

## EDUCATIONAL FACTORS

### *Introductory Remarks*

I. Priority in medicine goes to the science concerned with identification of disease. A student examines an infinite number of individuals, learns to observe and, on recognizing symptoms, to explain their meaning and confront them, and then draw conclusions.

If the science of teaching is to follow the road paved by medicine, it must work out on educational diagnostic based on the understanding of symptoms.

What a fever, a cough or nausea is for a physician, so a smile, a tear, or a blush should be for an educator. Not a single symptom lacks significance. It is essential to record and think over every detail, discard all that is incidental, bring together all that is akin, and seek out the guiding laws. It is not a question of how and what to demand from a child, not of bidding and forbidding, but of what he lacks, what he has in excess, what he desires, and how much he can afford to give of himself.

The boarding school and the day school — a research center and an educational clinic.

Why will one pupil, when he comes to the classroom, look into all the corners, say a word to everyone and be driven to his bench by the sound of the school bell only with difficulty? Why does another take his seat at once, reluctant to leave it even during the break? What sort of individuals are these, what can the school offer them and what can it demand in exchange?

Why does one pupil, when called to the blackboard go willingly, his head raised high, a self-assured smile on his face, to wipe the blackboard energetically with the pad, write in large letters, the piece of chalk firmly held in his hand? Why does another get up reluctantly, clear his throat, straighten his suit and move to the blackboard as if in a dream with eyes fixed on the floor, applying the pad to the blackboard only when told to do so, and writing in small letters scarcely visible?

Who is the first and who the last to run out for the break? Who frequently raises his hand to answer—knows everything and speaks up freely; who does so rarely, who — never?

If the lesson proceeds without interruptions, who is the first to start an uproar, and who keeps silent amid the general tumult?

Who has occupied that particular seat (and why) rather than some other, picked the first or the last bench, next to this or that classmate? Which are those who go home alone and which go in pairs or in a crowd? Who frequently changes friends, and who is constant?

Why is there no smile at a point where it is expected, why an outburst of happiness when we anticipated concern? How many times did the class yawn during the first lesson — and the last? Lack of interest — why?

To replace grumbling that things fall short of our expectations, let us introduce an unbiased and probing "why," in the absence of which we are in no position to gain experience, to be creative and go forward; in the absence of which there can be no real knowledge. This pamphlet is not a formula according to which such studies should be conducted; it is a document to show how difficult it is to portray in words what stands before one's eyes, how fruitful any comment can be—even an erroneous one—concerning what has been noticed and fixed in the mind as if in a "flash"; a symptom of individuality—of a pupil, or a general view of a group.

II. The more conscientious educators have now taken to keeping diaries but they soon give it up because they have no knowledge of the note-taking technique; they leave the teachers' training college without an addiction to keeping a record of what they do. Demanding too much from themselves, they lose confidence in their own ability; demanding too much of their notes, they lose faith in the value of such notes.

Some things make man happy, others — sad, puzzled, anxious, angry or discouraged. What should be taken down, and how?

It is a fact—the teacher has not been taught. While he has already grown out of the stage of keeping a youthful diary hidden from father under the mattress, he has not grown into keeping a record to share with a colleague, discuss at meetings and conferences. He may have been taught to take notes of someone else's lectures and ideas but never of his own endeavors.

What sort of difficulties and surprises have you come across, and what sort of mistakes have you made, how did you correct them? Take stock of what were your defeats and what triumphs. Let every failure be consciously instructive to yourself and of help to others.

III. What do you do with the hours of your life and on what do you spend the store of your youthful energy? If at one time you were filled with enthusiasm and it withered away as years went by -- has this fact cleared up anything for you, has it proved constructive? Experience? What are its constituent parts? The time has come when you no longer need it for the sake of knowledge as such, not for others, but for your very own self.

You are not working for your homeland, the community or the future unless you are working toward enriching your own soul. Only by getting can one give, only by growing in one's own spirit can one collaborate in the development of others. In notes lie the seeds from which forest and cornfield grow, they contain drops which become springs—this is what I offer to sustain, to quench the thirst, to please the heart and to fight weariness.

Notes are the entries you use to draw up the balance sheet of your life. They constitute documented evidence that it has not been wasted. Life never gives more than partial liberation, achievement is fragmentary. I was young -- ignorant; my hair is gray -- and I know: now it is strength that is lacking. Notes will soothe the sting of conscience; why so much, not that much, as you ought...

### ***I. Public School - First Grade***

Note: He hasn't a pen...

Comment What now? Should the teacher keep spare pens to lend? Who are the constant forgetters? Note how many times but don't exaggerate — "You always forget." Perhaps first thing in the morning before class: what has who forgotten?

Note: Five minutes of observation during the last quarter of the lesson (arithmetic).

Bolek rubs his chin, pulls his ear, shakes his head, looks out of the window, bounces up and down the bench, folds his arms, wriggles his hips, assesses the desk width with a copybook, then with the palm of his hand, turns over a page of the copybook, raises himself on the edge of the bench, leans forward as if about to leap, waves his arm, pats the bench, shakes his head, looks out of the window (it's snowing), bites his nails, sits on his hands, handles a shoe, fans himself with the copybook, puts his hands in his pockets, stretches himself, wriggles his hips, rubs his hands... "Please, miss, I'll go to the board." You say "Write this down!" — He grabs his pen, waves it in the air,

puffs and stabs the pen into the inkpot. You say: "What's 332 and 332?" Be reckons quickly—looks round him, "Got it?" and then in a subdued voice to himself: "Slick — aren't we, like the win-nd..." — he clicks his tongue and sighs...

Comment: So a child looks after himself; in this way he lets off the mounting steam which has no outlet; in this way he wrestles with himself so as not to disturb the class, thus, he sniffs action, expresses frustration, takes hold of the instrument of labor and lastly, in a poetic parallel, unconsciously expresses the yearning "like the win-nd."

Observe the torment of the lively and sensitive—wise in managing its energy by venting it bit by bit without annoying the teacher; how great the struggle before it bursts out with what will provoke the warning: "Don't fidget." "Lucky" to be an apathetic, drowsy, child.

Note: "Quiet!" How many times in an hour?

Comment: Three possibilities: (a) the teacher's admonition "quiet" is unnecessary — because punishment (read: physical) ensures silence; (b) he may repeat "quiet" without much confidence or effect; (c) he may allow noise — which means no lesson; (d) he may come to an understanding with the children. Result — complete silence, relative silence. What breaks the silence: a question, a request, a remark, an unsought answer, laughter, talk with a neighbor? When and to what extent are you permissive? Does it depend on your mood, and do you know it? If so, you must help the children to understand that.

Note: Hesitant answers to the simplest questions, reserved answers.

Comment: The teacher will rarely refrain from intervening even on a correct answer: "Quicker — slower — speak up — once more — alright — go on."

"Them three boys."

"Not them three — those three."

The child is not always sure whether he has made a mistake in reckoning as between two or three boys or has used the wrong expression. He develops a sense of unexplained error, of something wrong.

How little possible is any work, and altogether

impossible is mental work if someone "stands over you" and keeps "nagging" -- disturbing. It often happens: *Teacher*: "Well, how many pounds has he left?" *Pupil*: "Five."

Teacher: "Answer in full."

Pupil: "Six" (guessing now).

Better perhaps to let him finish and then correct. An important point.

Note: "Witches don't exist" — the teacher says. Zbyszek (silent) — after thinking it over, he whispers to himself: And I think there are witches somewhere."

Comment: How often the authority of the home clashes with that of the school! Occasionally adult authority must yield to that of a slightly older school friend.

Note: What increase in hullabaloo is there during breaks following the first, second, third lessons: how many fights, quarrels, accusations? In what way does restlessness in class increase? Judge by the number of warnings given to the class as a whole or to individual children.

N. B. To confine a child to an uncomfortable, ill-fitting bench for *four* hours -- the same torture as walking for *as* many hours in uncomfortable, tight, shoes.

Note: "Wait, don't start writing yet. Hurry up, come on, we're waiting."

Comment: "Hurry up, not so fast" — thus, the teacher tries to bring the class to a common denominator. Unfortunately — neither "hurry up" nor not so fast" do any good, they demoralize children, who feel suspended in mid-air.

Note: Teacher: -Well, how much?" Pupil stumped.

The class prompts: "fruity eight."

Teacher: "Well, how much?" The child stays mum.

Comment: This is an extremely interesting phenomenon. Why does the teacher insist on a now worthless answer, why does the pupil reasonably refuse that answer? What is the nature of pupil's reluctance to take advantage of prompting?

Note: Teacher: "What sort of a book is that?" (He expects an adjective.)

Pupil: "With pictures."

What should the teacher do in such a case?

Note: The others have started drawing, Adam is still making his preparations. The bell. They have finished but he goes on, reluctant to tear himself away.

Note: "Show me your drawings." A harassed smile — the child dawdles, appears reluctant.

Comment: Has it been noticed how serious a child becomes when he draws, how hard he

tries, how dispirited he may become?

"Why did you draw it precisely like that?" "Because it's pretty, because it seems to me like that."

Janinka has drawn something reminiscent of a broadly spreading cactus—with a little bird sitting on each spine.

"What is that?"

"One of the girls here (in the boarding school) drew something like it."

Note: It's cold for those sitting near the French window (draft).

Comment: Their attention is distracted. If it is cold in the classroom and the children lightly dressed: one sits immobile, frozen in a single position, another defends himself against the cold with frequent movements — he fidgets.

Note: Some trouble with his mouth, he keeps poking in it, maybe a tooth loose.

Common t: A factor distracting attention.

Note: A pupil's pocket treasures - the pen case.

Comment: The schoolmaster has stopped them from bringing balls, dolls, magnets, magnifying glasses to school. But the pen case is allowed. Its contents are also a distraction. But does playing with the pen case make the child inattentive, or is it rather that, being inattentive he plays with the pen case? Relaxed, fooling around, desiring not to listen to what the teacher is saying, will the child return sooner to proper behavior or will he remain inattentive for longer? Or just the opposite—without a pen case, will the child fall into unthinking apathy for still longer?

## ***II. Kindergarten and First Grade In A Private School For Girls***

Note: Today's monitor wipes the blackboard, Malgosia deliberately smears it with chalk. (Spite?) Odd.

Comment: We are occasionally flabbergasted by the action of some child. If A had done it, it would have been understandable — but that one? ... Consequently, we begin to reconsider our opinion of the child. When reproaching him, we shall say: "Well, well, so that's it. And I thought ... I was wrong ... but now ...," and so forth. We feel of fended and hurt, having been deceived. But in fact in that particular case it may simply be that B is mimicking someone: for once, he or she has followed the example of "ethers" Yesterday or a week ago, Malgosia saw someone annoying the class monitor, someone who impresses her and whom she wants to be like.

Note: Girls, please no talking.

Comment: Why are such admonishments effective in a school for the "well-bred?" As punishment — a mild reproof, an impatient gesture, look of surprise or a shrug of the shoulders ... As punishment -- irony instead of the cane; a word that lacerates ambition. "You should know better." A "sharp" reprimand — sharp because it hurts. Perhaps by chance, I have touched the roots of an important problem? Whence that dreadful dependence of man on the opinion of others, why the dead stop under the threat of the ridicule, to the point of canine watchfulness of what others think of us—the waiter or the hotel commissionaire?

Note: She has not learned it — should she be exposed?

Comment: The child has not learned it — the German words. If one could only photograph her behavior) Surely eyes, mortification, a forced smile or indignation on the face, mutiny in the frown or a deceptive clearing of the throat and wordless movements of the lips (she knows but she doesn't remember — she knows and any moment now will speak up — no, she doesn't know: why doesn't she?). The schoolmistress keeps on asking the question. It recalls torture, a pitiable sight.

Note: Not only children late for school, but some who come early -- both equally inconvenient for the school.

Note: Who prefers to sit on the first bench and who on the last?

Note: "Olek, give me back my erased" Olek gives it back, not putting it on the bench but on his head. No fun — putting the eraser on the table.

Note: "You don't know it again? I've repeated it so many times. You should be ashamed....!"

Comment: Well, what can one do - he doesn't know. Instead of a reprimand, a question: Why? Suppose a doctor were to say to his patient: "A shame, you've taken a whole bottle of medicine and still you cough, your pulse is weak, and you haven't moved your bowels."

Note: Wladzia comes into the classroom, puts her books down and wanders around: to the blackboard, to the pictures on the wall, the teacher's table and again to the blackboard, then to the bench where she sits at the very end of the room, starts swinging between the desks, and finally sits down and energetically swings her legs. Janka comes in, she goes straight to the window and looks out. There is some commotion, the benches are shifted,

she turns around with an impatient frown, no reaction, and then rushes suddenly to her desk. (N. B. Some children become as attached to their seat as a prisoner to his cell.)

Note: Stasia--an eight-minute observation. (1) Leaves her desk and stops by another one. (2) Kneels on her bench. (3) Makes for another desk again (some whispers). (4) Back to her desk. (5) She speaks to her neighbor, who gets out of her desk and Stasia takes her seat. (6) She is by the teacher's table. (7) She comes back and swings herself up in between the desks, bending sharply forward. (8) Leaning against her seat, she is talking quietly with two girls. (9) Laughter — gossip for five. (10) Goes rapidly to the fourth desk to share with a friend an interesting piece of news. (11) Going back to her seat. (12) Back again, glances at her neighbor's book.

Note: "You don't care to think, you don't concentrate" (in a tone of despair).

Common t: Closed in that classroom with the children the schoolmistress not only constrains but is herself constrained; wearying others, she wearies herself. Perhaps at one time she experimented, probed. Otherwise, her want of control, of capacity, must have been due to circumstances. Perhaps she chose the wrong profession. Whose fault?

Note: Władzia raises her hand (I am tempted not to record this, it upsets my earlier diagnosis).

Comment: I have unwillingly recorded that Władzia a trifler and a fidget — has volunteered an answer. Why? Because it seems contrary to my view of her as a poor pupil — but that is just why I should have been pleased and eagerly recorded the occasion. Władzia as I have seen her is not one to put her hand up, is happy to be left alone, not to have to answer. And I err in wanting her to be as I have seen her. But my duty is to probe her as she really is, to be intent on observing every indication, and comprehensively. I am just too lazy. I want Władzia to be easy to read. I have affixed a label — that's the end. The upraised hand now calls for reexamination, for a fresh mental effort, a deeper insight. I am impatient — I am in a hurry. Having written her off as transparent, I move on hurriedly to others. I attend superficially to a patient, make a plausible diagnosis — others are waiting. I am ambitious— I feel anxious about my diagnosis, perhaps because it was carelessly performed and muddled. I can never be sure, and then fear comes over me that some new feature may



blur the label which I have heedlessly affixed. I hate to admit that I am not good at this, I must read over and over again the "letters" of symptoms intently and long before I can dribble out the components more or less crudely. There is a pompous authority in me, which perceives at a glance what is inside "such a little tot," which can X-ray it. A demoralized bungler thrives inside me, trained even at school how to wangle out of what is involved in honest cognition. Little Władzia's upraised hand is the protest of a vital being not content with such treatment, not accepting a label; she says: "You don't know me." What do I know about Władzia? That she is a fidget? That once a teacher flung at her: "You are idle" — and it suited me and I appropriated it. Perhaps Władzia is no idler after all. Perhaps it would be wiser to drop the routine diagnosis and to admit the error to be rewarded with a few self-critical remarks. Perhaps Władzia, a highly-strung child, is capable of keen interest; perhaps she is fighting against the teacher's prejudice. That upraised hand may mean: (a) "that is just to show you, I'm not what you think," or (b) "if I'm interested, I know what to say and I want to answer." Perhaps only this morning the "idler" has decided to mend her ways and make a fresh start? Perhaps she has had a serious talk with her mother or a friend? Should Władzia be helped or, having recorded the fact, should one wait and see what happens next, tomorrow, in a week?

Of course, what matters here is not the inky hand of a girl in the first grade but a problem to which I can find no answer.

Note: A chat — about mice, say (in a moment — rats — bees and what have you).

Comment: No books tell us how to conduct a conversation, a chat (not a formal discussion with children). Maybe we are at a loss with it because it seems so easy. How well I remember the splendid chats at summer camps, at evening get-togethers in the boarding school—who doesn't remember them, how could any educator fail to? Might they not be tried out in the classroom?

A mouse—they borrowed a cat to catch mice — a story of a dog and cat fight — a rat on auntie's pillow — a mouse on a plate with fried fish—rats can swim—fish in the bath—there are golden fishes -- from a ship, one can see fish — there are poisonous flowers—dad was bitten by a bee — grandma keeps bees.

Another problem — several want to speak at once. One to me, another to his neighbor — others gather in groups. Someone starts a row — general uproar -chat spoiled. And only ten minutes to the bell—what is to be done?

Tell them to speak in turn and they feel constrained, they're not used to being listened to, and they haven't much to say. How can we save from oblivion the

interesting, and entirely unexplored language of a child's narrations.

An example—not from the school but from the Kindergarten—as told by five-year old Victor. "Where did you see apples?"

"Apples --I saw apples — teeny weeny ones but such big trees—you can lie on a branch, or swing — a dog—an apple falls — a man lies asleep—mummy comes — I want to walk by myself—there a chair —there a dog—some dog—the man's been bitten — oh, shar-r-rp teeth— and so when he slept, it bit him—the dog must be thrashed because it bit—there is a lady—such big teeth — can't remember what it's called — I know, Fox, that's what it's called—it bit and there was blo-o-od — it was eating a bone -- clear off, Fox, it glared at him and bit, dropped the bone and bit - - I threw an apple to the dog — and when he picked an apple from the tree and threw it far, far—such a crisp, sweet apple—it only sniffed at it—and then a soldier came along and hit the dog—hit it again -- such a nice -- so nice -- nice."

I took down as much as I could without shorthand. Compare Victor's "shar-r-rp" and "blo-o-od" with Bolek's "win-nd".

### ***III. Helcia***

Observation site—the Kindergarten. A large room with a piano in the corner. Small wicker armchairs by the walls and little tables for one. In the middle of the room—six tables with four chairs at each. A chest with toys and Montessori equipment stands near the door. The main characters under observation are: Helcia-3'/s; Jurek and Krysia—both 3; Haneczka —5; Nini — 6. Duration of observation—two to three hours daily for two days.

Helcia — an ambitious child, accustomed to being admired, trying to impress others with her intelligence and allure; she and her older brother are a charming pair of healthy lively children enchanting the eye and the heart.

Jurek - I know from his home; even if he is not a little tyrant, with the best will in the world I cannot help regarding him "with a touch of professional prejudice"; he has a "bad reputation." He once tried to take a whip to his mother and started a row — a game cock.

Krysia—here medicine rears its ugly head. In such children I can't stand measles and whooping cough. Slight, serious and unruffled — fragile, something dreamy, pensive and premonitory about them; they stir affectionate esteem and regard. I gladly prescribe cod liver oil for them and kiss their hands.

Haneczka — how can I describe her? "She's got her head screwed on alright" -  
- "She knows the answers"—"She won't be driven into a corner — you can't  
lead her up the garden" — "Roguish" -- She knows exactly how far she can  
go; one might say that she has no charm but that does not quite hit it off,  
she may prove to be made of the right stuff.

Nini - defies characterization. She has a touch of the typical child  
intriguer, a bit disquieting. She prefers the company of her one-year-old  
brother and children younger than herself.

I have launched into my observations without a program — a plan --  
offhand: "What are they up to?" My first note—in pencil:

Helcia (pictures): "He has a red tongue (dog). Why?" "Because it's a dog" (*Nini*).

"Do dogs have red tongues —sometime s?"

(She tells Helcia a story about a dog that barked "even though no one did  
anything to him".)

Kryisia is playing with a ball.

Nini: "Oh, Kryisia is playing (with one hand), too"

That the child looking at the picture should have considered separately the  
tail, ears, tongue and teeth—details adults pass over — that I could  
understand. We look at such pictures a bit aloof—they are only for  
children—but in an art gallery we give similarly detailed attention. If we  
are constantly astonished at the children's perceptiveness—which means  
that we do not take them seriously—we are in fact astonished that they are  
human beings and not puppets.

Helcia's question as to why dogs have red tongues — I take to mean that she  
wants to converse on any subject with Nini, who is higher in the social scale  
(she is talking on an equal footing with a seven-year-old), and the clue for  
me was the word "sometimes" inserted at random. Similarly, a simpleton  
meeting an educated 19 person, or a parvenu an aristocrat, will add in con-  
versation, an unrelated or farfetched word or expression, just to show that he  
knows a thing or two, too, is no fool.

Nini's remark that Kryisia is playing, with the addition "too," is evidence of  
surprise: she has seen Kryisia playing for the first time.

Nini (with a ball): "I can do it with one hand, can you?" "No." (Helcia says it  
quickly.)

"I can even throw it up."

Kryisia swaps a good ball for a bad one.

"Ha! ha! No more swapping— eh?"

Kryisia is squeezing the bad ball which "has lost its air" (Nini).

Two moments have been noted by me here. I have the chance to repeatedly observe Helcia's generous truthfulness. If she lies she does so, being very ambitious, to protect her own dignity. She finds it difficult to admit that she does not know something, so she says quickly that she can't do it with one hand, and is clearly anxious to change the subject.

The second moment concerns Nini. Kryisia has changed a good ball for a bad one. Nini eagerly grasps the good one and laughs -- probably any moment now she will be saying: "Stupid, that ball is going flat — it's no good— it doesn't bounce." But suddenly she reflects: best not to draw attention to her satisfactory deal. So she says quickly: "No more swapping." Superfluous cautiousness: Kryisia is satisfied with the exchange, is experimenting with the damaged ball, doesn't want to play any more. Just as Helcia did not lie when she said quickly and in something of a low voice that she could not catch the ball with one hand, so Nini has not actually cheated Kryisia. Thus blurred are the boundary lines of many human failings — virtues, action, and offense.

There are building blocks on the floor.

Nini: "I'll build a ship for you -- a furnace — yes, furnace — that's it, a furnace on a ship."

*Helcia*: "And do you know how to build such a ship?" *Nini* (not looking at her): "Sure."

Kryisia—Helcia--are making a train.

The six-year-old Nini, though she plays with the smaller children, treats them condescendingly. She is not building for herself but for them. Nelda will not have that, she refuses to acknowledge Nini's authority — she asks an impertinent question and receives an off-hand reply. Can Nini build the things that Helcia can? Nini has not so much as looked up, obviously she can.

Nini tells a tale about snakes

"Does it end funnily?"

*Helcia*: "No."

I am adding the rest from memory. Nini is fighting to maintain her authority: she is going to tell a story- about snakes. Helcia does not know what a snake is, she is not interested in the tale. Nini sniffs a flop. She puts a thoughtless question and gets a terse reply. At this point I interfered, unnecessarily as it happened, by putting a few questions about snakes to Nini. "A snake is like a string and can devour two hundred people." Helcia is looking at Nini like a thundercloud: relations are strained, the atmosphere is tense. Individuals of different kinds have met by chance: after a feigned conversation, an uneasy contact, they will part holding a grudge against one another.

Building blocks -- a long time — a palace.

"Can you build like that?" (Helcia). "Nice, isn't it?" Nini —22.

Kryisia -- 0.

Helcia.— 14.

They go back to building. Within a short time, Nini uttered twenty-two words, Helcia fourteen, and Kryisia — none. At this point, I made a note that during a dozen minutes or so of undirected play, there were: (1) Pictures. (2) A ball. (3) Building blocks. (4) A story. (5) Building blocks.

Envy — emulation.

*Helcia* (increasingly insistent). "Nice isn't it, can you do it like that?"

She upsets the little house Nini has built.

"I'm going to build it myself."

*Nini*: "I'm going to build one for Kryisia."

(Whispering in Kryisia's ear.)

Kryisia turns round and upsets Helcia's house.

(Blank space.)

I have forgotten to mention that while building they were sitting on the floor. The struggle is over Kryisia, over that small but self-possessed, silent and serious person who surprises everybody if ever she takes a ball to play with. I hold my breath as I watch the dramatic developments. Helcia is clearly stung, the rancor is festering inside her, she is angry with Nini, and struggles to win Kryisia over, but she senses that it is all in vain; Kryisia is looking at Nini's construction. Vengeance. Helcia knocks over Nini's house. But even that Nini accepts with icy contempt: she is above such a thing as

starting a fight with a weaker opponent. She contents herself with making it only clear that Kryisia belongs to her. I left out a lot here! I am filling in the gaps from memory: after Helcia's provocative outburst, Kryisia moves slightly closer to Nini; her steady gaze meets Helcia's rebellious eyes, she turns to Nini. This takes but a tenth, perhaps even a hundredth of a second: Nini says what to do, Kryisia promptly "flattens" Helcia's construction with her hand. Helcia is silent: she feels guilty, and defenseless against Kryisia.

The blank space in my notes shows how moved I must have been just then by the whirlpool of emotions the situation evoked. What is lacking here -- that is known to man? I cannot recall an equally tense moment throughout my study of infants.

Helcia has got on terms with Nini again (how?)

I don't know, I don't remember. A number of interesting moments have slipped my memory. But I should not put much faith in notes where there are no "blank spaces," no frank confession that the note-taker cannot recall, has failed to notice or has forgotten.

Haneczka approaches Nini.

Jurek seats himself on Helcia's chair. Helcia stares *a long time* (I am waiting) — nothing happens! Haneczka takes a cube from Helcia's house. Helcia stares again for a long time.

"Please, Haneczka, don't take my blocks!"

Haneczka starts removing them one by one. Helcia hits her on the head with a block.

Grabbing the last block, she gives it to Jurek.

"Take it — take -- take it!"

*Jurek* (to me) "That girl hasn't anything to build with — nothing."

*Myself*: "What?" (in a thick and hoarse voice).

"She's taken everything away from her."

Helcia looks at Jurek (Jurek at her).

"She is good, that girl."

Haneczka counts out eight cubes. Jurek adds his one to make nine; Haneczka, at random—adds more.

"I've given them all back to her, Jurek, all of them, I've given." (My eyes are moist.)

Let me begin from that hoarse "what?" of mine—that single word that I managed to utter, alien both in spirit and sound to all that had taken place. The children had understood one another perfectly—as for me, I was feigning ignorance; my brain cells, my vocal cords, all of me including my past which involves so much—all that was a personification of baseness and falsehood in relation to that marvelous mystery of sounds, of allusive silvery tones. There is no place here for scientific reasoning, there is only mood, the rite of emotions, which science has no right even to touch. Yet reason I shall, though to my own detriment

Jurek has settled down on Helcia's chair by her table. Helcia looks at him. It cannot be that she is thinking—she is just feeling. She is regretting the long moments now past when she would sit by that table remote from the other children, watching them aloof. Gone—not to return. She has left her quiet little roost—with how much heartache—but she won't go back. Now Jurek has sat himself there, the same who pushed her over only a few days back. Helcia has forgiven him, she turns over her haven of rest, her solitary abode, to him. She yearns after that which will not come back.

They are grabbing the blocks from her, she pleads timidly because she knows life is cruel, and that she will not get through unscathed, and yet she does not want to run away. It is not the words that matter here but the calm and utterly sad voice, the expression on her face, the posture. No actress could plead so convincingly for help, indulgence and pity. How ingenious must be nature, to enable a three-year-old to personify entreaty so expressively. And the words? So straightforward: "Please, Haneczka, don't take my blocks."

Haneczka-- life knows nothing of compassion --grabs. Helcia hits her on the head with the last block left to her; she fears retaliation—note the dramatic force in her treble "take it" as she presses the last block into Jurek's hand! In the same way, a dying standard bearer passes the colors to the nearest man, that they may not fall into the hands of the enemy. Jurek, a passive witness of the scene, turns to me in a voice thick with emotion. He pleads for the girl deprived of her "all," wronged, while he himself, holding the last block, is at a loss. In turning to me, he communicates to Helcia his understanding, his support, he condemns Haneczka.

Haneczka understood. Hit on the head with a block, she only rubs the spot

gently—no thought of retaliation. A sense of guilt—she gives back, more than she took, and asks Jurek's pardon.

I thought it best to omit from my notes the movements and gestures (you try recording them); I take down only the words, wonderful in their simplicity, gathering force by repetition. Helcia said three times: "take it" when she handed the block to Jurek; twice he said that Helcia had nothing to build with, and Haneczka also repeated that she had returned the blocks. It seems to me that in highly dramatic situations, a writer or actor might achieve a more powerful effect by repetition than by a lengthy tirade. "Mother —Mother" —"I have no daughter, I have no daughter anymore."— "Not my fault, not mine"— that might sound quite moving. Mote children's repetitions in particular. They are certain to be very frequent.

This scene sparks off many thoughts in my mind:

(1) In the world of feeling, children are much richer, they think with their emotions.

(2) H it went against the grain with me merely to describe the scene, what good would have been any interference? "Haneczka you're a naughty girl to take what belongs to someone else—give it back; Helcia, fighting is not ladylike -- apologize."

(3) What a broad school of life for children is this kindergarten!

Helcia: "Can you build so?"

Nini: "We are not speaking to you."

Jurek wants to take one, Helcia pushes him aside, Jurek does not protest.

Helcia: "I'll give you" (the blocks).

Nini: "Nat necessary, not at all."

Haneczka: "I've built a beautiful palace"

Helcia: "Ugly— it's ugly."

(Blank space.)

Helcia: "Can you build like that?"

No answer.

(?) You're not wanted.



Helcia (to me): "Did I build it well?"

Myself: "Yes, very well."

Wide: "Can you do it?"

Myself: Yes, I can."

Only now — thrust out and humbled — she notices me, turns to me, Poor mite!

Haneczka in part feels respect for Nini, in part is tired of her loquacity.

Helcia is trying to mend the hall.

"You see how it's done?"

Helcia (to Jurek): "Give me that box."

Jurek—makes a defensive gesture.

She strokes his face. He won't give it — he takes off. Helcia grabs it, thieflike, runs away, sits near me.

(Blank space.)

Helcia: "Can you build like that?"

Jurek: "No-bz-wzz-wzz-wzz-biz"

At last -- but in what a warped way—it would not have been surprising if she had sighed.

These are the notes of a weary man. I don't give up making the notes because they are invaluable, but I'm tired, dead tired, I'm making a mess of it. I provide the final scene with a commentary because I cannot trust my memory any more: Helcia, so anxious to hear someone say that she could do what others could not, at last managed it. Jurek could not, but admitted grudgingly; hence his "bz-wzz-wzz" — the matter not worth discussion, let's change the subject. Helcia had previously done the same,

Teacher: "There are squares..."

Helcia (to Nini): "What are squares?"

Helcia asks Nini, not me.

A prayer: Haneczka and Krysia join in. Helcia is downcast— after the prayer, she declares to Jurek:

"That's my place, mine."

Jurek gets up and moves to his seat.

After the routine marching to music, Haneczka drives Jurek out of his seat, he timidly moves on to another.

Helcia at her desk she bumps against it with her legs—shifts the desk about noisily —bangs on it with her hand.

(Blank space.)

Helcia has the blocks—she takes one out—taps the table with it — lethargically - her head against her hand.

She begins to build — a gate copied from Haneczka's castle—she tries, it doesn't work; the triangle falls away from the base, three or four times. Helcia returns the blocks to the box.

The blank space is evidence of my shortcoming. My attention was distracted for just an instant I left her disturbed, alone. I find her depressed and unhappy—but a box with the blocks is now lying on her desk. When did she manage to take them out of the chest -- how? I have no idea. Weary, I missed it.

I am reading back what I have written, It is poor stuff. I know what it is all about but the reader won't grasp it without carefully rereading it several times. Few will bother. One must write easily—one must communicate. For the second day's observations, I'll use a different method. First, the notes taken down will be put in order, then the course of events will be processed into a coherent narrative, and finally. — commentary.

For students of teachers' training colleges this is the plan:

(1) Characterization of the child under observation.

(2) Conditions of observation:

(a) the site and its layout;

(b) concerning the student: how does he know the child, what does he know about him? What has he overheard, noticed or registered prior to the observation;

(c) own mental state — is the observation voluntarily and deliberately undertaken, or by chance; is he fit, in a good mood, etc.

(3) Raw notes with the addition: "blank space" (break in observations). A question mark in brackets denotes a place where the student finds the note illegible. Important: telegraphese should be preserved.

(4) The course of events in concise form.

(5) A commentary to the notes.

(6) Personal experiences and reflections.

It seems to me that throughout I have half consciously had this scheme in its main outlines in my mind. It is something in the nature of a report on a play or a composition on a well-known drama. The lack of clarity in my work arises because when reading a composition on a play by Shakespeare or Sophocles, I do know Hamlet or Antigone. Here the reader knows neither the leading lady — Helcia - nor the actual play. The form in which I have presented the first day's observations is purely with a view to giving an example of unsatisfactory work, such as it should not be. I am far from certain that the second day will be any better. •

(MB. It is a pity that I cannot process the notes on the precise day of observation but only four days later: observations made on Tuesday are elaborated on Saturday.)

#### **Second day of observations Notes:**

Helcia has not so much as looked at her desk.

Kryisia is playing with Mania.

Helcia addresses Stasia —nothing.

Helcia addresses Jane's — a longer time.

Helcia yawns.

Helcia with Wika:

"I'm eight."

"Wladek is eight, too."

Wika goes to check it, Helcia is not sure.

"Wladek, how old are you?"

Wladek: "Seven and a half."

Kryisia by the older children's desk. Helcia watches her. The prayer — marching.

Helcia (shouting, challengingly): "Oh, an apron—mummy told me to wear an apron." (She runs, and turns over a bench.) Loudly to the teacher:

"It's got turned over."

To me:

"The sleeves got turned inside out."

She is ugly.

A moment later -- she's pretty; unself-conscious, she struggles to button up the apron at the back.

"Please, help me."

When I make a move toward her:

"No, I'll manage by myself."

She comes up — a finger in the buttonhole.

"Please, button it up."

I advance my hand, she withdraws — tries hard again. (It's the final effort—the same with adults — perhaps after all, at the very last moment — the last hope.)

(Blank space.)

I button it up: "Try to undo it, that's easier."

She does not want to — moves to the table with the letters — to Krysia.

She learns to respect real service.

Helcia, letters—dreams of power -- I'm by the table, she turns to Miss N.

She fiddles with the letters — Is that right?"

"No!"

(How utterly the flattery of adults demoralizes children.) To me: "That's the way to put it together, isn't it?"

"But look, Please."

"No."

She rearranges one letter.

"Please, look" (to Miss N), "Is that right?"

"No."

She won't be shown to do it.

I shoot an insult at her: "You're still too small" (she annoys me).

She goes away -- shows Miss N. a broken table, a doll: "Is she badly dressed?"

She itemizes all the doll is wearing.

"And I've got something in my pocket. What is it?"

"I don't know, how should I— and you, do you know what I've got?"

"Yes, I do" (she peeps in).

Back to the letters:

"Please, look" (to Miss N.), "is that right?"

"No."

(Struggling — she won't give up)

Miss N. shows her how to do it—she doesn't look; she wants to charm, to rule, not to work.

She asks me: "And now?"

Back to the broken table, points it out to Janek. A talk with Miss N.

A picture book — she turns over its pages, humming Punch, one of the Kindergarten songs.

"Can you draw a cat?" (to the teacher) "I can."

(At home, she can do whatever the grownups cannot)

She talks to Tadzio, tries to prevent him from doing something. She is bored.

"Take the blocks, and make houses, like Haneczka." "Like Krysia-a-a?"

"No, like Haneczka."

"I don't want to. It's easy. And you, can you make an apron?"

"No."

"And I can."

"You can't even button it up."

"Yes, I can."

"No, you can't."

"Yes, I can" (she is irritated). "Can you draw a little cart?"

"No."

"And I can. And a cat?"

"Yes."

I give her a pencil and paper: —"Come on, draw." "I can draw a pencil."

She is drawing a duck (as a three-year-old would). Coolly, without enthusiasm, I admit that it's not bad.

"Can you draw?"

"Yes."

She looks at me with surprise, starts drawing. "Well, what this time?"

"I don't know."

"Now what has all those legs?"

"I draw a duck."

"Please give me some paper, I'll draw a little bowl." "Draw on the same piece of paper."

"No"— but she starts drawing.

Not a bowl--a girl with a basket.

"You were supposed to draw a bowl."

"Is a bowl nice?"

"Ask Krysia."

A talk between Helcia and Krysia—very short. "What did Krysia say?"

"Is that basket good?"

"Poor."

I draw one: "Which is better, yours or mine?" With her finger: "That one" (points at mine). I feel sorry for her:

1. Praise.
2. Dislike, anger.
3. Commiseration,

I ally myself with Helcia against Krysia. Helcia is admired, Krysia is lauded. Krysia tries to keep in front during the marching. Helcia wants to force things to come to her. Krysia waits for them to come to her.

Krysia:

1. Inactive, spend no energy.
2. Quiet— can steal into anywhere, and easily grasp what others are best at— simply by patient watching.
3. They win without struggle— by a sudden outburst, by a single attack.

So I want to help Helcia; to teach her.

"Give me the chalk."

She doesn't know where it is, but Krysia does — and brings it. I draw a little house on the blackboard. Helcia is trying, too— no good. So she adds some windows to my house. Lala comes by.

Helcia: "Look, pretty, isn't it?"

Lala: "You draw nicely."

Helcia: "Oh, the windows, look."

Helcia realizes that there has been some misunderstanding—she is embarrassed.

She draws trees, she doesn't want to use the wiper on the blackboard, prefers bits of paper. She wipes it with her hand, looks at me with a challenging smile.

Helcia: "Please, draw something."

I draw a man— she adds the fingers, gives the finishing touch.

She asks for another drawing. I have drawn a bird. Helcia: "That's a bird or lark" (She waits for applause for having used a new word.)

I've left Helcia for a moment to go to Krysia who is pasting. Helcia soon comes up--tried to pull me away (jealous). She loses her piece of chalk, searches long for it, finds it.

The piece of chalk has fallen and is broken. She looks surprised, tries one of the pieces, she deliberately throws it on the floor and keenly watches what happens (experimenting). She asks me to draw something else. I draw a

flower. She touches it up.

"What's that?"

"My spectacles."

"What for?"

"To see better."

"And that what's that far?"

"To join the lenses."

"And nails?"

"Nails would hurt."

I take off my glasses to show her. She smears chalk on me.

"You'll make me dirty, Helcia."

"Is it a new suit?"

"No, it's old."

"I've got a new one. Zosia made it for me."

"Who's Zosia?"

"A man with a head, forehead ..."

"Why a moustache on the face?"

"Daddy shaves. I can't, I've no money to buy things." She advises me to make money out of gold or paper. I cut some out of paper, as she says. There remains a piece with two holes in it. She puts it over her face, to scare me. (She's waiting for; "Oh, I'm afraid, oh, I'm going to hide!") I do nothing.

"Is it frightening?"

"No."

I give her a mirror to see whether it is frightening. I ask Krysia whether it is.

"No."

She draws something on the mask to make it more terrifying.

"Now, is it frightening?"

"No"



She makes a face.

"And now?"

I: "Has something like that frightened someone before?" She doesn't answer, puts the mask over my face, then tries it on Kryisia.

Breakfast.

Helcia (in a loud voice): already know where my bottle (milk) is."

(N. B. Kryisia says "t" for "k" - this defect in speech may make her taciturn, unsociable. Educational hygiene should bear such things in mind and eliminate them.)

(It wasn't Helcia that I observed for two days but the laws of nature and man.)

There are only two tiny tots in the Kindergarten: Helcia and Kryisia. The rule says: "you two should play together" — under pressure they would do so, left alone they are attracted rather to older children — among whom they may find more than mere amusement. Mania is particularly keen on talking to the little ones and looking after them; Kryisia has noticed this, and Mania must have been attracted in some way to a taciturn, calm and serious person like Kryisia. Helcia is still feeling for someone. She approaches Stasia but finds her a bad choice; then along comes Janek — he's alright: he has been in the Kindergarten only a week, has not yet "settled down," feels uneasy, knows hardly anyone; this makes up for the difference in age—they talk. But Helcia is impatient. She tries to make friends with Wika clumsily: she has spoken of her brother's age, but not sure whether she is right (eight years), feels ill at ease. Helcia's fear of appearing ridiculous fetters and checks all her forthright feelings, her every action. That is why she takes no part in the prayer, in the marching and gymnastics. She suffers but is afraid — she can't force herself to do these things. When the children march to the piano music, she tries to draw attention to herself by speaking unduly loudly about the apron ... and she turned over the bench: she announces the fact in a surprised voice and with a forced smile, and, having promptly changed the subject, tells me that her sleeves have gotten turned inside out. She straightens them and puts on the apron: she can't button it up. I offer my help — - she turns it down. She thinks the buttonhole is too narrow. Then she asks spontaneously for my help, but withdraws at the

very last moment and makes another attempt. Asking for the second time, she still holds on to the button, she still strives. This is a most frequent occurrence and not among small children only—also among older ones and adults. While still a student I worked in a hospital, and on one occasion I witnessed the following scene: H., a fellow student, was trying to extract a patient's tooth—he couldn't manage. Finally, he summoned the doctor who immediately came up. But the student instead of handing over the forceps to him, had another go and broke the tooth.

The interchangeable letters of the alphabet are placed in a partitioned box, much like types in a printer's case. They are taken out of the box in the morning and children unfamiliar with letters arrange them like with like. Krysia can do it but Helcia tries to bluff instead of doing the work. I can guess why: at home she scribbles on paper and declares that she has written something, and since the adults confirm it, she believes it to be true. If a three-year-old child is led to believe that it is easy to read (indistinct muttering), draw and write, it is not surprising that she should be unwilling to make a real effort when she is six. Helcia insists angrily that others agree she has put the letters together in the right way; she does not want to be instructed and helped. She wants to do it all by herself I One can easily divine from her incessant questioning of her ciders and other children. "Can you do it?" — that at home, the adults pretend that they can't do what she can do. How often and in how many forms, we observe that. A three-year-old jumps down a step: "I've done it." A jolly uncle pretends that he can't or is afraid to do it, slips, and plays the fool; the child laughs, pushes him, gets all worked up in the spiteful and vicious game, in the taunting and pretending. A three-year-old has scrawled something on a strip of paper: "That's horse." His uncle registers surprise: what a fine horse, he couldn't draw one like that; he tries, takes the pencil by the wrong end, then lets it fall to the floor. The child tries to explain, grows impatient and sometimes even violent. Had the jolly uncle known that one child laughs in excitement because he knows in advance that the game is going to end with swinging up, hugging and kissing, and another gets angry and impatient for precisely the same reason; had he noticed that the sparkling gaiety and unchecked laughter of the former and the half astonished and half angry gaze of the latter have in them something of the depravity of a private room in a restaurant, and of the atmosphere of the bedroom, he would probably be more careful in the future. If the same sort of game is played by nannies, maybe they have acquired it from those jolly uncles

because obviously they did not pick it up in the village they come from, in the peasant's hut; for, as far as I have been able to observe, the attitude to children there is serious and dignified.

My anger expressed in the insult flung at Helcia: "You'd better leave it, you're too small," was most likely addressed to the jolly uncles (and aunties) who cannot help semiconsciously or unconsciously seeing in a lovely two-year-old the adorable person, he or she will one day become. That is how the contagion enters the nursery, how it warps the minds of infants who later on, in kindergartens, straighten out in torment their deformed spirits but at the same time lose confidence in the grownups and their feeling of attachment to the home.

"No," I say, "it isn't." "But I know," "I can do it" —all that comes also from the jolly uncle repertory. The uncle says: Well I'm going to buy you from Mummy." "You have such unattractive eyes" — indeed his inventiveness is colossal! The child says: "Mo — it's not true — it isn't — Mummy, say it isn't." This is called teasing. Some children hate it, and some like that kind of joking in which anger, aversion and fear arouse strong sensations.

Helcia has announced her intention to draw a little bowl, but she understands that there is no trace of resemblance to a bowl in what she has done; so let it be a girl with a basket—the grownups are so simple that they will believe anything. Twice she changed the subject in a conversation when she found it inconvenient. She honestly admits that the basket drawn by me is better than hers, but when Lala takes the house drawn on the blackboard for her work, Helcia has not enough courage to clear up the misunderstanding.

The episode with the piece of chalk is interesting. She did not expect the chalk to break when it fell. When a glass falls it becomes useless, a broken pencil too. The piece of chalk has broken in two. Helcia cautiously tries it: well, it works just as well as before. She drops it once more, what will happen? Now she knows—and she will know it as long as she lives. A few days back, Brzydula dipped a piece of chalk in water and tried to write. Each of us has gone through the stage of asking himself what happened to the sugar put in a cup of tea; if he was told that it "dissolves," this amounted to an incomprehensible word added to an incomprehensible phenomenon. It was first cleared up by experimenting with sugar or salt. I remember how myself I used to keep salty water in the sun in order to find out whether dry salt would show in the bottle again; but I never did find it—and the

solution of the problem remained in the air. A child likes to stir sugar in the tea himself, but the mother does not like it because the usual result is that the cup is upset.

The conversation about spectacles. These are not merely pieces of glass through which one can see better but also pieces of metal what for? If the pieces of glass don't hold together, they can be secured with nails. I answered that it could not be done but I showed no sign of amusement. Securing the tense through which one can see better, has been variously solved: the monocle, binoculars, spectacles (lorgnette); it is not so simple as it now seems to realize that thin lengths of wire can be attached to the hinge. That three-year-old Helcia should not know that it took the collective effort of specialists many centuries to devise— is no subject for laughter. But the fact that I, a man of forty, have grasped this for the first time following Helcia's question—that is compromising. By jeering at a child for not knowing, you kill the desire to learn, to know. Who will admit that he has not read Faustus or seen a Rubens, or heard of Pestalozzi? So we read books haphazardly and look around us haphazardly and know everything — haphazardly; civilization is made by individuals, and politics by cliques, while the rest — simply led by the nose—accept their fate, ashamed to admit that they do not know what it's all about, and are laughed at. Whoever laughs at a three-year-old child because she wants to fix the lenses to the eyes with nails—he is a traitor, perverted.

Helcia does not know how glasses stay on the nose but she has a new frock. Well, that finally gives us common ground.

A chat about money—gold and paper—some scraps of recent conversations incidently overheard. I have cut, following Helcia's instructions, two holes (the money) in a sheet of paper. To Helcia the piece of paper resembles the mask which a kind uncle has used to scare children. Involved in a conversation on the subject of finances, she is anxious to extricate herself so as not to reveal her ignorance. She puts on the "mask" and tries to scare me and Krysia. It doesn't work. Probably the mask is not terrifying enough —so she makes a face. It does not help.

Helcia, it seems to me, is beginning to understand that at home they just make fun of her, play, pretend, and fib; that things are far from what she has thought they were. She is at the same time afraid of and attracted to the new life which involves effort and struggle, where genuine value and merit count more than personal charm, where one finds more indifference

than smiles, where there is more trickery than helpful hands. Home does not help, but hinders her.

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This has not come out as I wanted it. I intended to provide a teachers' training college student with a formula for his record of observations and commentary. In fact I have produced a formula for myself, a formula for passing from a minor detail observed a child's question—to diversified and general problems. This exemplifies the extent to which frameworks, plans and directives obstruct independent thinking.

#### *IV. Stefan*

It has always seemed to me that a major difficulty in the rational upbringing of a single child is the thought, ever present though not always realized, that "the game is not worth the candle." Being an educator of many scores of children, I have an enhanced sense of responsibility, every word of mine enters a hundred minds, every step is watched by a hundred pairs of vigilant eyes; if I am successful in rousing them, convincing them, stirring them to action, then my zeal, faith and act is multiplied by a hundred; invariably, even when almost all have failed me, there is always one child, perhaps two, who will give proof, if not today then tomorrow, that he has understood, reacted and goes along with me. Educating a hundred, I do not know the meaning of loneliness, I never fear utter defeat. If I were to offer the hours, days and months of my life to one child—what would that amount to? At the expense of that one life - - mine I should build only one life, too. My every renunciation would nourish only one I find it easier to overcome disinclination, weariness and dejection, and I can begin to tell a story when I know I am to be listened to by a hundred.

Whenever I have come across a schoolmistress who had given up a group for one or two children, preferred private work to a kindergarten or a boarding school, I have thought that she had no liking for her profession, that what interested her was money, better conditions, less work.

I spent two weeks with Stefan, a boy of eleven—and I found that observing one child provides material as ample, a sum total of harassments and satisfactions as great as the observation of a large number. One sees in a single child much more, one feels it more subtly, considers every fact more thoroughly,

A weary educator of a group, it seems to me, has the right, perhaps even the duty, to apply that kind of "crop rotation" in his work: to withdraw from the crowd, to be a recluse for a while, and then to go back to work with the crowd. To the best of my knowledge it has not been so up to now — there have been specialists on individual teaching and on general teaching and upbringing.

I took the notes in diary form—and I have left them as they were. They may prove of some value as a document in spite of the unusual time, place and conditions.

M. B. I was in charge of a field hospital then. During one of the lulls in hostilities, I took a boy from an institution for destitute children; he wanted to learn a craft, and there was a carpentry shop in the hospital. I spent only two weeks with him; I fell sick and had to leave, and the boy still stayed on for some time; then the battle front began to move — my orderly sent him back to the institution.

#### **Thursday, March 8th, 1917**

He's been four days with me. I intended to start taking notes from the very first day. That's how it is with notes— whenever a lot of writing has piled up, there is no time for it. This is discouraging to many people. I regret it, for a number of characteristic feelings have been lost. I've already gotten used to his presence.

His name is Stefan. His mother died when he was seven — he doesn't remember her name. His father is either somewhere at the front or in a POW camp, or has been killed in action. He has a brother of seventeen who lives at Tarnopol. He used to live with him, then he stayed with soldiers for a time, and for the past six months—in the institution. Institutions for the destitute have been set up by municipal authorities and they are run by individuals picked at random. The government chops and changes, now allowing, now banning school instruction. They are in fact not boarding schools but dustbins into which children are cast as refuse of war, the waste products of the dysentery, typhoid fever or cholera that has liquidated their parents— or rather the mothers, the fathers are fighting for a new arrangement of the world. War—it is not a crime, it is a triumphant procession, an orgy of devils intoxicated with a malign elation.

As soon as I had asked him whether he would like to come along with me, I regretted it.

"Not today. I'll come to fetch you on Monday. Ask your brother about it tomorrow. Discuss it, think it over."

We are on our way. What is he thinking about? The moon— snow. He is looking keenly round: the church, the railway station, the carriages and trucks, the bridge. An ordinary face. He is supposed to be keen on work—the hospital has a carpentry shop I'll turn him over to Duduk as an apprentice.

An examination: He has not forgotten how to read. An arithmetic problem.

"At present, how old are you?"

I feel, he doesn't understand what I mean by "at present."

"At present? That sounds like giving something to someone."

I don't correct myself.

He got 50 copecks from his brother, bought some jam cakes, and candies, and on arrival had cold sausage — Płasek's speciality -- a tummy ache in the evening. A pain in the region of the appendix. That's bad; I wanted him to have meals from the soldier's pot until it was settled whether he would stay for good. I planned a strict daily routine for him to start at once. Walenty sighs deeply.

"What did you do it for?"

Stefan has an innate sense of order: on finishing the lesson, he puts the books neatly together on the table, pen by the inkpot. He has hung up his towel; the ends were uneven so he promptly straightened them out.

Why did he spend the whole 50 copecks only on sweets?

"Well, why should I keep money?"

That's not his idea; he got it from someone he looks up to: Nazarek or Klimowicz (Klim can draw well).

"Your father will come back — I'll tell him about you."

"If he comes back, O.K., and if he doesn't — that's O.K., too."

He must also have heard that somewhere. I might have talked a lot of rubbish about it: "How can you say such things ... about your father ..." and so on. He is now preoccupied with other things.

"What are those straps for, by the looking glass?" "This one is for soap, that one for the comb, and the other for toothbrushes."

That cigarette case, was the leather cracked when it was new?"

"Yes, that's an imitation crocodile skin!"

*Note for teachers. When you arrive at the house where you are to work as tutor, have the children in your room when you unpack, let them help you with the luggage, take out and arrange your small possessions. This cannot fail to start up a talk about watch, penknife or dressing case. It will quickly, and in a natural way, bring you closer to the child. That is just how a child strikes up acquaintance with his peers. Here is a point worth further consideration: how often do adults get to know one another through children, as a result of talking about children (in a park or in the country in summer). Boys get acquainted through the intermediary of a ball, girls through dolls. If you say, it's not polite to touch everything or ask about everything, they are bewildered and begin to dislike you. They may be told in a month or more not to do this or that in relation to someone else, not to yourself. You are friends.*

"What did that cigarette case cost?"

"Two or three rubles, I suppose, I don't know, well, I don't remember, I've had it for such a long time. See, the catch is out of order, it won't shut properly."

"Couldn't it be mended?"

"Of course, it could but it suits me as it is, the cigarettes don't fall out anyway."

I have not so far been instructing but simply watching him and trying to refrain from any remarks so as not to put him off. And yet, I simply had to caution him twice during the past four days.

The first time: the assistant surgeon came in during my lesson with Stefan. It was just duty day in the hospital: some new patients were brought in.

"They bother you all day" — he said irritated in a raised voice.

Both the sound of his voice and the expression on his face showed that the words were not his own. Either Miss Lonia or the cook in the institution must have talked like that.



"You mustn't say such things" —I reproved him gently after the assistant surgeon had left.

"Well, I'm reading and he just butts in."

He can't grasp the fact that there are two hundred and seventeen sick and casualties in the hospital.

"So being the house surgeon on duty you must take care of all of them."

"Certainly not—only the new arrivals, so that a patient with a contagious disease won't get put next to the ordinary sick."

"Is it true that you can catch measles from others? When I had measles, I was choking, I couldn't speak, father gave me paraffin to drink, and it made me feel better. My dad would never go to a doctor, he knew himself how to cure people."

"Your dad was a clever man, I'm sure of that" — I said.

"Sure, he was clever"—he nods his head decidedly.

There is a question on the tip of my tongue and I can hardly refrain from asking him what he meant by saying if his father did not come back, that would be O.K., too. No, it is still too early for that. The second reproof: "Listen Stefan, when you address Mr. Walenty, don't call him 'Walenty,' say 'Mr. Walenty.' "

"I do say 'Mr. Walenty.'"

An echo from the institution: the art of wriggling, My fault—now when I speak with Stefan, I always say 'Mr. Walenty.'

This is important, especially in a boarding school for orphans. The porter, the charwoman, or the washerwomen resent it when children don't give them a handle to their names. When speaking with children, one should always say: "Mr. Wojciech," "Miss Rozia," "Mrs. Skorupska."

I confirm the truth of something I have said before about boarding schools: sickness in the family draws the child nearer. There is something about such times that parents and children alike refer to with warmth, or at least remember well. In a boarding school sickness means extra trouble and is frequently a source of estrangement.

What a lot of trouble I had to make it possible for him to write in bed. I had to empty a large box of its contents, place the inkpot in an old can which

Walenty had made into an ashtray for me. A pillow had to be put under the box on one side, and some books under the other. He thanked me with a smile. A boarding school could not afford such luxury.

"Are you comfortable?"

"Yes" — and a smile.

He spread all his things on this improvised table: books on one side, the pencil in a crack between the boards of the box—that sense of order is integral to him. A new situation, no precedents to follow—he acts on his own.

Now he sits, copying a little verse from the primer. He mutters to himself.

"White — white — white ..."

And he ends with an evident mental effort:

"A white ro ... a white robe."

A deep sigh.

"A white robe I will give her a white robe for her way.

But despite the effort he has made has written "wite."

"You see, instead of 'white,' you've An embarrassed smile.

"I'll write it again."

"You'd better leave it now, it's later."

"No, now."

Silence again, broken only by his tense muttering. He frowns at the mistakes pointed out to him in the second attempt. I ignored some mistakes in the first one, just to encourage him; this time — no. The day before yesterday, he read a text very badly in the evening, he' could not tell why.

"It's because you are hungry" - I remarked then.

I wonder whether he remembers that remark of mine. "What do you think, why has it come out worse than before?"

"'Cause if once you get it wrong, it gets even worse later."

And with exasperation:

"I'll do it once more."

He has blushed and clenched his hands, I kiss him on the head—fatuous gesture, he moves away slightly.

"Orp-orphan as poor as she ..."

Walenty comes in with the tea just at a critical point where he had previously left out a whole line. For her way — I will give her for her way— for her way I will give her."

"The knife's been found" — Walenty announces.

Stefan looks up: knife—what knife? — his chin is on the palm of his hand — in a moment he will fire the question, no, he has resisted the temptation he is self-possessed again. Walenty smiles, I am making notes, as rapidly as I can; an interesting moment--the boy has not noticed anything. In a few moments, he announces in a voice of triumph mingled with hope:

"I've done it" - and a smile.

"It is alright but you've missed one letter; do you know which one?"

He is drinking tea, frowning — looking for the missing letter.

A pity I didn't keep an eye on my watch how long the writing took him.

The watch—the watch—how many times I told myself about it — I always forget.

Two thoughts: during many months spent with a crowd of children, not once did I take notice of a smile — it was too subtle a signal, too small, below the threshold of consciousness. Only now I can see that it is an important signal, certainly deserving study.

When he asked with seeming casualness: "Could I go for a ride on the horse?" - - This also with a disarming smile.

I wriggled out of it by saying:

"It's slippery now, the horses are not suitably shod — perhaps in summer."

Children must realize that to smile is obligatory. The second thought.  
Copying is not an unthinking action for a child-on the contrary, it calls for a great effort: to be careful not to miss a letter, a word or a whole line; not to repeat the same word; not to make a spelling mistake, to manage

to write a word without having to carry it over to the next line; to write the letters neatly and regularly spaced. Perhaps it is precisely through copying that a child comes to a full understanding of the text he reads? Naturally, creative minds will tire sooner of passive work like copying. Stefan, when writing, recalled a painter copying a masterpiece. A schoolmaster when going over the scrawl of some forty copybooks must feel miserable, indeed, unless he has actually seen, so that he can appreciate, the collective effort put into that work.

Reading involves for a child not only the difficult task of putting letters together but also a number of incomprehensible words: grammatical surprises. So he reads like that:

"Ap-app-les, app-l-les" (a pause during which he gets the meaning of the word) — and then promptly and fluently he reads the word "apples."

The same goes for a few lines of poetry:

"It-was-the-larks-that-taught-me a Po-lish mel-ody melo-dy (incredulous), melo-dy, melody" (muttering to himself) "what's a melo-dy" (and aloud) — "it was the larks that taught a Polish melody."

We fluent reading acrobats who from two letters can guess the word, and from two words can make out the whole sentence—we can't visualize the difficulties a child has to cope with nor the artifices he uses to make things easier for himself.

The other day, reading a story, he said "Franek" instead of "Felek" four times. I didn't correct him. When he finished reading, I asked him:

"What was that boy's name?"

"Franek."

"Perhaps it will be tomorrow, but not today." "Franck, I'm sure"

"And I'll bet you it's not Franek."

He takes the book:

"Fra-Fre-Felek."

"You see, just as well you didn't take the bet, isn't

"Sure."

You know someone named Franek?"

"Sure, I do."

And Felek?"

"Don't know one."

The same thing happened in arithmetic. Instead of "peaches" he said "pears" twice.

"Five pears," he announced the result.

Mot on your life!"

"And I say it is five."

"Five, but not pears."

"What, then?"

"Sec for yourself."

"Pea pear ... peaches."

"Mow you know. Perhaps you are a wizard or something—you can turn Felek into Franek and peaches into pears?"

He was so disarming in his surprise, in his exclamations -- what's come over me, how could I do such a thing? — that I couldn't help taking him in my arms and kissing him. (Absolutely unnecessary—am I never going to get out of that habit?)

He gets annoyed at any expression he can't understand. He is reading:

"A peddleress has nine apples. H four boys take two apples each, how many apples will she have left?" He mutters to himself:

Some for each, or something." (And aloud): "One apple."

"Two coins... Coins, I know that, but I've forgotten."

This statement seemingly illogical, is founded, all the same, on a sensible premise; if he does not know because he has forgotten, he may still be able to recall.

When we had gotten as far as having solved about twenty problems in arithmetic he suggested:

"I'll read it to myself first, and then I'll write what it comes to."

"Alright, and I'll nod my head if you get it right."

He is by no means the first to make such a suggestion. I haven't yet discovered

whether in this way a child seeks to break the monotony of the work or whether the reason goes deeper than that: the necessity of silence for a concentrated effort.

Evening

He said his prayers, pecked a kiss on my hand (harking back to home, of the family broken up by war—one of a hundred, a thousand, many thousands). I am writing. He lies quietly --his eyes wide open.

"Tell me, please, is it true that if you shave, hair won't grow again?"

He is afraid to make a direct reference to my bald head, so as not to offend me.

"It's not true, one shaves the chin and hair still grows."

"Some soldiers have beards reaching right down to their waist—like the Jews. Why?"

"It's a custom. On the contrary, Englishmen are clean shaven, even no moustaches."

"Is it true that there are a lot of Jews among Germans?"

"There are some among the Germans, there are Russian Jews and there are Jews who are Poles."

"You say 'Jewish Poles.' Are the Poles Jews?"

"No, the Poles are Catholics. But if anyone speaks Polish, desires the well-being of the Polish people, wishes them well, then he is also a Pole."

"My mum was Ruthenian and dad was Polish. And boys take after the father. Do you know where a place called Podgajce is? My dad comes from there."

"How old is your dad?"

"He was forty-two, and now he's forty-five."

"So now your father wouldn't know you, you've grown since."

"I don't even know if I would know my dad." "Haven't you a photograph?"

"Where could I get one from? And there are lots of soldiers very much like my dad."

Silence. The evening. An important part of the day for a child. Most often — reminiscences, frequently— quiet reflections and soft-whispered conversations. It's just like in the Orphanage or at summer camps.

"Are you writing a book?"

"Yes."

"Did you write my primer yourself?"

"Mo."

"You bought it then, did you?"

"Yes."

You must have paid half a rouble for it?" "Mo, only twenty-five copecks."

Silence again. I light a cigarette.

"Is it true that you can get poisoned with sulfur?" "Yes, you can, why do you ask?"

I don't understand what is behind the question. "'Cause they had matches, and when they were going on maneuvers..."

A reminiscence of some vaguely remembered story told by his father concerning the superiority of some sorts of matches -- something heard a long time back: when his father was still a bachelor and served in the army—there was some sulfur in the soup and the men were poisoned.

I didn't get the point. Stefan speaks dreamily, fades away — he has dropped off to sleep.

how anxious I was as a child to see my guardian angel. I pretended to be asleep and then would open my eyes suddenly. No wonder he was hiding. It was just the same in Saski Park: you were sure there was no guardian anywhere near, but as soon as you ran after your ball over the grass there he was, cautioning you from afar. I grieved over the fact that my angel was also called guardian.

### **Fifth day**

Duduk praises Stefan: he is hard working. When I came to the workshop he was just sawing at a plank. It was painful to see: the board was jumping all over the place, the blunt saw was getting no grip — he might easily injure his fingers. But I kept quiet. It would have been a mistake to tell him to be careful. All the time he hears:

"Don't go out barefoot." "Don't drink unboiled water." "Aren't you cold,

sure you haven't got a tummy ache?"

Precisely such things make "our" children self-centered and spoiled and stupefy them.

He returned from the workshop at six.

He does not want to go to Tarnopol on Sunday.

"What for? It's only a week, we must go there again? Is Mr. Walenty coming? How long shall we stay there?"

He did not want to write a letter to his brother. "I'll be seeing him anyway."

"And if he is not at home?"

"Well, let it be so."

"Well, and how would you start a letter?" "Praise the Lord."

"And then?"

"I don't know."

"Perhaps you should tell him that you were ill?" "Mo!"

I could hardly swallow back a sarcastic question: "How about telling him about the jam, cakes and sausage." Result -- a brief note: "I work in a carpenter's workshop, I like the work, the master teaches me how to write and do sums, you need not worry about me."

"How will you sign it?"

"Stefan Zagrodnik."

"Perhaps you should add: 'lots of kisses'?" No need for that?

"Why?"

He whispers:

"B'cause I feel shy."

I suggested:

"Would you like now to make your own neat copy or shall I write it out for you on a piece of paper for you to copy."

I handed him a sheet of note paper and an envelope. He tried twice—it didn't come out. A lot of paper spoiled. Alright, tomorrow he will copy it from my draft.

We have been doing arithmetic problems for an hour and a half without a break.



"Had enough?"

"Mo. Let's get to the bottom of the page."

Who knows whether a collection of arithmetic problems is not the best textbook to practice reading. Problems, puzzles, crossword puzzles or joke questions— the child not only must but also wants to understand. I am not sure: perhaps any splitting of attention is undesirable. Suffice it that during today's lesson, arithmetic problems have ousted and replaced reading.

"How many cigarettes do you smoke, must be fifty?"

"Mo, twenty."

"Smoking isn't good for you; a boy I know blew on a piece of paper, and it turned all yellow. H the cigarette has cotton at the end, that stops the smoke."

"Have you ever smoked?"

"Of course."

"In the institution?"

"Mo, when I was with my brother."

"Where did you get the cigarettes from?"

"They used to lie on the table or in the cupboard... Does it make you feel dizzy?"

"Certainly, I feel just a bit dizzy"

"It made me dizzy ... I don't want to get used to smoking."

A pause.

"You weren't kidding when you said, we would go riding when it gets warm?" (Tie's keen on it—he remembers the promise.)

"It would be better for us not to move about, to stay put."

"Oh, no, I thought of going to Tarnopol."

"Horses get scared of motorcars."

"So what, if they get a bit excited...?"

"And if your horse jumps the ditch?"

I told him a story about a horse which nearly rolled down a high hill near Lomza.

He gets into bed. I'm winding my watch.

"Is it true that there are watches that can be wound both ways?"

I show him that my watch, too, can be wound "both ways."

I start writing — putting my notes in order. "You know, I put a new pen in the penholder because the old one tore the paper."

"It got spoiled quickly because you had been writing with the pen right over the table; the point gets blunt on wood."

Too late, incidently, I realized the folly of my remark; I have observed many a time that remarks like that have more in them than meets the eye.

Silence.

"Why did you tear up so many sheets of paper?" I explain to him about jotting down notes quickly on the spot and about processing them.

For instance, I put down something about a patient: cough, high temperature... And then in spare time, I rewrite it properly.

"Mum used to cough, spit blood—the doctor came — he said nothing could be done. Mum went to the hospital until she died. (A sigh, then a yawn. The sigh is camouflage, usual when referring to the dead.)

### **Sixth day**

As soon as he had finished his morning tea, he ran out to the workshop. He put in only a brief appearance at lunch time—came back at six.

I have started a most interesting experiment: I keep my eye on the watch to see how long it takes him to read a piece aloud and I record how many mistakes he has made; I don't correct him while he is reading — afterward. He has read the piece twice, the first time it took him four minutes thirty-five seconds with eight mistakes, the second time—three minutes fifty-five seconds with only six mistakes.

There was trouble over the horse. We were playing checkers. In the institution — boys who were good players would not play with him. "Who would want to play with me when I'm no good?" All the same, he has acquired the mannerisms of an experienced player: before making a move, his fingers soar above the board to drop like a hawk on the opponent's pieces, then he makes sounds with his mouth, moves a piece with a casual

gesture, a flick of the fingernail, a scathing expression on his face and a grunt indicating contempt for his opponent. Bad manners even in a good player, the more so in a bungler whom I let off with a draw now and again just to encourage him.

So we go on playing. Suddenly:

"You go tomorrow by train, and I and Mr. Walenty will come on the horses."

"Don't be silly. Do you think the horses are for you to ride? Anyhow, ask the colonel."

"Will he give me one?"

"You work that out."

"Come on, your move."

He has been speaking in an irritated tone. He begins to cheat, determined to win at any cost — to get his own back.

"Eh, what sort of a move is that... Come on ... Wise going, eh?"

I pretend not to see, but I am playing carefully, to win in spite of him — to punish him.

"You're going to lose" he says.

"You'll lose because you're cheating" — I say, calmly but firmly.

If I let the child get the better of me, then an attitude of disdain is bound to creep in. One must fight back, work toward maintaining authority, by demonstration, without scolding of any kind.

He has not many pieces left now — I strike a serious blow: he has lost a crown.

"I don't know how to use the crowns" — he says, disconsolate.

"You don't play well even with the other pieces, but you'll learn."

When I wash my hands he pours water for me from a jug to rinse them, brings me the towel, and tells me to drink my tea—it will get cold.

Without a word, I have let him know that I am offended; he has apologized in a subtle way for what he felt toward me.

In addition to anger, there was also disrespect in that argument over the horse.

Where did it come from, what was the source of it? Perhaps in my words: "Do you want to know how to do sums — read — write?" Perhaps this makes him impatient. Children like a certain amount of coercion: it helps them to fight their own inner resistance, it spares them the intellectual effort of having to make a choice. A decision involves the pain of voluntary renunciation, with increased responsibility for the effect. A command is binding on a man only from without, a free choice—from within. If you let children have the last word, you are either foolish, and therefore don't know your own mind, or lazy, and therefore yourself unwilling.

Where does that lingering air of lack of respect come from? I give him the buns, while I eat black bread. Twice already he has urged me to have some buns, but then himself picked the better, crisp ones: no one has taught him the pretence of those little sacrifices arising from good manners, which are meant to manifest readiness for significant sacrifices.

The little occurrence, a mere nothing, that I have described—the trouble over the horse—is proof that the time for overcoming his bashfulness is over; now I can gradually proceed with his education. I am collecting material for a talk with him...

I examine his dirty shirt in the evening; of course — a louse.

"What was there?" (anxiety in his voice). "Louse."

"They never changed the sheets in the institution. The blankets were dirty."

"Never mind, I'm sure, it won't happen again. Why didn't they change the sheets in the institution?" "No idea, I suppose washing was too much trouble." The first chat about the institution.

They are not afraid of the sanitary office, but they sure are of the guard. No, the guard doesn't beat anyone, 'cause it's not allowed and the matron would be very angry. Only sometimes he kicks up a rumpus, guardlike, and waves his strap, but as for beating, he never beats.

And did you ever get it?"

"You bet."

So that's how it is: no beating, but they beat. And yet Stefan is right. They don't beat, not allowed, the guard kicks up a rumpus, probably threatens, and rarely, exceptionally, on the quiet, uses the strap.

I once used to laugh, at this apparent lack of logic. But I gave that up some three years ago when Lejbus said:

"I love driving in a boat."

Have you ever driven a boat?"

"Mo, never."

At most, an error in expression. Mo lack of logic: He is certain that it is very pleasant.

I was filled with unbounded gratitude to this lad. There is nothing special about him, nothing to attract attention, nothing stirring. An ordinary face, graceless stature, average mind, little imagination, absolute lack of tenderness — nothing that makes children adorable. But it is nature, its eternal laws, God, speaking through this unspectacular child just as through any scrubby bush growing by the roadside. Thank you, for being just as you are — just ordinary...

"My son" — I thought with tenderness.

How should I thank him?

"Look, Stefan, if you want to ask about anything, or have some trouble, or want something, speak up." "I don't like to be a nuisance."

I explain that he won't be.

"If you ask the impossible, I'll tell you straight, I'll explain. Take, for example, this business with the horses; they must draw wood, bread, the patients..."

"I'd like you to get me some buns."

"Alright, you shall have buns."

Today we have exhausted our store of food for the current rationing period.

### **Seventh day**

A few friends at Czekow's place — cards. Supper late. Walenty on duty in the dining room this evening. I left the company, in a rather bad mood, about midnight. Back at my place I switched on the light; Stefan not there. What the hell? Going out, I ran into Stefan by the door.

"Where have you been?"

"In the kitchen. Every now and again I went out and looked through the window, and you were still there. And suddenly, I look, and you're not there. I ran

fast to catch up with you."

Were you afraid?"

"What have I got to be afraid of?"

No, he was not afraid. He was waiting and looking out, and he ran to come home with me. I haven't seen any of my family for the past two years, but six months ago — a short letter, all creased, somehow got through the tight ring of bayonets, censors, spies. So I'm no longer alone.

We took the sledges to Tarnopol. Stefan is somewhat downcast. None of those childish remarks, the things which make us cast our minds back to things no longer noticed, and recall things that once we used to see very—very clearly.

Stefan was to go to church with Walenty and then to see his brother while Walenty went shopping. I was planning to go to the oculist said to be working in some military hospital. We were to meet in the institution. lie has changed the plans several times on our way: first, he would go to the institution, he said; no, first to his brother; no, he wanted to go with Walenty.

In the institution, he was summoned by the matron; he stood in front of her feeling a sort of empty colorlessness; he answered questions in a low, apathetic voice. Only after we left, I realized why he was so reluctant to go to Tarnopol, why he was so downcast on the way, why he said quickly: "Let's go" when I left the matron's office.

Stefan was afraid I would leave him there. We have to buy a kettle.

"I'll go with Mr. Walenty, I know where to buy it." I take out my purse.

"Oh, Walek (not Mr. Walenty) will get ten rubles, and we'll buy some cookies..."

The tone of his voice, challenging, is meant to show: "I wasn't afraid at all, I knew, you wouldn't leave me there ..."

lie is strangely unwilling to talk about his brother. I don't know why. The lad does not want me to meet him: what is at the back of it?

He is reading aloud -- has finished.

"Well, how many mistakes did I make?"

"Guess."

"Five."

"No, only four."

"That's halt what it was the first time."

He has misspelled a word and immediately corrected himself.

"Are you checking the time?"

He has read a verse in twenty five seconds, first time, in fifteen, the second time, and fifteen again, the third:

"Could you read it any faster?"

He tries to read faster.

"A vry, vry, a very old lady ..."

He turns the page quickly to save time.

Yesterday, he read a verse "The Vistula" three times, today — four times; the result is most interesting:

Yesterday: 20 seconds, 15 seconds, 11 seconds. Today: 11 seconds, 10 seconds, 7 seconds, 6 seconds. A verse "The Little Orphan":

Yesterday: 20 seconds, 15 seconds, 15 seconds. Today: 15 seconds, 12 seconds, 10 seconds.

The proficiency attained at yesterday's third reading has been maintained in full.

I have recorded it in the form of a fraction: numerator — number of seconds, denominator—number of mistakes. Thus  $24"/3 =$  twenty four seconds, three mistakes. Setting out from that, I estimate the time and quality of the work— thus I can dispense with making notes concerning the reading practice.

When reading, he has gotten tied up with the word "crooning" — he has wasted a lot of time — and given Up:

"Eh, it's going to be too long."

Walenty remarks:

"Just like a horse, it gets stuck and can't get going." I have let Stefan make a fresh start.

### **Eighth day**

I wrote yesterday: the remarks of children compel us to see things which already pass us by. Here are a few examples:

"Look, there is a badge on the tea packet." (When he puts in the sugar, air

bubbles move up to the surface.)

"How many lumps of sugar did you put in?" "One."

"Look, there are two now."

(The beaker is made of cut glass...)

"What is poppy seed made of?"

"It grows."

"And why is it black?"

I: "Because it's ripe."

"Is it true that it's got such tiny partitions inside, and there is a little bit of seed in between each wall?" I: "Hm, yes."

"Can you get enough poppy seed for a plateful from one garden?"

His conception of a garden covers four, perhaps five, ideas — mine a hundred, even a thousand. It is obvious, and yet it was his question which launched my mind on the problem for the first time. The roots of many seemingly illogical questions asked by children are to be found here. Why we find it so difficult to find a common language with children is that, though they use the same words as we do, they fill them with an entirely different content. "Garden, father, death" my words are not his "garden, father, death."

A father, a surgeon produces at home a bullet, he has removed from a patient's body:

"Dad, will you be killed with a bullet like that?" —asks his eight-year-old daughter.

Neither can town and country understand each other, the same goes for the master and the slave, the well-fed and the hungry, the young and the old, and perhaps—man and woman. We only pretend to understand each other.

Stefan had watched indifferently for a whole week as all other children of his age in the neighborhood were tobogganing down the hills and any sort of slope. What a temptation: and he working in the carpenter's shop. Still up to lunch-time he made beds for patients, with Duduk; in the evening—he came back with a toboggan.

"I'll only go down twice."

"Only twice, and not three times?" I sounded incredulous.

He smiled and was off, was away a long time. The room seemed empty and it was



very quiet. It is a mystery to me why Walenty, who keeps grumbling about all the trouble no good to come of it, has gone out twice to call him back: perhaps my evening lessons with Stefan have become a part of his routine, too.

Stefan came back, sat down — waiting.

"Is the toboggan O.K.?"

"It's not yet run in."

I asked no leading question, nothing to betray how with all my soul I side with him, how completely I have forgiven him for being late — perhaps not so much him as the flushed face, the breathlessness and the cheerful, hearty excitement. He understood and wanted to take advantage of it: he reached for the checkers with a questioning glance.

"Mo, my son."

Without a word of protest—on the contrary, with some satisfaction—he reached for the book. I had a feeling that if I had yielded he would have resented it.

"But without the watch" — he said quickly. "Why?"

"'Cause with the watch it's like someone standing over you, like a slave driver."

He started reading. He never read like that before. He was simply inspired. I was astounded — I couldn't believe my own ears. He didn't read but glided over the book as if on the toboggan, negotiating obstacles with a determination that seemed to be enhanced a hundredfold. He had transferred in full the hazard of the sport to learning. Now I am sure that it would be absurd to correct his mistakes in reading, he does not see me any more and should not see me—all on his own with his all conquering determination.

I reached for the pen—and started making notes.

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Errors arising from the desire to master the text, to understand its content:

He reads the children was going, was talking." He reads: "bread is baked" instead of "made." He reads: "he gave the sign" instead of "to give the sign." He reads: "Hanusia" instead of "Anusia" (compare: "Felek" and "Franek").

He reads: "The doctor beckoned to grandma to take those (children) away" instead of "take them away ..."

The struggle for content: "In a gib book" — not "in a big boot" "When the teacher

gets verses" -- oh, no — "when he teaches verses."

Errors due to a confusing thought.

Text: "The children knelt down around granny ... weeping, they prayed aloud: 'Oh Lord, oh Lord, spare our mummy. Holy Virgin Mary, intercede with us for our mother! Make her well.' Then granny knelt the children to bed (should be: laid to bed ...)." Text: "At this time of the day, mother used to be busy cooking the dinner. The whole family would gather at the table. Sitting at the head of the table were grandpa and grandma Joan, both bowed with age. Grandpa was oncely" (should be: once ...).

The peculiarities of written language: we say — fife, ruff, the troff, rite—why do we write: knife, rough, the trough, right?

Even though a child does not say so explicitly, one can surmise from his voice, the look on the face, a pause in reading, or the way in which he accents a strange combination of letters, that he is puzzled, and occasionally irritated ...

If we refrain from interfering in the child's reading effort with constant corrections and explanations, we can make extremely interesting observations:

Stefan is reading: "ba-bak-baking," I correct him —"bathing." He says "baking" again and goes on reading, he hasn't heard what I said, intent upon his work, engulfed in the pains of reading ...

They do not like to be interrupted because it throws them off. Stefan reads: "against the cornice." He has sensed that I am about to explain what the word means, because to forestall me he says quickly: "I know what cornice means" and goes on reading

Difficulties: combination of words, incomprehensible words, peculiarities of written language, unfamiliar grammatical forms.

Stefan reads: "he gave the boys," and then mutters to himself: "them boys," and then again reads aloud: "the boys some cherries." When he has finished reading, I want to check whether he understands what he has just read and I ask him:

"What was it all about?"

"About a careless boy."

An echo of a passing thought concerning a new grammatical form: he probably wanted to say: it was about a boy— but he vaguely remembered that it was a bit different in the book from what it seemed to him that it should

be ...

How extremely interesting it is that precisely today, after tobogganing, he felt the constraining pressure of the watch. I did not take notice of that at first.

I am standing by the stove and thinking of today's lesson. Suddenly Stefan who is already in bed says: "You promised me something."

"What was it?"

"A fairy tale."

It is the first time he has asked of his own volition for a story.

"Should I tell you a new one?"

"No, I want the one about Aladdin But sit down." "Where do you want me to sit?"

"Here, closer — on the chair."

"What for?"

"Oh, tell it sitting by the stove if you like."

There seems to be nothing to it, but in fact there is a great deal.

Of the three fairy tales, "Cinderella," "Puss in boots" and "Aladdin" — he has chosen the one closest to him: a wizard comes to a poor boy and changes his fortunes by means of a wonderful lamp. Here, an unknown doctor (officer) suddenly appears and takes him away from the institution. In the tale, slaves carry delicious dishes on golden plates, here — Walenty brings the buns.

"But do sit down" — Stefan whispers intimately. That explains why children are serious and collected when listening to a story, they want to be near the teller: I should sit by his side. My question: "Where — what for" -- annoys him. A feeling of embarrassment won't let him confide in me. It is only the result of our depriving a child that makes him shamelessly declare: "I like you so much, I want to be near you, I feel so lonely, you're so good to me." Stefan was too shy to end the letter to his brother with: "Lots of kisses, Your loving ..."

Stefan says to me at breakfast:

"Instead of eating the buns yourself, you give them to me."

My answer is: "hm, hm" and he says no more.

After the fairy tale, I explain to him that the clock should not bother him while he is reading.

"Supposing it took you three minutes to read the first time, and five seconds short of three minutes the second time — it's quite alright either way. Further: supposing it did take you longer to read today than it did yesterday, then think why that is: either you didn't sleep well last night, or you got more tired in the workshop, or the toboggan came into the picture."

"And today, did I read badly?"

"What do you think?"

"Don't know." (After a moment of hesitation.) "It seems to me, it was O.K."

"Yes, you read quite well today..."

Now for a change my right eye has become painful, it is watering. I can hardly write — I must rest. A pity about the notes—such an inexhaustible treasure.

### Ninth day

Stefan has the itch. He had it twice in the institution — the first time he was under treatment for three weeks, and the second time for six weeks. No wonder he was afraid to tell me about it, trying childlike to put off the dreaded moment. Only now do I realize why he inquired several times whether and when there would be a vapor bath. I took no notice of these questions — a mistake. I ought to have been struck by the extraordinary concern of a war destitute child for personal hygiene. Having failed to pay any attention to it I probably explained the whole thing to myself as arising from the boy's desire to see and try out a strange kind of bath (he has heard of a vapor bath made for the patients).

The discovery has been a shock to Walenty — what are we to do with the linen and meals?

"I've never had such a thing," the boy says reproachfully, believing, for some incomprehensible reason, that now he is sure to be infected.

A short lecture on the itch, its etiology, contagiousness and methods of cure—within three days.

"Go to the workshop now, my son, and I'll put some ointment on at lunch time."

Yes, a tender word, a kiss, was absolutely essential at this moment.

"I never had pimples at home" he whispers.

Before going to the workshop, goes tobogganing for a long time. When I enter the workshop, he throws an anxious glance at me: might I not tell Duduk about him?

What a nuisance, how upsetting, is all this. Just today, I wanted to have a serious talk with him — I have already gathered enough material: he has torn out a page from his copybook, taken a cannon shell to the workshop without asking my permission, made a toboggan for himself not being sure whether I would agree; he has told lies — he did not want me to see his brother and therefore must be hiding something from me; he said that there was no beating in the institution and only afterward admitted that he used to get it with a strap now and then. I wanted him to know that I was satisfied with him but that there were some little matters for us to talk about, just by the way, because he ought to know that my silence does not mean that I did not notice them. Now I must add this matter of the itch which he has tried to hide but I'll do it all in a few days when his skin and my eyes are better.

It is extremely important to admonish a child wholesale though this should be done on rare occasions, in the form of a friendly chat. We fear as a rule that the child will forget but it is not so, he remembers everything very well — it is we who are rather apt to forget and thus we prefer to settle the matter there and then—in other words, at the wrong time — brutally.

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He has been reading rather badly this evening. Yesterday — twenty seven lines in six and a half minutes; today—sixteen lines in seven minutes.

I ask him to tell me what he has just been reading about. Recently, he has been telling me, briefly, in his own words, the story read starting in the usual childish manner from: "Well, it was like this ..." Today, for no apparent reason, after narrating the first story, he remarked:

"Not good—was it?"

So he has decided to tell the second story using the words of the book—as at school. He immediately falls into that dreadful, monotonous, careless and slavish tone of a classroom answer — peeping into the book for random clauses and getting all mixed up.

He plays checkers much better now. The mannerisms have gone—he plays with

care and seriously. I can understand that: formerly he tended to mimic an experienced player, some authority at the game; now he has already begun to think for himself.

I try to help him by calling attention to the errors he makes in the games.

"Please, don't talk. When you talk, I stop taking things seriously."

To correct every mistake in reading or writing —does it not produce the same effect: that the pupil loses interest in his work?

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The table is shaky. He has spilled some tea over it. He marks out with his finger a course for the liquid to the table's edge and the tea runs down.

"Oh, look how I am directing the tea."

"Hm. Hm."

"It runs down."

Undoubtedly, a child is endowed with a quality which I should call a grammatical (orthographical) conscience. I have observed on many occasions how a child, having listened intently to a clause he has constructed ungrammatically, changes it, without knowing how to put it right. Is it not possible that systematic instruction kills that conscience? Is it not that the work is made rather more difficult for the child by our incomprehensible, beyond his ken, explanation?

The child's mind — a forest in which the tops of trees gently sway, the branches mingle, and the shivering leaves touch. Sometimes a tree contacts its neighbor with a delicate touch and through that neighbor receives the vibration of a hundred or a thousand trees — of the whole forest. Whenever any one of us says "right — wrong — pay attention — do it again" that is like a gust of wind which plays havoc with the child. I remember how once I was chasing a minute seed of bitter lettuce as it traveled through the air, suspended on its white crest. I followed it for a long time: it was soaring lightly from one blade of grass to another stopping here and there for longer and briefer moments, until finally it was entrapped into where it would start germinating. Man's thought! — we know nothing of your guiding laws—we thirst—we are ignorant—the evil spirit of humanity is the beneficiary.

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Instead of "hungry" he reads "angry."

In the arithmetic problem, he is annoyed at the word "received."

"Received means really he got. (To himself.) Must be - three ... He received six plums..."

He is reading aloud: "Distrustfully (reads it once more carefully) — distrustfully (for the third time— now resigned) distrustfully ..."

And goes on reading ...

He is reading: "Boor ... boor ... Perhaps it's poor? ... Mo, it's book here ..."

He is puzzled by the grammar "keep quiet, child."

Having read and made sure that he has got it right, he ponders over it.

Is the hand of your watch made of gold?"

"Mo, it's an ordinary one."

"'Cause there are gold ones."

"Have you seen one?"

"Yes, Miss Lonia had it."

On another occasion:

"You should buy yourself a nail file."

"What for?"

"One like Miss Lonia had."

Evidently he is bewildered by the fact that la man, an officer and his present guardian fall short of Miss Lonia, no gold hand to my watch and no nail file.

Before he goes to bed, I put ointment on his skin. "In three days it will be over?" he asks diffidently. "Why didn't you tell me about it?"

"I was ashamed" (subdued voice).

"What of? That you are unwell?"

"I never had any pimples at home" — he gives an evasive answer: he is unwilling to admit that in the institution they make fun of anyone having

the itch, and abhor it.

"You've got your hands smeared."

"It will wash off."

From his bed he asks me:

"I wasn't tobogganing for long, was I?"

Confronted with my kidness, he feels ill at ease at having done wrong. The question, apparently asked neither here nor there, I explain by his thinking thus: "He doesn't get angry with me whatever I do. Why doesn't he get angry — perhaps he doesn't know? And I was tobogganing. But he wants me to study. I was tobogganing for a long time, or perhaps it wasn't as long as all that?"

### Tenth day

An argument and a reconciliation.

Walenty is on duty today. I am pouring out tea for Stefan.

"Why only half the glass?"

"So that you can't spill it on the table."

"I'm going to fill it up."

I keep silent. He adds tea to the glass, puts it down, and while trying to squeeze between the bench and the table, knocks the table and spills some tea on it. He blushes. He goes out — comes back with a rag.

I say in a calm but firm voice:

"Now see here, Stefan, don't take any of Mr. Walenty's things because he doesn't like it."

"I only wanted to wipe it."

"How do you know that it is a rag and not a dish cloth?"

Confounded, he takes the rag back. I lift the table on one side and wipe off the rest with blotting paper. Stefan keeps silent; after some time he asks tentatively — putting out a feeler:

"What do the letters H.S. on the glass (the oil lamp) stand for?"

"Probably they are the initials of the maker."



He asks a number of questions — and at the back of all of them is:

"A chat. That matter is forgotten. Who would remember such a nothing?"  
Yet he remembered. In the evening:

"I'll pour the tea -- O.K.?"

"O.K."

He pours a glassful for me and just a little more than half a glass for himself.

"Would you hold it please," he says squeezing through to sit down at the table.  
"I didn't spill it this time."

If not for the trouble with my eyes, I would have described all that more minutely — I've left out a number of details. In the morning, after breakfast, he says "thank you" — passes me the towel. He apologizes not in so many words but by deeds.

A child keeps himself constantly under observation and analyzes his own actions but we, being incapable of getting behind his casual remarks, fail to notice this effort. We should like the child to confide in us --- all his thoughts and feelings. Being ourselves not particularly keen on confiding, we do not want to understand, or cannot, that the child is even more shy and touchy, more sensitive to a brutal invasion of the privacy of his spiritual vacillations.

"I didn't say the prayer this morning," Stefan says. "Why?"

"I forgot." (A pause.) "When I wash in the morning, I pray immediately afterward, and when one doesn't wash, one forgets about praying."

He has not been washing because of the itch.

During the showdown with him I intend to raise the question of the toboggan. Probably, the snow will soon be gone. A good thing I have not admonished him on this score. Here is the secret of his neglect of duty:

"I was so afraid that the boss in the workshop would smell the ointment. When I saw him coming my way, off I scrambled to the other end of the workshop. And in the morning, I went tobogganing to get 'aired.' "

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Two habits derived from the institution:

Stefan always laughs quietly and covers his mouth. "Why don't you laugh aloud?"

"'Cause its not nice, matron says so."

"Perhaps that was because there were a lot of children and they would make too much noise..."

The second habit: he always leaves a tiny piece of the bun and some tea at the bottom of his glass. There must be a reason for it.

"Tell me, Stefan, why do you always leave some?" "But I eat it all."

"Look, my son, if you don't want to tell me, you needn't. Sometimes, one doesn't want to confide (the right to a secret). But you do leave it."

"You see, they say that if you eat to the last bit, it looks as if you haven't had anything to eat for a year."

I could see that he found it difficult to say even that much, and I have stopped insisting. I hurt him unintentionally. I also would feel hurt if I did something to show that I knew good manners, and suddenly found out that it was not a sign of good breeding at all.

Mimicry.

"Sir, I'd like to write the capital 'K' like you do."

Many children in the Orphanage used to follow my way of writing letters. The letters as used by grownups are apparently better, more valuable. I remember, how long it took me to learn to write a capital "W" in the way my father did when addressing envelopes. At school I felt sure that the teacher would be impressed; but instead I was brushed aside.

"When you are a father, you can write as you please."

Why? What has she against it? What harm will it do? — I was surprised and hurt ...

Today, the assistant surgeon came in with some papers during dictation. Stefan watched me carefully as I was writing. I'm sure he did, because as soon as the assistant surgeon left, he began to write so fast as to be quite illegible.

As an instructor I am presented with three lines of culpable negligence in writing, as an educationist — I experience a subtle feeling of rebellion against my own imperfection: "I'd like to write like you do, I want to be like you".

Well — let's try and see.

"Look, my boy, what you have scribbled here. Blame. drum... trum... — Why

did those three lines come out so badly?"

"Don't know" (embarrassed smile).

"Perhaps you were tired?"

"No, I wasn't."

He does not want to lie but cannot tell the truth.

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We have been checking together all the progress he has made in reading. Since we are now reading a book printed in smaller type, we have had to count the letters.

"Previously there were thirty-seven lines, each of seventeen letters—that makes six hundred and twenty nine letters. You used to read it through in two hundred and ten seconds. And here we have sixty-five lines, each of twenty-seven letters, and you've read them in six and a half minutes. So you can read nearly five letters per second."

He is not impressed, though he watched my calculations with keen interest.

Before going to sleep:

"Should I kiss you goodnight?" "Why, am I a saint?"

"Do you think, only ..."

"Or a priest—or what?"

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When reading, I like to find words running easily together: "She called out, a happy woman, she lit the lamp." I get annoyed with: "Exasperating experiences ..."

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An easy arithmetic problem; he has already solved the more difficult one of the two - - and now he is confused — makes mistakes. What the ...?

"Please, look —a little pimple."

"Where?"

"Here," he points to his neck. "'Is it the itch?"

"No, it isn't. You'll have a bath in the morning and you'll be alright."

And now the arithmetic proceeds smoothly.

### Eleventh day

When I put on the spectacles with blue lenses, Stefan asks me in a hushed voice:

"Does it hurt much?"

A hushed voice and a smile —I owe it to Stefan that I have paid attention to this — I would never have noticed it in the boarding school.

"I'm well and you're ill," he said in the evening.

That is an honest way of showing compassion. We adults say it more diplomatically—but feel less. I'm grateful to him for saying that.

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I have no idea why he said:

"I never think of my brother, now."

"A pity, you should think of your father and your brother."

This wicked war.

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He wept when I was being taken to the hospital. I assume that this was a reminder of the family ... when someone goes to the hospital, dies.

He visited me with Walenty in the hospital. "Tell me, please, are those officers ill too?"

"Yes."

"Eyes?"

"No, various complaints."

"And are they playing cards for money?"