cooperation between the two departments of the school and that the headmaster is to blame.

' In view of the findings as above, and having regard to the fact that in present circumstances co-operation between the two departments is not possible, the committee are reluctantly compelled to recommend the County Educational Committee to ask the headmaster to resign, or, alternatively, that he be given formal notice to terminate his appointment.'

It seems absurd, doesn't it? It is the kind of thing that happens with irresponsible local committees. But it was no joke for the O'Neills. Here is a glimpse of their condition. It is taken from a diary kept at that time.

March 24	N.U.T. solicitor at school in conference with Teddy.
March 27	Teddy left school early to keep appointment about inquiry business.
March 28	Both Teddy and his wife had to be absent twice today on inquiry business.
March 31	Mr. and Mrs. O'Neill both absent from school ill, though Mrs. O'Neill returned at 1.50 in the afternoon and tried to carry on.
April 1	Mr. O'Neill absent ill all day. Mrs. O'Neill absent ill in the morning.
April 2	Mr. O'Neill absent ill all the morning but re-

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sumed at 1.50. He was too unwell to work. He left at 3.45 to confer with barrister.
April 3 Mr. O'Neill came to school but left at 11.15 unable to carry on.
April 10 Both the O'Neills absent ill.

You see, his enemies had got him. down.

Will you let, your imagination turn towards his home?

Figure his children during this period, unable to understand quite what was afoot. Developing a horror of the school and all it stood for, which seemed to them to be the downing of their parents. The rumour that their parents would be without jobs and their home in jeopardy.

But you will be wondering what these complaints were which this committee had been considering with their careful deliberation, with the help of legal luminaries.

The first was that, eleven years previously, Mr. O'Neill had made disparaging remarks about the headmistress and staff of the infant department.

The second was that he had done the same sort of thing seven years ago.

The third was that, about a year ago, he had expressed a desire to have the infant department under his own control.

The fourth, that the headmaster made an entry in the log book which was not a statement of fact; and that, contrary to regulations, the log book had been left in a position accessible to anyone visiting the school.

The fifth, that the headmaster wrote a letter to the Chairman of Managers making false charges against the headmistress of the infant department.

The sixth, that the headmaster had used the infant department for dancing without having obtained permission

The seventh was once again the matter of infants being allowed to remain at the evening activities after 8 p.m.

The eighth was about boys being allowed in the girls' yard, and the inconvenient stowage of furniture in the shed therein.

The ninth accused the headmaster of trying to impose restrictions upon members of his staff in their relations with the staff of the infant department.

The tenth was really six separate complaints. The headmaster was accused of stealing the school wheelbarrow: (you remember what happened to this wheelbarrow and how it lay disintegrated in the sports field adjacent to his home?), that he sold goods in the school: that he used children to clean his car during school hours: that, on the occasion of the General Election, 1929, he was

absent from school during the afternoon without permission: that, without permission, a party had been held in the school until midnight on 20th December 1929: that he was habitually late in the time of arrival at school for morning session.

It seems odd that the conclusion which this sub-committee arrived at after their very careful deliberation of all these complaints was merely that there was no co-operation between the mixed department and the infant department. Bear in mind that O'Neill had had it impressed upon him that this infant department was not under his control, and that he had been asked to keep out of it altogether.

It seemed odder still that, having come to this conclusion, they recommended that for this reason the man should be given the sack. But there is more to be told.

Of the seven members of this sub-committee who signed this document three put in qualifying notes, and of these, two stated that they did not concur with the recommendation made. Of these two, one put in a minority report which is of interest. He describes how, in dealing with the ten complaints, the sub-committee found that one only was of a serious nature, and that this one was the central charge around which all the others had been accumulated. These others were, for the most part, of a comparatively trivial nature, or occurrences on dates remote from the present time.

This pivotal incident was, of course, the entry in the school log book.

This critic agreed that the infant-school staff were undoubtedly justified in looking upon this entry as a reflection on the efficiency of their department.

The explanation offered by the headmaster and the nature of the incident were as follows. It seems that his junior assistant whose lot it was to receive into the mixed school the children promoted from the infant department, had advised him that a recent batch were not, in her opinion, up to a reasonable standard, and that she did not feel that she should be blamed if one of H.M. Inspectors found this to be the case. She pressed O'Neill on the matter. In order to safeguard her position, he made an entry in the log book to the effect that, in his opinion, they were below standard. A member of his staff got access to this log book which, by regulations, should have been kept under lock and key. Though fully aware that the contents of this book were to be regarded as confidential, he showed the entry to the infant-department staff. There were two serious mistakes here. O'Neill should have made it impossible for anyone to get access to this book. Further, any entries made in the book should be statements of fact and not expressions of opinion.

'It was unfortunate', the writer of this minority report continued, 'that Mr. O'Neill made that entry, but the subcommittee ought to accept his explanation that the entry was intended to protect his junior mistress from any adverse report in the event of an inspection of her class by H.M. Inspector. The recommendation of a majority of the subcommittee that the headmaster should be dismissed for such an indiscretion is not only unjust but vindictive.' Well, there you have it.

The report of the sub-committee was sent to the County Committee. The action they took was certainly anticlimax. It could have been summarized in two words—'stop quarrelling'. The

headmaster of the mixed department and the headmistress of the infant department were to confine themselves strictly to their own departments. School property was not, in future, to be removed from the school premises. Boys were not to enter the girls' play yard, and the gate between the two yards (in this 'mixed' school) was to be replaced and kept locked. The railings round a tree were to be replaced or not replaced. Scholars were not, in future, to be allowed to do during school hours any work 'which was not strictly educational'. Children attending the infant department were not to be allowed to take any part in the evening activities. The log book was to be locked up.

No comment whatever was made on the sub-committee's recommendation that the headmaster should be given the sack. Perhaps the members were not sorry as, to use their own words, they had made this recommendation with feelings of reluctance.

But this time they had got Teddy down. The strain on his nervous system was very apparent and his health began to be seriously affected. His whole internal mechanism, got out of harmony. His resistance was reduced. He began to suffer great pain. There were times when he hurried out of school and was doubled up in agony on some waste hillside nearby. The symptoms of jaundice began to be apparent. It was not long before he was taken, to hospital. His gall bladder was seriously infected and had to be removed and, other symptoms developing, his appendix went also. But it was his spirit which ailed most. He would make no effort. He gave up. He would not bother to eat and had to be forcibly fed. He came to the lowest point of nervous exhaustion.

Teddy's collapse took place in the latter part of 1930 and his operations were performed in February 1931. There was thus a period of about eleven months between the subcommittee's report and his final prostration.

Had this period been one of educational peace and quiet he would, no doubt, have quickly recovered from the anxiety he had suffered. But it was nothing of the kind. The attackers were by no means satisfied. Moreover, a strong body of parents had formed themselves into a self-styled 'parents' committee', and these were keen supporters of the headmaster and his methods. This 'parents' committee' was dissatisfied with the School Managers and especially with the vicar of the parish who was chairman of the Managers. They were set upon obtaining his resignation.

A good deal happened during this interval of eleven months. It would not make pleasing reading to recount it. You must just accept the fact that neither side was satisfied and that one, at any rate, with bulldog tenacity, continued to shake the other by the throat.

It was, however, largely due to the loyalty of the 'parents' committee' that O'Neill was ultimately saved. Whispers began to penetrate to the consciousness of his moribund mind. They conveyed the news that the school itself was working with zeal and smoothness, and that the evening activities continued without any set-back whatsoever. Parents were organizing themselves to help in every way. The children had their programme: they knew what to do: they were not dependent upon their headmaster and, in his enforced absence, they were apparently not only able and happy to use the resources he had made available to them, but the more anxious so to do, now that they knew him to be for a time knocked out.

As this news slowly penetrated to his consciousness, his desire to live returned to him. His interest returned. He began to ask questions. He became aware of the increased support that had

come to him., and although he learned that the enemy were by no means crushed but continued militant, he perceived that they were no longer fighting him. but were now crossing swords with an army of his friends and supporters. Above all – the children had not failed him.

CHAPTER XIV He Planted a Garden

And so, in April 1931, Teddy reappeared in school. His return was hastened by the routine halving of his salary, which he could ill afford. He had to forgo any period of convalescence to rebuild his strength, and returned from hospital straight to work. But he returned to those who had learned to see him differently as a result of his suffering and had learned to love him with a genuineness and strength which they might otherwise have missed. And he had returned in April.

April—it is the time when, in these temperate climes, life is stirring. Inevitably one's thoughts turn to gardens, country lanes, the fields, and orchards.

His own garden of roses on the brow of Clarke's Hill had suffered with him. To restore it to well-being was beyond his present powers. His thoughts, moreover, were with the school in the valley. It was there that his work lay—there, where staunch friends had kept his colours flying, there, where his dear wife had acted for him when she was not at his bedside, there, where the children were always ready to respond. In return for all this his mind was restless to create a beautiful garden of gratitude at the school itself.

Except at Chelsea no garden is made overnight.

He would have liked best to attack the tarmacadam play-yard. But the holes he had made had been cemented. The gate between the boys' yard and the girls', which he had removed, had been replaced and locked and these bare eyesores continued to stress the differences between the sexes.

But beyond the girls' yard, between it and the church, lay that neglected potato-growing demonstration area, known as the ' school garden '.

You may remember that one of the boys' early activities had been a bit of landscape gardening in this area. They had made a ' valley ' opposite the infant school windows which they had planted with tulips. This had fallen on evil days. Its sides had been gradually washed into its depressed area: its tulips had become discouraged and their birth-rate had fallen.

But the eyes of the man who had so nearly entered the garden of paradise turned now in this direction and saw the scummy hollow, and the few remaining patches of cultivation reminiscent of the graves of bygone gardeners, and his imagination began to work.

Who can say how much he saw in those first early days?

Not for one moment can he have visualized that the gardens which were about to be created by him were, in twenty years' time, to draw ten thousand visitors to the school, when they were illuminated for a fortnight in celebration of his sixtieth birthday. But such was to be the case!

No plans were prepared and submitted to the educational authorities before the work was put in hand. They could not have been approved. No indenting for materials—bricks, crazy paving, cement, sand, iron piping, wood, trees, plants, or seed—reached the Director of Education. He would have had no power to grant these materials. Teddy just started off and, having done so,

persisted. When, in due course, the garden had become a going concern, it became known as the 'Lido'.

It developed from the deserted valley which was now entirely reconstructed and ran with water. From an upper pool, filled by the elegant jet of a fountain, the little stream fell to a second pool. Both were the homes of water-lilies and aquatic plants, and in them were to be seen and studied frogs and toads, small fish, and insect life. Spilling over the lip of the lower pool, the water descended in a meandering course over a gravelly bottom, its flow enlivened by an occasional outcrop of rock, until it reached the 'ditch-garden', many yards long and edged with iris, ferns, spiraeas, and phlox, and having a soak-away at its lowest extremity.

Two wooden bridges were constructed and put in place. One spanned the upper stream, the second crossed the ditch-garden.

This, then, was the nucleus.

From the bridges, in either direction, paths started to roam.

Do you know the joy and charm of rambling paths? And how intriguing it is to come upon a stile? How, on turning a corner, an unexpected feature meets your gaze? How it might be red-hot poker? How, in this little retreat, you must be entirely out of sight? And how, escaping through a second entry, you come upon a straight and formal route, paved with crazy flagstones, edged with flower-clad walls, and leading to a bold architectural feature? Is it? Yes, it is a huge windmill! This lido grew with just that venturesome spirit.

And there are things to do!

One comes upon a garden lounge. Children sit at it drinking their milk and by it is a brazier. In colder weather it is alight and the drinkers can warm themselves. There are flights of a few steps at either end. If you sit on the topmost, you have a new prospect. Indeed, you can see into the sand-pit. This is a low, walled enclosure, with a rather wild garden round it aglow with flag irises, dusty-miller, loganberries, crab-apples, pears, and roses; you might easily miss it and the four small people who are busy building castles in the deep sand. And you will only come upon the wishing-well by a chance turn. Its parapet is about thigh-high, and it is this parapet that really holds the water. Overhead is a roof and under this is the bucket-winding gear. The parapet was built by girls; just bricks, dipped in creamy cement, but properly bonded and brushed over internally with a cement skin and touched up here and there with the aid of a pastry knife. Boys made the wooden structure overhead, and the axle of the winding gear, an old railing, was bent to form a handle at one end by heating it in a small bonfire. The bucket is rather fun. In the bottom are rings of holes, and a disc of rubber is fitted, which acts as a valve, so that when the bucket is lowered into the water this latter, entering through the holes in the bottom and pushing past the rubber disc, fills the vessel. When it is wound up it will empty slowly through an outer ring of holes not covered by the valve, forming a shower-bath, which aerates the water in the well. This is a good thing because those are real fish which you can see swimming in the well and they like it. Children love to play with water, especially when it sprays and splashes, and there is grand exercise to be had winding the bucket up, holding it while it discharges, and lowering it to refill. The water in the well is not really deep, just eighteen inches or so, and when a child leans with

his elbows on the top of the parapet, the surface is just at hand. There is a wide step at one side for smaller people to get onto.

All around are roses. There are pillars of roses, trelliswork covered with climbers and ramblers, standard roses, bush roses, and pergolas where roses sprawl with other plants. That is 'Blackpool Tower', that tall trellis structure where the girls on the ladders are tying up new shoots and pruning older growths.

And here, there, and everywhere are real fruit trees and, since the initial excitement is over, real fruit is allowed really to ripen on their branches. The longing in Teddy's mind is that every possible kind of fruit tree should be planted around and near the school, so that children should eat their fruits fresh from the branches. It is, of course, naughty to pick someone else's apples: but we may pick blackberries, and what a joy it is to do so! So walnuts, chestnuts, figs, medlars, damsons, nuts, and even peach trees and a vine, and, of course, apples, pears, plums, and a cherry were planted, one by one, in the lido; and their fruits began to supply Vitamin ED (for education). Please watch what you are treading on—that long trailing stalk with the rosette of leaves: follow it back: you see? Yes, real strawberries in a Lancashire school garden, and all over the place!

In this lido there are plants which can scratch one, and children do not like being scratched. But they do like to avoid being scratched and to dodge these prickles, and that is why there are so many deliberate obstructions and constructions—stiles, gates, ladders, and the like—in unexpected places, which one can climb over and wriggle under, avoiding these trailing thorns.

Yes, that is the windmill! Fine, isn't it? Two boys built it, complete with sails and a filter bed for that paddling-pool near by. It is as high as a house and has two balconies. The upper room is used by girls when donning their bathing-costumes, and the lower is just the place for a tea-party. It is approached by a path and surrounded by a parterre of crazy paving.

Among the plants sown in this new garden each year were patches of wheat, oats, and barley. How few people, young or old, can recognize growing cereals! If the 'townee' is not 'countrywised'—the words are Teddy's own—he is as menacing as a caterpillar to the country community, and to our food supplies. He rolls and hides and plays in and flattens down a field of hay: he opens gates to cattle: climbing them he breaks down fences meant to preserve crops. Recently a party of happy Manchester boys were found doing much damage to a field of oats outside a lovely village in the English Lake District, where they had encamped. Quite taken aback by the farmer rating them for spoiling his small field laboriously cultivated, they assured him that they thought it was only 'yaller grass'. The gulf between grain and bread can be bridged in the school garden, when these lovely grasses are grown, tended, and talked about.

Quite a library of books helpful to lido builders, gardeners, biologists, and joiners, had to grow up within the school. Books on the making of garden furniture and garden obstacles; on the cultivation of plants and the care of fruit trees and shrubs; books for guidance and information for those watching copulating frogs, newts, and tritons, water-snails, water-beetles, and water plants growing here in their natural surroundings, instead of in jelly jars on shelves.

But it was probably the roses which won the lido its laurels'. With roses to smell, roses to take home and give to friends, roses for weddings, roses for graves, roses on the school dinner-tables,

and an occasional rose for H.M. Inspector, one of the prime evils of the slums and industrial districts, the utter disregard for what Teddy, at any rate, thought of as God's greenery, was vanishing.

Yes, but all this was not done overnight, and it was not brought into being without much spending. It took six years in the making and the making of it did much to empty Teddy's pockets. But it was a triumph, and a triumph calls for illuminations. The idea of illuminations comes naturally to Lancashire folk. If they will go all the way to Blackpool to see them, perhaps they would, some of them, come to Prestolee. It did not take long to arrange matters. The local electrical power company, of whose great generating station in the village you are already aware, being as yet un-nationalized, supplied much valuable gear, floodlights, and so on, and an abundance of current. The children decked the lido with coloured lamps. The crowd came. On Friday, 25th June 1937, the Prestolee school lido figured prominently on the front pages of the *News Chronicle* and the *Evening Chronicle*, and the local *Farnworth Journal* of that date carried a long and appreciative article descriptive of the scene. The small charge made for admission, such were the crowds, did much to replenish Teddy's coffers.

The next day Bell, his wife, was rushed off to hospital.

Of course Bell's collapse and operation were long overdue. She had suffered from anxiety at the time of the first attack and the inquiry which it led to. The second had come upon her without warning and with the utmost venom. She had fought bravely but had had to give in, and all through March and early April of 1930 she had many times been unable to carry on and was absent from school through illness. The following year saw Teddy in hospital and, in addition to her anxiety on his behalf, she had to perform all the duties of a headmaster during his absence as well as her functions as a mother. There can be no doubt that she was sensing the grave reaction which, due to their own troubles, their children were experiencing. As she and Teddy, weary and anxious, sat into the nights debating their position their voices would rise, from time to time, in natural altercations. It is now known that the two children crept from their beds to the stair-head to listen with growing fear to what they imagined to be a quarrel. Their natural confidence in their parents and the stability of their home was shaken. Both husband and wife found their children eyeing them askance and felt an artificiality creeping into their hitherto spontaneous affection. Just how permanent was the damage done to their children by these vindictive attacks on Teddy, his wife, and their work, only became fully recognizable at a much later date: but a mother's instinct sensed that something was happening and this added to the stress she was enduring. During this period of great activity the post of headmistress of the infant department suddenly fell vacant, and this department was, at long last, put under Teddy's control. This event, so long wished for, necessarily threw extra work on to Bell's shoulders, as there had been no harmony of method between the two departments. Finally, one surmises she may have been worrying at the way in which Teddy was accumulating debts in his provision of wood and bricks and materials, debts which the 'illuminations' had provided the means to liquidate.

Once in hospital she collapsed and, after her operation, she showed little rallying power.

Teddy was filled with consternation. His thoughts turned toward Omes, to whom he wrote. It was now over a decade since these men had met: nor had many letters passed between them. But a link bound them, forged out of their belief in each other's sincerity and common aim. Who can tell of the innermost thoughts? Many years ago, when they were working together in the early

days of Teddy's great adventure, an incident had taken place. One of the boys, who was regarded as under Omes's care, lay dying. Omes was told, and he was asked to go and see him. He went. He found him lying in a big bed, where others had to sleep with him, in a dark and stuffy room. Around the bed were four women. One was sobbing. All were waiting for the end. Omes asked them to leave him alone with the boy, which they did. He stayed alone with the boy for some time. From the boy there was indeed little response. Omes suddenly knew he had to pray. He felt he should be alone. He rated the women. He told them that they must cease from gloom and believe fervently that all would soon be well. He made them promise to keep away from the bedside unless they were able to approach it in confidence and with joyous looks. He felt they were murdering the boy. He hurried back to the school, which was empty. He went to the little staff room and he prayed. He never told anyone of his experience until many, many years had passed. When he did confide in a deep friend, he told this story. He said that he had endeavoured to hold firmly in his mind the thought of this boy well and active as he always was. He held this picture of the boy in his mind and he pictured this lively, active boy in the hands of God. He tried to keep the two thoughts together—the boy, healthy and active in the hands of God, the giver of health and activity. He strained to hold these thoughts. He seemed to be in darkness. He struggled to keep the thoughts clear in his mind. Suddenly he felt a sort of snap, as if something had broken in him. He found he was wet with sweat. But he knew that the boy would live. Nothing of this experience had been told to Teddy. The man regarded it as too sacred to divulge, lest it might be wrongly interpreted. What was told to Teddy was told by the mother. She told of the sudden change that had followed close on Omes's visit. She told him and others that the boy had, as it were, been raised from death. Who can tell what actually happened? Who, but one who is certain that he knows.

Teddy wrote. His letter was not hysterical, dramatic, or supplicatory: but it conveyed to Omes a sense of urgency such as he had experienced before. They met at the station and were soon at Bell's bedside.

There are delicate matters of a very private and spiritual nature. They are matters about which it is profitless to argue. If they are not matters of conviction and of personal experience they count as nothing. But they are matters which are part and parcel of the make-up of any teacher who is worthy to be called to teaching, and that is why you will be glad to know about them.

There was rejoicing at Bell's return. Indeed, there were presently more illuminations. They took place in October of 1988 and lasted a full week. A description of the events filled almost an entire column of the *Farnworth Journal* of October 28th. It was something of a pageant.

The programme began by the entry into the lido of the senior children, who quickly broke the darkness with the soft glow of their lanterns. As they lined up between the towers of the gymnastic arch, they sang the hymn:

*The King of Love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am His
And He is mine for ever.*

Then rockets ascended; a fountain of fireworks was released and, as the floodlights and hundreds of coloured globes were switched on, a procession of infants entered bearing in large letters aloft

on sticks, WELCOME TO OUR ILLUMINATIONS. And now, no longer infants but fairies, these small people, dancing their way through a song, are forming a fairy-ring round a tiny circular raised lawn, while they mime a sequence of nursery rhymes.

Suddenly the light is concentrated on the windmill. On the two balconies and stairways are the supporters of the Jolly Miller, while a moving throng, massed around its base, give forth a revised version of the old song. Comes a pause, and the recital of Kipling's 'Glory of the Garden'.

And now a touch of heraldry, as the older children, reading from scrolls, clearly enunciate an 'Educational Declaration', listened to intently by the assembled onlookers.

Dances and songs follow, including a slow and graceful minuet.

But what of the boys? Their big moment has come, as a horde of yelling and dancing Indians meets a troupe of Robin Hood's own archers, and anachronism is forgotten when the rivals join in a Morris dance.

And now attention is directed to a further figure of fire-worky fury, as none other than Don Quixote charges the windmill and captures the Jolly Miller. So great is the jubilation that one and all, children and audience, are swept into accord, as the 'Lambeth Walk', then at the height of its popularity, engages all in movement.

Indeed a grand finale to a glorious week, when gales and rumours of wars were, for the moment, forgotten.

But within a twelvemonth, war came.

CHAPTER XV

War Victories

Yes, there came the war; and Hitler was able to close down the Prestolee evening activities which two inquiries, both intended to result in inquests, had failed to do. Hitler did it, just for a week or two, but not for long.

Yes, indeed. These children, mostly from very congested homes, and now used to the spacious life and the abundant opportunities to be enjoyed in school every day and evening, suddenly, at the outbreak of war that September, when daylight was fading, found the doors closed against them. No lights must be shown. And high above the school hall alone were forty-six windows, to say nothing of the large main windows of the class-rooms, and not a blind in the place!

In a day this multitude of children and young people, used to very active lives in handicraft rooms, cookery rooms, in gyms, in dancing rooms, with access to player-pianos, libraries, and apparatus of all kinds, found themselves with no other outlets than the darkened streets, darkened shop-doorways, and rubbish dumps.

The healthy, active life which had come to the young people was no training for 'doing nothing', and it is no adverse criticism of that provision to have to record that very soon 'juvenile delinquency' began to make its appearance in the neighbourhood.

Immediately upon the outbreak of war, a fire engine of the National Fire Service was sent into the village, and the school was asked to accommodate it and its crew. It was housed just inside the gates. Some protection was needed for this machine, so the stage which the children had built at one end of the school hall was dismantled and the material used to build a shed over and around the engine. The headmaster's room was given up to the crew. Here they erected their bunks and here they were, or would have been destined, in the ordinary course of events, to have spent many weeks in intermittent thumb-twiddling. But not so with Teddy about.

If the stage could be destroyed and reborn as a fire station: if the headmaster's room could be darkened with blinds or shutters: why not the whole school? So let's begin.

As a start some rooms were blacked out completely by pasting black-out paper on the windows. Though effective in its main purpose, from within these large areas of blackness made the rooms seem dark and dismal even with the lights on. So bright and gay designs were cut out in coloured papers and pasted on the interiors of the windows, so that the war was stimulating art, and these rooms were able to be open again for evening activities. They were quickly crowded out. It was clear that the school would have to go the whole hog. And so one of the biggest and most helpful handicraft jobs ever tackled by these children was carried through.

Whole days were devoted to it. Rolling blinds, flopping blinds, huge blinds, tiny blinds, sliding blinds, window blinds, door blinds . . . Girls sewed, boys sawed, all fetched and carried, designed and cut out, and devised all sorts of ingenuities.

The huge class-room windows and those between the class-rooms and the central hall were soon dealt with; but, high up under the hall roof, so high up that a new extending ladder had to be bought to tackle the job, were those forty-six windows which provided light and ventilation to the hall. It is not too much to say that, working at this height, straddling the roof-beams for

support, plugging the walls and ceiling, fitting up screw-eyes and leads for the cords, and lifting all the gear, was perilous. It was achieved without an accident, and all forty-six windows were fitted with blinds which could be released and raised by means of cords led to the ground level. Hundreds of long laths were needed and were cut by means of the circular saw in the handicraft room.

In a few weeks the whole school was efficiently blacked-out from end to end by children allowed to work earnestly and efficiently and with craftsmanship. It was more than a black-out, it was stagecraft, it was decoration; for every blind and curtain was adorned and sceneful on its inward surface.

And what a litter? No! N.F.S. men could not continue thumb-twiddling in so active an environment. They were soon taking part and formed themselves into an informal but most effective auxiliary caretaker crew, helping in every possible way to deal with the debris of activity. And so they became members of the family.

Thus, in a few weeks, it was possible to reopen the evening activities and never, surely, was anything of the kind more welcome.

And now came the balloon barrages. One balloon was located in the open waste adjacent to the school. The W.A.A.F. crew were housed in huts. Here they too, in the ordinary course, would have been destined to much thumb-twiddling, but they were quickly made welcome in the school. These people were away from their homes. They hoped to make friends. It was soon evident that the school might render these people, too, a social service, by providing somewhere where they could meet their friends. There were, too, soldiers, sailors, and airmen home for short periods of leave whose welfare might be considered.

There was, of course, the primeval handicraft room up three flights of stairs. It had long since been abandoned and a new one had been brought into being, downstairs in the centre of this new world, where it was constantly wanted and in use. Just the place. It was decided to make it into a dancing room and lounge. It was cleaned: the brick walls were washed down, and upon them a mural panorama was painted, based on local views. At one end was built a balcony for quiet sitting-out on swinging seats with awnings. The whole structure was decorated with trellis work, upon which climbed hand-made roses. 'Sunsets' on coloured cut-outs filled the darkened windows. Hollyhocks and laburnum festooned the alcoves. The light-shades were moons and stars. This room was the children's masterpiece. A radiogram was bought on easy payments and another pianola, second-hand. What a business getting that up the stairs! The main sixteen-foot beam for the balcony, bought as salvage from the blitz for one pound, could not be got up the stairs at all, but it was parbuckled on to the school roof in the black-out, and the boys worked it along and through a window of the new lounge which overlooked the hall roof. Soon the room had to be called the 'Palace of Youth', and in the evening the strains of modern music extended Teddy's own musical education. Up till then he had never provided this: country dances and ballet formed the school's repertoire. But now he found himself being captivated by military two-steps and strange new dances with strange rhythmic melodies and boisterous movements.

Much of the wood for the 'Moonlight Balcony' came from the dismantled stage. The seats and furnishings were made from wood which the firemen, entering wholeheartedly into the business, requisitioned from the Salford blitz to repair their beds which seemed to be always breaking!

This wood was generally burned at one or both ends or otherwise damaged. It enabled the building of eight long seats around the walls of the 'Palace', the length of each being determined by what was left of each component plank when the burned or damaged ends had been sawn off. The general effect of the whole scheme of decoration was pleasantly enhanced by the erection of two large mirrors, also bought second-hand.

Then came the problem, of refreshments. The counterpart of the old handicraft room was the well-equipped cookery centre up three flights of stairs on the opposite side of the building. The two rooms were separated, back to back, by a common wall. 'Come on, there's a war on.' Can you imagine a headmaster of a public school setting his boys on to knocking a hole in the school wall and converting it into a hatch so that a cup of tea and a cake could be passed through from the cookery room to the 'Palace of Youth'? Yes, it was done; and it is still there today, for these 'alterations' became permanent and the lounge is used today, by day and night. The structural work has stood for ten years, and the place is the scene of folk and country dancing, ballet, and modern dancing, player-piano studies, singing and singing games by infants, and at times it is arranged for engagement, wedding, Christmas, and birthday celebrations.

As that first spring of the war came on. Hitler's influence began to be felt out of doors as well as within the school. Though the lido had come into being the two tarmac yards with their spiked railings continued the official segregation of the sexes, and the holes where trees were to have been planted had all been tarmaced afresh.

Now authority came proposing the partial destruction of the lido, by building thereupon three air-raid shelters. Teddy, immediately up in arms, fought that plan and won. The shelters were built in the school yard. What is more, they were built in ideal positions for carrying out a grandiose plan which was rapidly developing in his sleepless brain. Iron was in demand for salvage purposes: static water-tanks were in fashion: air-raid shelters, if they were not to be obvious targets, would have to be camouflaged.

So now it was a duty, a most pleasant duty, to 'sacrifice' one's iron railings, and down came those between the lido and the girls' and infants' yard, and between the latter and the boys'—good riddance and good salvage! Officials were now too busy to be interested in tarmac surfaces which were blown to bits in every direction, and at Prestolee the shelter builders were breaking these up to lay their foundations. So beds were carefully marked out and the tarmac hacked out and earth exposed and enriched, and a great planting of fruit trees, shrubs, and flowers was put in hand. There are close upon two hundred fruit trees in the school gardens at the present time! Bricks from blitzed houses became available and these were built into cistern or sarcophagus-like structures which, too, were filled with soil, locally known in this district of Britain as 'dirt', and, in these, small trees and flowers were planted, and from their lips trailing plants hung down.

As soon as the air-raid shelters were completed they were taken possession of. The woodwork within them, being good, was removed for the making of seats in the new garden and replaced with scrap stuff from orange boxes. On the shelter-tops were built double-walled parapets, which were filled with soil and planted with carnations, pinks, stonecrop, fuchsias, ornamental currants, and other suitable flowers: the spaces thus enclosed being furnished as open-air studies. The shelter walls were embellished with trellis work to give the appearance of doors and windows, and soon climbing roses were clothing their surfaces. Access to these 'Babylonian

gardens ' on the roofs was by means of wooden ladders, and, when wood became short, rockery stairways ambled upwards, built from blitz concrete and suitably planted with rock-loving flowers. At one place the approach was diversified by crossing over a bridge.

In front of one of these shelters an open-air stage was built, 'winged' with flowering trees and 'foot-lighted' with lavender bushes. The shelter itself became available as a dressing-room when, as often, alfresco performances were in progress.

' But . . . but . . . but . . . is this the kind of activity to engage in, in war-time? '

' Of course it is. What more obvious target in a dormitory area than air-raid shelters and school buildings? This was camouflage. It was a necessity. Think it out! '

So, too, was the building of a tank for static water. So the children made one.

It took the form of a bathing-pool. It was most successfully constructed by carefully fitting together bricks dipped in liquid cement and later grouted over with a stiffer mixture on the inner surface and where the walls stood upon the tarmac. An outer ring was added and the space between was filled with soil and planted with irises and reeds and hanging plants. Filling this tank was a big undertaking to begin with, as the water had to be carried across the playground in buckets. Even with a bucket-chain this took ages and the spilling percentage was a considerable one. Day by day the level of the water rose, and the walls held. Would they continue to do so? They did! And they still do, after ten years in use.

But you know the state an ordinary tank of static water soon gets into—a weak infusion of orange peel and canine corpses. The regular changing of the water and refilling called for generous consideration. So, once again, out came the crowbars and cold chisels, heavy sledges and a marvellous new tool, new to the boys, called a Stillson wrench. The tarmac was again attacked and an underground pipe fitted together which was led from the water supply across the yard and connected to a ring of pipes laid round the top of the retaining wall of the pool. At equal distances along this ring the pipe had been bored and tapped and a nozzle had been fitted; and soon six most elegant fountains, twenty feet in height, were throwing graceful jets to fill the pool and provide refreshing showers in hot weather. The static water became dynamic!

So much for filling and refilling; but changing the water, removing what was tending to be contaminated, was a difficulty until the arrival of two farmyard pumps, one of which was fitted up to draw from the bottom corner of the pool. The second was used to deal with the nice soapy water which collected in a sump, built in connexion with a new outdoor washplace: very good, this soapy stuff, for feeding the plants. Up till now no child had handled a farmyard pump, and soon the watering of wall-gardens became a new activity. Children have to get tired and they could do this by logging full watering-cans up to the hanging gardens on the shelter tops. What opportunities all of this provided for study and research into pump mechanisms, hydraulic pressures, fertilizers, the chemistry and properties of materials, cement, and so forth, the estimating of quantities, bricks, wood, and the like, costing and ordering. And this was real. This was what Teddy meant when, in stating that ' Credo ' of his, he said—do you. remember?

' I believe that education should deal in realities and not be artificial. It should be concerned with the day's work of the Jack-of-all-trades, children, and teachers, the response to actuality, genuine

employment called for by the circumstances of their environment, inside school as well as outside.' And again . . .

' I believe that the ability to find out and the desire to do so matter rather than any limited load of information a child can carry, remember, and repeat.' And again . . .

' I believe that the function of a lesson should be at one time the stimulation to research: at another the confirming and ordering of knowledge acquired.' And again . . .

' I believe that the function of the teacher should be to provide opportunities for the exercise of the life force latent in every child and to facilitate such exercise in every possible way, and never to withhold opportunities.'

And again . . .

' I believe that teachers should do things with the children rather than/or them.'

And again . . .

' I believe that children should be allowed to work together, to discuss their work one with another, and to learn by helping each other.'

And once more . . .

' I believe that these yards and buildings are educational laboratories.'

And because of these beliefs the yards gave place to this new garden.

' The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing.' Isaiah had dreamed of such things: Teddy, in this solitary Lancashire village, was enabling such things to happen.

CHAPTER XVI 'But what do they Learn?'

In these latter pages I have given you a picture of a very active and industrious school and community centre.

'It all sounds very pleasant,' you say, 'but what are the children actually taught? What do they know? That is just the question which will disappoint me. I do not want you to ask me 'what they know'. Ask me 'how they are growing'. What kind of people are they becoming? Are they going to be able to fit in and be effective elsewhere?

But I must not head you off: you ask what they are taught, what they actually know?

First then, as regards literacy and the ability to calculate. These, the three R's, you will remember are classed as primaries. They must be exercised every day before the children undertake any self-chosen activity at all. They follow a definite and well-considered programme, but they follow it at their own rate. They have to accomplish a minimum amount of work in these subjects, but the atmosphere of activity in the school secures that this minimum is not regarded as a maximum: they may go ahead, the programme has no end, nor has the time available any fixed limit. At Prestolee the aim is not to secure that the children possess a certain amount of definite knowledge and dexterity in these matters such as can be imparted by formal teaching to anyone possessed of a normal memory; the aim here is that, by being given abundant facilities to use their inborn powers of discovery and interpretation, these faculties will grow and grow through such healthy exercise. The knowledge will accumulate as a by-product of this activity, but initiative and resourcefulness will have greatly increased: far more so than can be the case with formal class-teaching and blackboard work.

It is a common experience in ordinary schools that it is much easier to get children to learn for the wrong reason than the better. They are tempted and misled by the offer of incentives. Of all incentives, that known as 'marks' must be the wickedest, stupidest, and cheapest. Cheap it is, without question: marks cost no one a penny. Stupid, because it forces false values on the child's conscience and urges him to do the job, not for the joy of doing it, but for worthless gain. Wicked, because the marks system, forbids the exercise of the natural virtue of helpfulness. It is natural and advantageous that children should discuss with each other ways and means of resolving difficulties. They are thinking mathematically and learning from each other and arguing as to whether or not they have either or both reached a correct solution. The marks system, forbidding collaboration, which it would class as cheating, opens the way to cribbing. Even more lamentable, the marks system asks the child to compete with his classmates for these prizes and tempts him to regard his friends as rivals and possible enemies; to pride himself on his petty achievements and to look down on those whom he may happen to surpass. It exploits his selfishness and his vanity. 'Self' is pushed into the forefront of consciousness, but it is only when 'self' is lost sight of that the sense of well-being which constitutes happiness is really achieved. Incentives, motives put into the mind to induce a worker to do some job, if they are extraneous to the work in hand, whether they are prizes or punishments, should find no place in a well-considered scheme of education.

All right: all these children work regularly every day at these primary subjects before they do any self-chosen work. If they have not been contaminated by working under a marks system before

they come to O'Neill, and have been under his care from infancy, they will be found to be enjoying their study of primaries for its own sake, performed as it is in an atmosphere of freedom, initiative, and discussion. Moreover, not having been brought up to be dependent on a teacher for guidance and instruction, their faith in themselves will not have become paralysed.

Remember, too, that there is no time-table for these primary studies. There is nothing to prevent a child reading, writing, and calculating for the rest of the day, day after day. That they do not so employ their time is due, one supposes, to the same considerations which deter a guest at the Lord Mayor's Banquet from eating nothing but his bread. There is an abundance of other good things to be interested in, as is evident from the menu.

At Prestolee, too, there is a menu.

On it will be found listed those items of general information about the knowledge of which, by these children, you are inquiring: History, Geography, Geology, Physics, Astronomy, Economics, Citizenship, Domestic Work, Needlework, the Arts, and so forth.

These are dealt with in two ways, you will remember. There is the regular cycle of lessons whereby one definite lesson is given daily upon one or other of these subjects, taken more or less in rotation: a lesson which is formal, informal, or something which seems desirable between these two: a lesson which continues until it seems to come to a natural break, and which is given to a definite group of children by a teacher.

There is also the possibility of freely choosing to study any of these topics of general interest as a self-selected occupation; for once the lesson for the day has come to its natural close and the primary requirements are fulfilled, the remainder of the day is available for any individual study or activity. The purpose behind the 'Cycle of Lessons' is that of securing that all these topical interests are revealed to the children. The whole cycle does, indeed, form a menu from which children can choose what interests them.

But can one be certain that a child in this free and easy environment will, in fact, be possessed of the stock of information with which a similar child elsewhere has been carefully stuffed? Silly question! No. One cannot.

One can, however, be confident that, if one of O'Neill's children were asked why a river is said to 'meander' when it curls its way through an alluvial plane or plain, and what an alluvial plane or plain is and which it is, if he or she did not at once answer, he or she would be off of his own accord, consulting books and other sources of information, and would return with reasoned answers: whereas the average reaction of the spoon-fed child from elsewhere, if he had not had that particular spoonful, would be to say he had not been taught that, and leave it there.

And why? Because these groups are different the one from the other. O'Neill's have been given uninterrupted opportunities to develop their natural powers and abilities by exercising them, as a result of which their powers and abilities have grown and developed. The others have not been thus encouraged and their development has not taken place, unless by some lucky chance, to anything like the same degree.

But you are troubled by the absence of a time-table. Can one really do without one?

One cannot. But everybody does not take the same time to do the same work. The rigid time-table caters for the average worker. If the quick worker may not go ahead he must twiddle his thumbs. If the slow worker has not got through in the time he must 'lump' it. What Teddy has is not so much a time-table as a programme. The programme has a structure but it is more like that of a shark than a mammal. It is a plastic and resilient structure, not rigid. It allows quick workers to go on: it give slow workers sufficient time. Which amounts, you say, to everyone having his own' time-table. It is a good matter if everyone conscientiously has.

But when a child leaves O'Neill's school is he going to fit into a regime organized on a rigid time-table basis?

The characteristic of a rigid time-table in a business or commercial concern is a clock. Work begins at such and such an hour: stops for tea: stops for dinner: stops for tea, and stops for good. This clock divides the worker's life into work and leisure. His upbringing in an ordinary school and the gangdom to which he later attaches himself ask him to resist any encroachment by his working hours upon his leisure. If such an encroachment is threatened he demands higher incentives. Higher incentives bring him no satisfaction. Like the man who bet on an outsider which won, who regrets he did not back it with a higher stake, the man who demands a higher incentive regrets he did not hold out for more still. Polarizing life into work and play does not bring happiness.

Having no rigid time-table, O'Neill's children do not divide their lives into work and play. They are actively living all the day. They come early and they leave when they are shut out. They are sometimes mentally busy, sometimes socially busy, sometimes physically busy: but, although they may start at 9 a.m., they never start because it is 9 a.m., and they never watch the clock to see when to stop. If they look at it at all, all they see is 'the time'. Whether or not industry will welcome such workers is, indeed, a problem. It seldom gets the chance to do so. Maybe they will get murdered. So did Jesus, to the world's inestimable advantage. But perhaps they will be received as is their due.

And now I want you to question Prestolee from another angle. I want you to say that, in a school run on O'Neill's lines, a tremendous amount must be left to chance. He is out to build character, but suppose a child shows initiative, how is one to be sure that he shows perseverance? He may show courage, but is he not excitable? He may develop conscientiousness, but is he really honest? Has he esprit de corps or is he selfish? Is he truthful as well as logical? Has he patience? Is he lacking in foresight? Has he not become rather greedy?

Do you feel that, although Teddy sets out to develop character and personality, he seems to do it, or try to do it, by organizing a healthy and generous environment and then chucking the children into it and hoping that they will gain from it all that is available—a kind of 'lucky dip', and he hopes everyone will get all the presents?

Well, that is not a bad plan. A watched pot never boils; and children have a way of seizing upon anything worth having. Moreover, Teddy is not called upon to write individual reports on every child's progress.

But there are those who are so called upon. There are schools which send weekly reports on children's progress to their parents. Many write monthly, and in a large number of cases term-end reports are called for. It may be helpful to describe a form of report designed to secure that a child's moral make-up is not left entirely to chance. It should, however, be made quite clear that nothing of the use or existence of this form of report is recognized at Prestolee, and that where it has been used it has not been handled more than twice a year in any child's case, and it is never supplied to the child's parents. It is for the guidance of the child's teachers and particularly for such of his teachers as may be cliché addicts. Children are apt to get a pretty raw deal when the prizes in their lucky dip have been wrapped by such guardians. It is surprisingly difficult to judge a boy's character if you spend five minutes hearing him discussed in, say, a prep school common room. The maths man classes him as a 'bloody little waster'. The English specialist sees him 'keen as mustard'. The games blue regards him as a 'dodger'. The classics master can 'make him burst into tears at the slightest thing'. They all know that the headmaster's wife does not like him: you see the 'old man' has accepted him at a reduced fee. What sort of a soul has this little human shuttlecock? Even at 'reduced fees' a good deal is being paid to these battledores to play with him, and a fair game is hoped for.

Suppose that these specialists who handle this boy's education could be got to sit quietly round a table with the headmaster. 'Yes, gentlemen, you may smoke.' (Now we may get something done.)

Before each of them is a sheet of paper relating to this boy's character.

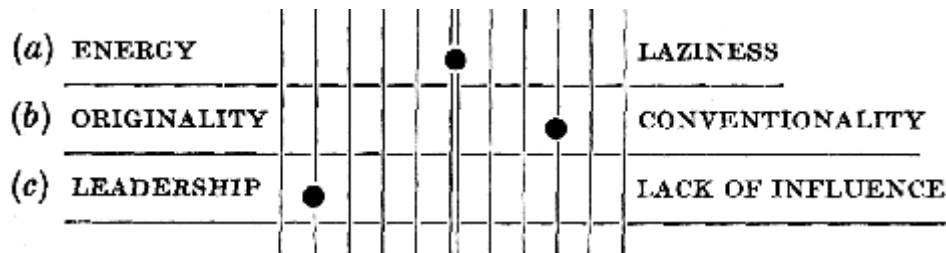
It is very simple. Down the left-hand side is a list of qualities: down the right-hand side and opposite each of those on the left is a list of more or less contrasting qualities. The centre of the sheet, between these two columns, is filled with a square ruled grid. In the actual form I have in mind² there are thirty-five qualities in each column, but there is no need to enumerate them all. Here are a few:

² See Appendix, p. 200.

Leadership (in the left column) is contrasted with lack of influence (in the right): energy with laziness: courage with timidity: alertness with stolidity: originality with conventionality: joyousness with moroseness, and so on.

The teachers are asked to consider the boy line by line and to put down their considered opinions of the boy, under those headings. They do this by putting a dot on the paper. The grid is ruled with eleven vertical lines. A dot placed on the middle line, half-way between the left-hand and right-hand columns, would indicate the opinion that the boy showed no marked tendency one way or the other.

A dot placed well over to the left would indicate a corresponding excess of the right-hand quality. Here are three examples:



(a) would mean that, he was neither markedly energetic nor lazy, in which case he might be given more opportunities to develop his latent energy by withdrawing any restrictions which caused him to consider that it was not much good to exert himself.

(b) would mean that he displayed very marked originality. This might or might not be in need of treatment, depending upon (say) his marking on a line connecting HONESTY and UNSCRUPULOUSNESS.

(c) shows an almost complete lack of influence and would obviously call for careful consideration.

There is no need for this marking to be open. The ballot may be secret if this is preferred and the sheets just handed in and then examined.

If, upon analysis, it turned out that four out of five men present marked the boy as 'docile', while the fifth marked him as 'intractable', the staff, as a whole, would form a more accurate idea of the boy's make-up in that respect, and of the make-up of their fifth colleague!

The reason that boy 'bursts into tears' every time a classics master puts his arm towards a lexicon, but cannot be induced to shed a tear in the boxing-ring, a dormitory fight, or under the most trying circumstances in the English class-room, becomes so apparent that the classics man may cure himself of the pleasure he gets from getting this boy to cry for him, and the boy may be free to exercise his accommodativeness in a healthier field than that of playing the fool for an idiot.

So much for this little whiff of common-room life, unknown to Teddy. To know about the existence of report sheets of this kind may be helpful. Let me leave it at that and get back to Prestolee.

CHAPTER XVII

The Proverbs of Teddy O'Neill

The texts have been altered! '

'The texts? . . . Oh! you mean the slogans displayed all over the place. They are constantly changing.'

You see, Teddy believes in 'visual aids'. Not those substitutes for blackboards and chalk, no longer called 'magic lanterns and slides', but now known as diasscopes, episcopes, epidiascopes, film-strip projectors, and even cinemas and documentaries; but the older Victorian-age stimuli (known) as you say, as 'texts', which our betters made us colour and which they framed and hung at the head of our beds.

Not that he rules out all these 'scopes. Indeed he welcomes them and turns them over to the children to take to bits, reassemble, and use among themselves by giving 'talks' to each other, thereby getting excellent exercise in verbal expression and the art of public speaking. They put them to unexpected uses. That 'text' which lights up the darkness of that corner under the stairs: do you see where it comes from? No, you don't. There is a small film-strip projector out of sight on the top of that cupboard; its lens is throwing a message into the recess. There! it has changed. The boys have devised a little gadget which makes it change automatically from time to time. The 'text' itself was photographed and developed in the dark room. You have to put it in the projector 'upside down and the wrong way round'. Find out why.

And now about these 'texts' of Teddy's, these 'visual aids' of his. Although he does not preside over any staff gatherings to analyse a child's soul, facet by facet and phase by phase, with the help of any carefully designed report sheet or otherwise, and although it is his aim to provide a healthy, well-equipped, and stimulating environment and place children in it and hope for the best, he is well aware of the danger of a lack of balance in a diet ill-chosen from an *embarras de choix*. He seeks to guard against this by displaying appetizing 'texts'.

Picture Prestolee school as a well-stocked wine-cellar of days gone by. Teddy, as host, potters round with his candle and selects from his bins of good years and vintages a bottle for lunch today and two or three others for his guests to enjoy at dinner. At that lunch and, again, at that dinner the company's attention is concentrated upon these decanted excellences offered for their consideration, and, he hopes, appreciation.

Teddy's cellar is stocked with slogans, yes, call them by that name rather than 'texts'; and these slogans may be produced to the company in sudden vocal explosions or he may print them on cartridge paper and pin them up here and there throughout the school. He is continually expressing ideas in this way. A condition which is very favourable for an abundant vintage is the news that a body of students and professors from some teachers' training college is about to visit the school.

Like the proverbs of Solomon and the maxims of Ecclesiastes, these slogans of Teddy's are provocative as well as stimulating. To those who can read between the lines they epitomize his message on education and disclose the nature of the driving force behind them.

God's instruction to Habakkuk to 'write the vision and make it plain upon the tables, that HE MAY RUN WHO READETH IT', urges me to reproduce here a goodly number of these slogans of Teddy for your own edification, in the hope that he, himself, always has, when he is giving birth to one, that his readers, like Habakkuk's, may get a move on.

Some of the Proverbs of Teddy O'Neill

WHAT DO THE CHILDREN DO WHEN THE TEACHER IS OUT OF THE ROOM?
AH! THERE'S THE RUB!!
CHILDREN SHOULD NOT BE TIED TO TEACHERS, BUT
ACCUSTOMED TO WORKING BY THEMSELVES IN AND OUT OF CLASS-ROOMS

FANCY KITTENS AND PUPPIES WITH GYM. TEACHERS!
OLD COCKS AND HENS SHOULD NOT TRY TO TRAIN

FANCY TEACHING MONKEYS HOW TO CLIMB!
GIVE CHILDREN OPPORTUNITIES TO TAKE RISKS AND
LEAVE THEM TO DO IT

CHILDREN ARE ONLY 'LITTLE DEVILS' WHEN THEY
CANNOT FIND SOMETHING LEGITIMATE TO DO.
THE LIFE FORCE IS THERE.
DO SOMETHING THEY MUST,
OR ELSE THEY WILL BUST

THE TRUE TEACHER IS A KIND OF GARDENER
"SHE, SUPPOSING HIM TO BE THE GARDENER .. ."
Saint John, xx, 15
SHE WAS NOT WRONG

THE PASSING OF EXAMS IS NOT EDUCATION
ASK HIM SOMETHING WHICH HE DOES NOT KNOW,
AND SEE IF HE CAN FIND OUT

AS WELL AS PUBLIC LIBRARIES WE NEED PUBLIC
WORKSHOPS WHERE MEN, YOUTHS, AND LIKE-MINDED
WOMEN COULD GO AND MAKE THINGS OF METAL,
WOOD, AND SCRAP

MANY TEACHERS DIE IN SCHOOL BUT ARE NOT
BURIED TILL LATER

THE 'ACID TEST' IS LIFE AND CHARACTER—NOT
SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE AND EXAM RESULTS

TEACHERS! ASK FOR RAW MATERIALS

SIMULTANEOUS WORK MEANS THE SUPPRESSION OF INDIVIDUALITY

SIMULTANEOUS WORK MEANS THE SUPPRESSION OF INITIATIVE

BABIES SHOULD BE RATIONED. LET EDUCATION DO IT

AREN'T MEN AWFUL?
THEY SHOULD MAKE THINGS BEAUTIFUL, NOT
BEASTLY.

ALL THE MESSES IN THE WORLD HAVE BEEN MADE BY MEN.
THEY CHOP DOWN TREES: THEY FOUL RIVERS:
THEY TIP RUBBISH ANYWHERE

LET TEACHERS BE HUMAN
THEY ARE NOT PARROTS—LET THEM COME OFF THEIR
PERCHES.

THEY SHOULD ADVENTURE WITH THE CHILDREN,
MAKING THINGS, THINKING THINGS OUT, DOING
THINGS ALL ROUND THE SCHOOL

LET TEACHERS BE SPACIOUS

CHILDREN SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO WORK WITHOUT
CLOSE SUPERVISION, OTHERWISE THEY WILL DO NO
WORK WITHOUT IT

ARE YOU DEAD BUT NOT BURIED?
DON'T LIE DOWN WITH A JAM JAR AND DEAD
FLOWERS OVER YOU

LISTENING TO TEACHERS IS ONLY AN EXTENSION OF
THE TITTY-BOTTLE-STAGE;
NECESSARY AT FIRST,
BUT WASH YOUR OWN NECK NOW

THE MEN WHO MATTER ARE THOSE
WHO DO MOST OF THEIR THINKING AND DOING
THEMSELVES

THE MIND OF MAN HAS NO LIMITS.
IT WAS MEANT TO MASTER ALL HE WANTS.
WHAT MAKES HIM WANT?
WHAT INFLUENCES HIS CHOICE?

THE BEST WAY TO LEARN IS TO LIVE

PROGRESS IS DUE TO THOSE

WHO DO WHAT OTHERS DON'T DO

'IMPOSSIBLE' IS THE SLOGAN OF A FOOL

EDUCATION IS BASED ON A PARADOX
'WE CAN DO WHAT WE CAN'T DO'
WHAT WE 'CAN'T DO' IS ONLY WHAT WE HAVE
NOT DONE YET

FINISH IT, IF YOU HAVE BEGUN IT.
THE FINISHER'S TOOLS ARE ORIGINALITY, IDEAS,
RESOURCE. AND GUTS

IF IT'S GOOD FOR THE CHILDREN OF THOSE
WHO CAN PAY, IT IS GOOD FOR THE CHILDREN OF
THOSE WHO CANNOT

LET THE SCHOOLS HAVE EVERYTHING FOR CHILDREN

MAN WAS MADE TO MASTER—HIMSELF FIRST,
THEN ...

IF YOU SEE IT NEEDS DOING – DO IT

SCRATCHES ARE DANGEROUS—AVOID INFECTION
BEWARE OF BARBED-WIRE: RUSTY NAILS: DOG TRACKS: POOLS: GANGSTER
FILMS: MURDER FILMS: AND GETTING
MONEY FOR NOTHING

THE CRANKS OF TODAY ARE ACCEPTED TOMORROW

THEY ARE FOR CREATING AND ACHIEVING!
WHAT ARE?
SOULS AND HEADS AND HEARTS AND HANDS

WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE TO BE EDUCATED?
IT IS TO WANT TO DO THINGS
TO BE ABLE TO WILL YOURSELF TO DO WHAT
YOU WANT
TO HAVE PERSONALITY
TO HAVE CHARACTER
TO LOVE GOD AND DAMN THE DEVIL

DON'T HAND BACK: YOUR TOOLS
GOD WANTS YOU TO USE THEM—ALL OF THEM :
YOUR EYES, YOUR HANDS, YOUR EARS, YOUR NOSE,
YOUR MOUTH

GO ON

SELF-ACTIVITY IS THE HABIT OF STARTING WORK
WITHOUT BEING TOLD TO

SHOW ONE ANOTHER

IF YOU WANT IT TO GET OUT OF WORKING ORDER –
DON'T USE IT.

THIS IS TRUE OF MACHINERY—IT WILL RUST.
IT IS TRUE OF HOUSES—THEY WILL COLLAPSE
IT IS TRUE OF ONESELF—WE SHALL DIE

FIND OUT

A TIME-TABLE SUITS QUITTERS—
A PROGRAMME SUITS STICKERS

ORDER IS HEAVEN'S FIRST LAW
YOUR PROGRAMME NEEDS ORDER
PRIMARIES FIRST
LESSONS NEXT—SELF-CHOSEN ACTIVITIES NEXT

HARMONY IS HEAVEN'S SECOND LAW
WORK: TOGETHER: GO HAND IN HAND:
SHARE INTERESTS

CHRISTIANITY IS A WAY OF LIVING
IT CALLS FOR TWO OR MORE PLAYERS

CHRISTIANITY IS A SYMPHONY: NOT A SOLO
YOU CANNOT BE 'GOOD' IN A VACUUM

TAKE CARE OF THE CHILDREN AND LATER ON—
THE ADULTS WILL TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES

IT IS GEESE THAT NEED STUFFING—NOT CHILDREN

'LAZARUS—COME FORTH'

DON'T BE A DEAD DUCK STUFFED WITH SAGE AND
ONIONS BY THE COOK OR WITH 'SUBJECTS' BY
THE TEACHER

REAL POVERTY IS LACK OF IMAGINATION

CARS ARE SO WONDERFUL THAT MEN CAN DRIVE THEM.
MEN ARE EVEN MORE WONDERFUL FOR—

UNLIKE CARS—THEY CAN DRIVE THEMSELVES

FARMERS FEED COWS—
WHICH WOULD YOU RATHER BE?

THANK GOD FOR WORK

WHEN THE MILLS WERE MADE AND WORKERS WERE WANTED,
LONDON SENT IDIOTS TO LANCASHIRE.
THERE IS ALWAYS WORK FOR A LONDON LOONY.
ARE YOU QUALIFIED FOR A JOB?

THE 'CREME DE LA CREME'
THE 'PICK OF THE BUNCH'
WHO ARE THEY?
THOSE WHO DIG DEEP INTO DIFFICULTIES.
PIONEERS, EXPLORERS, RESEARCH WORKERS,
INVENTORS, REFORMERS, AND CRAFTSMEN—
AND (PERHAPS) MINERS

ALL GREAT MEN MADE A GOOD START.
THEY STARTED LIFE AS BOYS

THOUGH BY NO MEANS FOOLS
WE LEARN MUCH BY 'MAKING FOOLS OF OURSELVES'

HAVE A CHARACTER AS WELL AS A CLOCK

TAKE CARE OF YOUR BRAINS AND YOUR BODIES
AND
YOUR WAGES WILL TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES

THE MEASURE OF YOUR ACTIVITIES IS
A MEASURE OF YOUR LIFE

HAVE A GO

THERE ARE

THOSE WHO DO	AND THOSE WHO DON'T
THE EDUCATED	AND THE UNEDUCATED
THE SHEPHERDS	AND THE SHEEP
THE RIDERS	AND THE DONKEYS
THE LIVING	AND THE DEAD

EDUCATE FOR DIFFERENCES

UNIFORMITY IS DEATH TO CHARACTER

ADVT.

BECOME A TEACHER AND TEACH FOR:

PAY

LONG HOLIDAYS

EASY REPETITIVE WORK

NO RESPONSIBILITY

REGULAR HOURS

PROTECTION OF A STRONG TRADE UNION

A PENSION

NO NEED TO LOVE CHILDREN

NO WONDER THERE ARE HUNDREDS OF VACANCIES

THE PROBLEM OF EDUCATION IS THE IDIOT TEACHER:

FOR WHOM NO PROBLEM EXISTS

WHO EXPECTS CHILDREN TO DO WHAT HE HIMSELF CAN'T—LEARN WHO

CAN ONLY DO WHAT HE HAS DONE

WHO ONLY WANTS TO TEACH HIS OWN SUBJECT

WHOSE QUALIFICATION IS THAT HE HAS PASSED HIS EXAMS

WHO IS REPETITIVE AND UNCREATIVE

WHO HAS NEVER REALLY LIVED

WHO HAS A BUS TO CATCH

THE THING THAT HE MADE MATTERS LESS
THE GROWTH OF THE MAKER MATTERS MORE

WHY THESE 'SPECIAL COURSES' FOR TEACHERS?
ARE THEY AS DAFT AS ALL THAT?

HAVE CONFIDENCE IN YOURSELF
EVERY BARREL MUST STAND ON ITS OWN BOTTOM

TOO MANY TEACHERS ONLY KNOW HOW TO TEACH

THE BETTER TEACHER MISSES THE BUS

A SCHOOL SHOULD BE:

A PLACE FOR LECTURES AND TEACHING

A WORKSHOP FOR YOUNG AND OLD—OF BOTH SEXES

A DEN OF HOBBIES AND INDOOR GAMES

A STUDIO FOR DRAWING, PAINTING, AND PLASTICS

A MUSIC STUDIO

A HALL FOR SONG AND DANCE

AN EDUCATIONAL SHOP-WINDOW

A REFERENCE LIBRARY

A PICTURE GALLERY

A MUSEUM

A READING-ROOM
A BOOK-STALL FOR MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS
A CLUB
A PLACE FOR PARTIES
A REFRESHMENT BAR
AN ORCHARD
A ZOO
AN AQUARIUM
A VIVARIUM

A HOME FOR PETS
A PLAYING FIELD
A GYMNASIUM
A BATHING PLACE
A FAIR GARDEN
A KITCHEN
A DINING PLACE
A LAUNDRY
A FIRST-AID POST
A CLEANSING DEPARTMENT
STORE SHEDS FOR RAW MATERIALS

Prestolee, a one-time ordinary primary council school, is now all of this. Every unusual feature in this comprehensive specification has been brought into being by the imagination and spontaneous activity of O'Neill, his staff, the schoolchildren, his wife, and their helpers in the village. These features have grown to their present stature little by little from small beginnings: the gymnasium from a few broomsticks lashed together into a kind of scaffolding, upon which children gained agility, strength, and balance by playing 'tig': the aquarium (there must now be upwards of thirty illuminated and often heated tanks, with a huge population of fish, aquatic creatures and plants, a very beautiful sight) from a jam jar of frogs' spawn: the vivarium from the arrival of a grass-snake in a shoe-box: the refreshment service from the habit of lady teachers disappearing to make a cup of tea, the existence of a cookery class-room, and the growing need of sustenance when the evening activities began to make calls on the physical endurance of enthusiasts taking part.

Two incidental problems of considerable magnitude had to be mastered: cleanliness and expense.

In spite of the vast amount of gear and apparatus in constant use in the workshops, class-rooms, and gardens, every morning finds the whole complex organism clean and tidy with everything checked and its whereabouts and condition known. All the livestock are fed and their dens and tanks cleaned. With so many jobs in progress and so much coming and going the unavoidable dust and dirt began to present difficulties so formidable as to transcend the ordinary duties of a school caretaker. Nor would O'Neill have regarded it as an educational triumph if the litter of an active population of a couple of hundred people was not dealt with by those who were making it. His many efforts to get the educational authorities to equip the school with a high-power vacuum cleaning installation, such as is used in multiple stores, were unproductive of results, no doubt owing to the expense involved, and the recognition of the fact that what was considered desirable in one case would be demanded in a hundred. So he bought the apparatus himself and had it installed, undertaking to meet the heavy cost over an extended period. He committed himself financially in other directions. Walls' installed a refrigerator in the school on condition that Teddy would guarantee the sale of two hundred pounds' worth of their products per annum. He entered into the agreement. He bought, again on the extended payments basis, an apparatus for making iced lollies for sale in the evenings.

The towel problem worried him. You may have seen a school roller towel—dreadful sight after an hour or two, isn't it? And so unhygienic. In a school like this there was far more call for washing than in any ordinary sit-in-rows seminary, and even after he prevailed upon most of the children to bring their own towels and use these alone, the stowage and laundry work involved

was formidable. So he has lately installed electrically driven, hot-air drying apparatus, to do away with towels altogether, again carrying the financial burden on his camel's back. In these decisions he let himself in for finding several hundred pounds in a very limited period, and his wife felt she was let in for finding at once some comfortable mental home where he might be cared for!

But he had a plan in mind. Once again he summoned 'illuminations' to the rescue.

Though it involved the preparation, costuming, and presentation of theatrical and other demonstrations by the schoolchildren night after night for a fortnight: though it called for the wiring and fitting up of coloured lamps, flood and spotlights throughout the gardens and upon the stages and buildings by the boys, the staff, and helpers in the village: though it called for vast preparations and provisions in the way of catering: though it called for the purchase and release of many fireworks: and though only three weeks of evening activity were devoted to all this preparation, the enterprise was carried through.

The fame of the school had spread. Earlier displays had left happy memories. The weather was kind. Teddy's sixtieth birthday fell in the period.

According to the local newspapers, upwards of ten thousand people visited these illuminations and entertainments during the fortnight, paying for ice-cream, paying for iced lollies, and paying for vacuum cleaners, drying installations, freezing apparatus, aquarium installations, and a hundred and one items of bricks, cement, timber, piping, and other raw materials, and leaving a bit over.

I know not whether the Lancashire education committee was consulted or their permission asked. I doubt if they would have had the power to grant it if it had been. But I do know that, among the thousands who paid their pence for admission, was the County Director of Education himself, and that one, at least, of Teddy's old pupils, who had been a member of Omes's old Brigade, was so moved that he slipped a cheque for five pounds into Teddy's hand, as a mark of gratitude which he had long felt.

There is, of course, something about Lancashire folk which is peculiarly their own. Under most difficult and harrowing circumstances they have been able to make the seemingly impossible come into being. They have achieved amazing performances. They have weathered devastating set-backs. Whether in any other county in Britain Teddy could have fought this thirty-year war to success; whether, elsewhere, convinced and active opponents could have become convinced and militant supporters; whether, in any other county the educational authority would have embraced and maintained the clarity of vision which has been maintained with regard to this experiment) is your guess. I do not think that your guess will be as good as mine unless you, too, know something of Lancashire.

What is beyond question is this: that by maintaining their attitude of non-interference with this man, Teddy, when he did outlandish things, so long as these things were progressive, and so long as, from an official and moral point of view, he never 'let them down', the several Directors of Education and their committees who have followed each other in office during this period, have enabled something which is very important indeed to develop.

Time after time they were challenged to interfere. They formed their own opinions about the challengers, and always, because they saw that he was capable and was moved by the highest motives, they skated lightly over the soft patches and allowed his work to proceed.

They have presented him with no bouquets. They have hung no garland upon his shoulders. Why should they? He has but ' given his best ', and that is what is expected of one, though it is not that which can be bought by wages or by salary rises'³

One hopes they will not lay a wreath on his grave, for that would look as if the thing were over. But it is not over yet. This story has no epilogue at the moment. The school is going strong. It is self-supporting, in that Teddy has found ways and means for it to earn the money needed to equip and maintain in running order all its ungranted features. That it does this is, itself, no insignificant measure of its educational success. Through blood and sweat and toil it has become the vital centre of a happy, busy, friendly, resourceful, self-active, and conscientious community of men and women, boys and girls, and quite young ' tots '.

It has been growing for thirty years.
It is more alive today than it has ever been.
Come and see it.

Though all the roads to the village lead down long, steep hills, there are buses now. The school is at the bottom, in the valley.

There is much else besides the school at the bottom.

There is the river Irwell quietly removing the scum and refuse and bringing fresh water to the busy industries.

There are the great mills, ever spinning raw cotton into the yarn the world ever needs.
There is the power station quietly pumping power to those who need it.
There are the paper works constantly converting rubbish into the material which has been my means for telling you about Teddy and his work.

As you approach the school you become aware of an atmosphere of human energy.

Cross the bridge over the river—it is funny, but there is always a smell of gas here—pass the road leading to the mills: pass the church: and here you are.

Do walk in.

Anyone will tell you where Teddy is. He is always somewhere about.

³ What has just been read by you is no longer quite accurate. To the great joy of multitudes of his disciples, Teddy's name was found by them in the New Year's Honours List, published on 1st January 1951. I suppose it was inevitable. Pioneers are apt to reach situations at which they were not aiming, but such events do not deter them.

APPENDIX

DESIRABLE as opposed to correspondingly UNDESIRABLE QUALITIES

LEADERSHIP										LACK OF INFLUENCE
INITIATIVE										LACK OF INITIATIVE
ENERGY										LAZINESS
PERSEVERANCE										LACK OF STAMINA
RESOLUTION										HESITANCY
COURAGE										TIMIDITY
CONFIDENCE										ANXIETY
COOLNESS										EXCITABILITY
ALERTNESS										STOLIDITY
CONCENTRATION										LACK OF CONCENTRATION
RESOURCE										HELPLESSNESS
SINCERITY										INSINCERITY
HONESTY										UNSCRUPULOUSNESS
OBEDIENCE										REVOLT
CONSCIENTIOUSNESS										CAPRICE
WILLINGNESS										RELUCTANCE
DOCILITY										INTRACTABILITY
FRIENDLINESS										HOSTILITY
ESPRIT DE CORPS										SELFISHNESS
ACCOMMODATIYENESS										OBSTINACY
HUMILITY										CONCEIT
GENEROSITY										GREED
ORIGINALITY										CONVENTIONALITY
ACCURACY										INEXACTITUDE
ORDERLINESS										LACK OF SYSTEM
SENSE OF HUMOUR										WANTING THIS SENSE
IMAGINATION										UNIMAGINATIVE
ATTENTION										INATTENTION
LOGIC										SOPHISTRY
TRUTHFULNESS										SUBTERFUGE
GRACE										INSOLENCE
JOYOUSNESS										MOROSENESS
PATIENCE										IMPATIENCE
FORESIGHT										LACK OF FORESIGHT
OPENNESS										SECRETIVENESS
					50%					