

## One Parent Family

There are large numbers of children who have only one parent. Statistics are available of approximate numbers, but from the point of view of the teacher, these are not important. Teachers deal with individual children, and it is not necessary for them to know how many thousands of children in the country have only one parent, the fact that there may be one or two in their class is enough for the subject to be important. The tendency at the present time is to deal with large categories of people, to discuss and write about them, and only large categories are important. There is a further tendency in for all children to be treated alike, and this is called "equal opportunity", but, as all teachers know, children are different individuals. A method that suits one child will not suit another. Every teacher knows that children respond differently and need a different approach according to their abilities, type, talents etc.; one needs firm discipline, another needs to be encouraged to let go; some learn slowly, others quickly, some can learn on their own, others need all given to them and so on. In addition to such innate variations, there are external differences occasioned by their home circumstances, or the events in their lives such as illness. No teacher expects as high a standard from a child whose parents pay little attention to him, the teacher must give more to that child. No teacher expects a child after a prolonged illness to be able to work as well or to be of as high a standard as a healthy child. In a class there are children who need more help, attention and understanding than others. This can be given without anyone feeling that it is favouritism; children understand these things very well.

Children who have only one parent need more help from outsiders than is generally realised. Teachers can help these children a great deal.

A child may have only one parent for the following reasons:

1. Through death.
2. Through desertion.
3. Through separation or divorce.
4. Mother never having married.

1. Death of a parent

If properly handled, children can probably adjust to losing a parent by death more easily than to the next two. Death is a real and natural happening, which can be understood and accented. It is a terrible disaster, it is final and cannot be altered and it happens in time to everyone. Very young children cannot, of course really understand, but they can realise that father or mother will not come back. According to Sylvia Anthony, the ages of seven to eight seem to be the critical ages, after that, death, as understood by adults, begins to be appreciated; by the age of twelve, the process is complete. Before seven the child has only a limited understanding of death.

When a parent dies, it is essential that the child be told of the death. This may seem obvious but it sometimes happens that the fact of death is

sometimes kept from the child. The child suspects something, or may have been told by another child yet feels he cannot talk about it. As can be imagined this can lead to difficult behaviour.

Three examples will give some idea of how absurd some families can be:

A girl of 6 lost her mother. Father and the relatives decided not to tell her but maintained that her mother was still in hospital. The girl suspected something and became withdrawn and difficult. She was referred to the clinic where the father and relations were advised to tell her the truth. They did this and the whole family were relieved. Now the death could be talked of freely and there were no more difficulties with the girl.

A boy was in a foster home and was so aggressive that he was referred to the clinic. It was soon discovered he had lost his mother at a very early age and had then lived with his father. The boy went into hospital for a minor operation. While he was in, his father died. No one told him, he was just taken from hospital and put into a foster home. When he came to the clinic, he at once began to play with ambulances, but would say nothing, he was very depressed. The therapist then told him the truth and his whole demeanour changed and he was able to come to terms with his changed life very quickly.

An Irish girl of twelve had been very ill in hospital, and during this time her mother died. She was told that her mother had gone to England. The thought that her mother had deserted her was a very traumatic experience, and when she finally knew the truth she was faced with the fact that trusted adults had lied to her. She ran off to live with her married sister in England, but she became impossible to live with and delinquent; the clinic was unable to help her.

If a child has lost a parent, therefore, the teacher should make sure that he has been told, if he has not, then the teacher must see that he is told. The distressed relatives will generally take this advice with relief.

The danger at the present time is that the whole question of death, that is normal death as opposed to murder and motor accidents, tends to be hushed up, even if the child has been told. It is treated as if they were a dirty subject, which must not be mentioned, instead of something which must be talked about, mourned over openly and finally accepted and adjusted to. The child already feels different from others, and to make the whole subject untouchable makes him feel even more isolated.

A teacher should take the first opportunity to talk to the child quietly, sympathise, accept any sign of grief and allow it to take its course, and perhaps introduce him to another child who has suffered a similar loss. When the subject is mentioned the child may react with tears. This is a good and normal reaction, allow him to cry, it will help him to mourn and come to terms with his loss. A child who cannot cry will find it much more difficult to recover from the shock. On the other hand, the child may react with embarrassment

but nevertheless he will have been helped and will feel less embarrassed in the future. A young adult, whose father died when he was seven year old, remembers what a relief it was when his teacher talked to him about the death.

One of the ways a small child tries to understand and to come to terms with death is to play at funerals, deathbed scenes, illness and so on. This should be allowed and through this play an understanding adult can help him. This is not macabre, it is a reality, which he has to face and understand. We tend to insulate children from realities, which are painful, children do not want this, they want to know, understand and experience.

In the last century this mistake was not made. Death was a much more familiar experience, as any one can realise by remains tombstones in village churchyards. Parents, especially mothers, died young; children also died, often few in a large family survived. In children's books of the time, deathbed scenes were common. The fact of death was known and not hidden away.

About twenty years ago there was an interesting French film called "Les Jeux Interdits", which dealt with this subject. It was about a little girl of 4 who lost both her parents in a bombing raid. She was taken in by a peasant who had a son of about 12. This boy was very understanding. The little girl began collecting dead insects and birds, together she and the boy buried them and marked the graves with sticks and flowers. In this way the little girl tried to understand. Nobody knew until the little girl insisted on robbing the churchyard to embellish her graves, then the storm descended.

It is right that the family should grieve for a time but if a child's grief is prolonged and shows no sign or relief, then help should be sought from a Child Guidance Clinic. Many factors may be at work to cause the depression and if it is not dealt with can continue through life. Feelings of guilt regarding the death are the most common cause. The child may have had angry or hostile feelings towards the parent and he may fear he has caused the death, especially if he has shouted, "I wish you were dead". This kind of feeling needs special help, which cannot be given by teachers. One very intelligent boy of 8 whose father had died when he was 4, was sure he had caused the death as he had given his father something to drink not long before, this had been bad for him and had led to his death.

Death of father or Mother. When a mother dies the bottom falls out of the child's world. Father is grief stricken and bewildered, routine is disrupted and there is no one to go to for comfort. As a rule relatives will gather and take over for the time being. Father may decide to keep the children with the help of a sister or a housekeeper and often he will marry again with all the problems attached to that, however it is very likely that he will put the children into care, and this will be dealt with in another chapter.

If father does decide to keep the children probably some of the children will be older and the older daughter tends to become the mother of the family and too much of a buds burden may be out upon her. Often this burden is

thrust on the girl to the detriment of her own development. That she should want to take some responsibility is good, but too much is had. Here the teacher can help by discussing the problem with the father and the girl, by feeling that the girl has some life of her own outside the family. The teacher can point out that it is to everyone's advantage that the girl can develop herself and not become a beast of burden.

Sometimes the father idealises his lost wife, can decide that his small daughter possesses all her mother's angelic qualities and treats her as an ideal fairy child. The daughter tries to live up to this ideal, which is quite unreal. She has therefore, to suppress all her natural feelings, and in doing so she uses a great deal of energy. This may result in poor schoolwork and inability to make friends, she will probably be pale and quiet, too sweet, and frequently not very well. It might be possible to help such a girl by several talks with father pointing out that he is strangling his daughter's real nature, but it is more likely that expert help will be required to release the girl from the spell cast upon her.

Death of father. In this case the family generally becomes a one parent family as the widow nearly always keeps her children with her. The widow gets much sympathy and help at the time of death, but as time goes on help tends to diminish. She is left with a widow's pension, circumstances will change, finance will be difficult, the feeling of security will go, she may have to go out to work. The mother may become very lonely and depressed and cannot help the children as she ought. She may cling to them and give them the burden of supporting her. If the widow comes to the school, she needs all the sympathy possible and should be made to feel she is doing a difficult job as well as she can. There is a club called the widow's Cruse, to which she might be introduced. There she can meet others with the same problems, feel she is not alone, and get help and support. The teacher can help by making sure the mother knows the sources of help she can apply to in the way of financial benefits.

Perhaps the boy needs more help than the girl in this situation. The boy loses his masculine model. The small boy who is beginning to copy father and look up to him in between being cross with him, loses his male model. The older boy misses his father's masculine firmness and discipline, which helps him to grow into a firm man. A boy without a father needs a substitute. This can be to some extent supplied by uncles or good friends of the family, but often such substitutes are missing and great difficulties can occur. Sometimes a mother makes one of her boys into a substitute for her husband pouring out all her feelings on to him and clinging, thus making a mother-attached boy. Such a boy needs help.

Often the eldest boy is told he is now head of the family and an unnatural burden put upon him.

A teacher who is aware of these difficulties can help by discussion with the mother and by inducing the boy to join in activities outside the home.

Again, the mother will need more help than usual in choosing a career for her son, or both may need help in seeing that an extra year or so at school will be more beneficial in the long run than getting a job as soon as he is old enough.

It is necessary also to consider the fact that the death of a parent may be a relief to everyone. Here the child will need help not to feel too guilty. If a teacher knows this, great show of grief must not be expected and the death discussed in a more matter of fact way, the teacher's attitude conveying that she knows it must be a relief.

Special Help. Teachers should realise that sometimes a bereaved child needs special help, which the teacher cannot give. These children should be referred to a Child Guidance clinic as soon as possible. Pointers to the need for such help are:

1. Prolonged depression and grief.
2. Withdrawn and inhibited behaviour following death.
3. Violent and hostile behaviour, which is alien to that child
4. Failure in school work where before work had been good.

2. Desertion by a parent.

Either father or mother leaves the family, probably it is more usual for the father to desert. Often this desertion is sudden and is an experience as traumatic as death, but is much more difficult for the child to adjust to. There may have been quarrels or threats of desertion for some time beforehand, but not always. Sometimes the deserting parent comes and goes several times before finally leaving. Sometimes the deserting parent returns some time later, then the family settles down.

Above all a child needs love and security that whatever he does or says will make no difference to his continuing love and support from both parents. If a parent deserts, he has to face the fact that either mother or father does not love him and does not care for him; can he be sure of the other parent? He feels insecure, anxious and unwanted; can he now be sure of anyone? This feeling of insecurity can spread to outside the family and he will find it difficult to trust friends, so that ordinary quarrels will loom as great disasters, and he will be apt to turn away from close relationships with anyone.

Unlike in the case of death, when the dead parent is often idealised, the deserting parent is generally thought of as bad by the remaining parent. Unfortunately the child is often told this many times. When the mother (or father) is angry with the child, she may say, "you are just like your father (or mother) you will come to no good." If the child loved the deserting parent, this makes it even worse; he will turn against the remaining parent, leading to feelings of bitterness and hate, both destructive feelings, and there is no one he can turn to with his troubles.

Again any difficulties the child has he can put down to the desertion, if this had not happened all would have been well, but now it is no use, he feels he cannot manage and gives up trying, self-pity takes over.

The deserting parent may have always been violent and indifferent to the child, in which case the desertion is a relief all round, but the child is left with the feeling of missing out on something. If the child is young he will often form the dangerous concept that all men, or all women are horrible creatures. It must be remembered that to a small child, his experience is all he really knows and he is apt to think his experience is universal, even if later he knows this is not true, the underlying assumption remains. This result is that a child of the same sex as the deserting parent will wish he was of the opposite sex and will try as like the opposite sex as possible. If the child is of the opposite sex to the deserting parent, then later, marriage becomes a difficulty. The underlying assumption colours his outlook and expectations.

If the mother deserts, the child will most probably be put into care. If the father deserts, the mother will probably keep the child, but will be beset with difficulties. Not only will the mother have no one to help and support her with the child, but also economic difficulties will be great. It may be impossible to trace the father, or to get any money from him. Even if money from the father is forthcoming, it will be barely sufficient.

By understanding these difficulties, people outside the family can help in many ways. The main way they can help is by seeing that the family is not isolated, by inviting the child to their houses, by being ready to help the mother with advice and friendship, by practical help with some household task that she cannot manage and so on.

The child himself feels different from his fellows and therefore inferior. Children hate being different; they must wear the same clothes as other children, do the same things and so on, as everyone knows. Not only does he feel inferior, but he cannot take for granted what other children can, that there is always a rather to help in various ways, to take you out and give you pocket money and so on.

In addition, unfortunately, the outside world too often condemns not only the deserting parent but also the deserted parent and the child. How often does one hear the remark that he or she has bad blood in him or her. The child has to race whispers and nudges from neighbours, to face, perhaps, pity. Other children taunt him with the fact that his father left him. If the child is naughty, difficult or does some delinquent act, the outside world is apt to say; "what else can you expect from a child with such a parent, bad blood will out". Teachers can be included here, when they should understand and help.

The child will be apt to accept such criticism and give up in despair; he will feel he is born bad and nothing can be done about it. One child will react to this by being as he is expected to be; he will hit out, be difficult in school and may become delinquent. Another child will become depressed, feel he is no good, school work will deteriorate: he will become solitary in the

playground and in class will hardly be noticed, in other words, he will react by trying to sink into the ground and will apologise for himself all his life.

Teachers can help enormously by understanding the situation. The teacher's task is to make the child feel he is a person in his own right and not just an offshoot of his parents. Because the parent is condemned it does not mean that he is condemned, there is no need for him to be like his parent. His good qualities should be stressed and his bad qualities played down as far as possible. Not expecting the child to be bad is help in itself. The child can be given helpful tasks that make him feel he is of some use. He can be encouraged to join clubs or other outside activities.

A great deal can be done also by supporting the mother when she comes to school, by letting her realise she has a very difficult task, discussing any problems she may wish to bring and making sure she knows what financial help she is entitled to or can receive.

### 3. Separation and divorce.

This is a potent source of distress and conflict. The separation often takes place after years of unhappiness, quarrels, and recriminations between the parents. The children will have often witnessed terrible scenes, sometimes with physical violence. If the parents manage to rear their differences away from the children by not quarrelling in front of them and so on, the child will still know and sense the atmosphere. For some time the child will have lived in an unstable atmosphere and will have feared a separation and dreaded coming home in case the worst had happened. He will already be in a state of stress and conflict before the separation takes place. This will occupy his thoughts to the detriment of all the learning and experimenting he needs to do and for which he needs a stable home that he can take for granted.

When a separation takes place, the child usually stays with the mother. Often, though not always, the separation is legal and the court makes financial arrangements whereby the father must contribute to the upkeep of the family and pay a weekly sum to the court. Of course the standard of living of the mother and child will be lowered. The mother will have to fetch her allowance every week from the court. Some weeks she may find that there is nothing for her. This adds considerably to the mother's burdens. The child will often come home to a tired, lonely, insecure mother, who cannot support the child as she should, as she needs to support herself.

In addition to this unhappiness and insecurity the child is often faced with divided loyalties. He may love both parents or he may prefer the one with whom he does not live. What is he to do? He will certainly be extremely unhappy. As a rule the father has access to the child and may see him weekly or monthly. The father will take the child out and will give him a good time. The discipline and management of the child falls on the mother, who will not have money for treats and extras. During arguments and fits of temper, the child may well compare mother unfavourably with father, telling mother how nice father is to him in contrast to herself; he becomes resentful and feels

badly used. On the other hand, father may remarry and be less interested, or even quite uninterested in the child, when the child will feel deserted.

If the child sides with father and dislikes mother, but has to live with her, he can only become sullen and unhappy or rebellious and impossible to live with and in any case probably fail in school.

His attitude to marriage will be affected and to men and women. To one man will seem unreliable, to another woman are not to be trusted and give no pleasure. The emotional complications are innumerable, depending on all the circumstances and the child's nature. Here one can only give a few hints; each child has to be considered separately on the known facts and what one can glean from the child.

It may seem unbelievable, but sometimes the child is blamed for the separation. The parents feeling, "if it had not been for him, we will still be together." The child will feel bad, no good and very guilty, so why should he both; whatever he does will be no good. A tremendous burden is put upon him, which he cannot bear and for which he is not responsible.

Again the same applies to this child as to the one whose parent has deserted, he will feel different, outside the main stream, will have less than other children in the way of pocket money and so on. He will suffer equally from remarks of neighbours and other children. He will need a lot of support from other normal families and experience of happy families so as to get a balanced outlook on life.

Here the teacher can help a great deal if she has sympathy and understanding and does not condemn. If she can realise that whatever has happened the child is not to blame and that if the same situation is not to recur when he marries, he will need understanding and help, then the teacher's attitude will tend toward helping him. Again there is the need to stress that the child himself is a person in his own right, is important in himself and is not just an off-shoot of his parents, that he can, in time, rise above it all. If the child shows particularly difficult behaviour at one time, this will probably be due to some further upset at home. The teacher will find that asking him about what is happening at home, whether he has seen father recently and so on will be more helpful than punishment or scolding. It will show that the teacher understands and sympathises and is willing to listen which is a relief to the child in itself. A "don't care" attitude means that the child feels no good and it is no use trying. Such a case the teacher should use every opportunity to stress and bring out any of the child's strong points and to play down weaknesses. Find ways for the child to use any gifts he has, give him jobs he can do and make him feel useful.

The unmarried mother. Here we should distinguish between two types of family:

1. The Young woman who conceives and decides to keep her child knowing the father will not be there.



2. The woman who has a prolonged affair with a married man, by whom she has children. The father keeps both families and visits the second family regularly, but has little to do with the upbringing of the children.

The first type is a different problem from the others so far considered, as the child grows up without even the idea of a father in the background. The mother and child tend to be very isolated and all in all to each other. Relatives may disown the woman, or the grandparents may help but subtly punish their daughter and make the mother and child feel outside society.

Financial and living conditions are very difficult. Often the home is one squalid room, with frequent moves from one squalid room to another. The mother must work to keep both herself and the child, therefore the child must be minded by others during the day.

The mothers themselves are generally ignorant, unhappy, lonely or very disturbed or all four of these. They are not as a rule promiscuous. The relationship can be due to feeling tender to their boy friend, or to the need of his tenderness having been deprived of tender feelings from a loving father; there is also often the fear of losing the boy friend. Often these young women derive little satisfaction from the relationship. A highly sexed, promiscuous girl who is also stable and responsible, does not as a rule have an illegitimate child, she takes birth control precautions, which are readily available. It is significant that girls who have illegitimate babies often do not take precautions, which are offered, to them.

A girl who has a stable, even if disturbed background, is more likely to have her baby adopted, as a rule it is the girl from a broken, unhappy background who keeps her baby, she has the need for someone of her own to love.

Society feels that the institution of marriage is threatened by these girls and therefore feels they should be punished, but support for such girls does not lead to more unmarried mothers. These mothers are less likely to have a second illegitimate baby if they are helped and treated with sympathy. If they are not helped, they are apt to despair and feel that nothing matters, they give up trying, get what little satisfaction they can from brief affairs and produce babies which they more or less abandon.

From the legal and financial point of view, these mothers have the same rights as other mothers left without a husband. All mothers left with children under sixteen years old, can apply for supplementary benefit. They can get the same services from the National Health Service, and the Maternity Provisions of the National Insurance Act as any other mothers.

Often these unmarried girls do not know this, or if they do, do not want to approach the local authority and have to tell their stories, they tend to feel ashamed and unworthy. In any case they will have to work to supplement any benefits they can receive. The National Council for the Unmarried Mother and

her Child (255 Kentish Town Road, N.W.5. Tel. 485-8383) will help anyone who wants advice about this problem. Anyone can get in touch with the council either by writing or paying a visit. The council is a practical body that works in the field with these mothers, as well as doing research.

As finance must play a great part in the unmarried mother's struggle, it is important that a teacher should know and make sure the mother knows, what help she is entitled to, and what other agencies are willing to help, so that the mother can give as much calm attention to the child as possible.

A child from an unmarried mother comes to school from an insecure and unstable background, also an incomplete background. Not only will he have moved from room to room, but probably will have been minded in various ways during the years before school, There are several ways in which this can be done.

1. A Day Nursery. If the child can be found a place in a day nursery, he will have efficient care and proper food, but often members of the staff change frequently so continuity of relationships may not be possible. From there he may go to a Nursery School where the same conditions apply. A good nursery with continuity of staff may be the best form of day care for such a child. When the child first comes to school the teacher will have reports from the nursery and will know something about the child and his background. This will help the teacher to realise that this child may need extra help and attention and will bias her attitude (it is hoped positively) to understand and tolerate behaviour, which may be different from the usual.

2. The grandmother or a friendly neighbour may agree to look after the child during the day. This can be the best solution as the child will have a warm and continuing relationship during the day, and will have his mother in the evening. It also means that the mother has social contacts and is not completely isolated. Needless to say the advisability of this arrangement depends on the attitude of the grandmother or neighbour. Their attitude is wrong; it can make the child feel he is an unwanted burden. Again such an arrangement is apt to break down owing to changed circumstances in the life of the grandmother or neighbour.

3. The child can be placed with a Registered Child Minder; here good physical conditions will be assured. Whether or not the child will get loving care will depend on the minder and cannot, of course, be ordered. This will also be a drain on the mother's limited resources.

The child can be placed with an unregistered child minder, or private child minder. This is the least satisfactory form of care and can be positively harmful. The child may be changed continually from one minder to another. Often the physical conditions are appalling and there is little play material or stimulus of any kind.

The child, then, comes to school with a most unsatisfactory history. He will still have to be minded after school until his mother returns from work. He

will be now becoming more aware of his place in society and will begin to realise he is different from other children, is missing out on a normal home environment and will begin to feel inferior and deprived.

He has no father, even in the background. It is very difficult for him to understand why this is so. Gradually he will come to realise that there must have been a father, then that he is illegitimate. This realisation may be very traumatic, particularly in the late teens, when his whole role in society will seem threatened. To some extent his feeling is correct, his illegitimacy will have an adverse effect on a number of people. The teacher needs to make sure that as far as she is concerned, she thinks he is as good as anyone else. She should talk to him openly about it and discuss the situation. The fact that it can be talked about will make it more bearable.

He may have an image of his father as had and rejecting, feel responsible for his mother and be unable to leave her without feeling guilty. If the teacher suspects this to be the case, she can help by talking to the mother. She can suggest that the mother should develop outside interests and this leave her child free to join his friends, join clubs and so on.

On the other hand he may idealise the idea of his father; will want to know him and will search for him without quite realising what he is doing. This can result in wandering, running away from home and so on. Such a child needs more help than a teacher can give.

The boy has no model of his own sex and it is difficult for him to realise his manhood. He may blame his mother for not giving him a father and come to hate her and yet be unable to leave her, his existence is indeed joyless and he will need a great deal of expert help.

The girl has no relationship with a loving member of the opposite sex and may distrust men as her mother probably does. She has no experience of marriage and will tend to repeat her mother's pattern and produce an illegitimate child herself. If the neighbourhood condemns the mother, the girl will also feel condemned and will behave as she feels she is expected to behave.

By understanding these difficulties, teachers can flip once more to make the child feel he is an individual in his own right and is important in school. It is imperative that the child should grow up as balanced as possible so as not to repeat the pattern. Both mother and child require sympathy and help.

The child may be over-burdened with his mother's emotions all lavished upon him, he feels guilty if he is cross with mother, or wants to go out with friends, or join outside activities. He tends to feel badly used and prevented from leading a normal life.

On the other hand, the mother may find the child a nuisance and an interference with her life, in which case he will be a deprived and neglected

child and needs all the friendship and warmth he can get outside the home.

A brief mention must be made of the mother who has a prolonged affair with a married man and has children by him. The man keeps both families, he visits his second family regularly but does not live with the family. Father, then, is someone who comes and goes, who gives presents and sometimes takes you out, but is not part of the family. The burden of bringing up the children devolves on the mother and the situation is unnatural and frustrating. The mother is probably a disturbed woman who for one reason or another is unable to break the liaison and marry.

Society will disapprove of this mother more than of any of the others. Teachers will find it difficult not to show disapproval and be disparaging in their attitude. The mother will feel this attitude on the part of others and will tend to isolate herself from her own family and from neighbours, with the result the child has no outside contacts and few friends. Other mothers may disapprove of their children knowing him or of going to his house.

Again the situation is not the child's fault and he must be treated as equal to the other children in school. The teacher must swallow her feelings and not show her disapproval for the sake of the child.

## CONCLUSIONS

The whole subject of one-parent families is very complex, each family differs, and has its own problems which depend on the personality of the parents, the type of child, the particular experiences the child has had, the age at which major events occur and so on. Some children seem able to weather very bad experiences and indeed, almost to benefit from them: others are unable to deal with even mild problems without becoming disturbed. All that can be done in an article such as this is to indicate the types of difficulties a child from one parent family has to face.

The most important point to bear in mind is that a child is an individual in his own right and not just the offspring of his parents. The child need not be like them. He can overcome the deficiencies in his environment if he gets help from adults outside the family. Here teachers are very important, they have more contact with the child, than anyone except his parents, and by their attitude, can help a great deal. Teachers should not be afraid to be open with the child. There is nothing more frightening than a hushed secret half understood; something, which must not be mentioned, is felt to be very dreadful or very bad. Often it is not easy to make contact with such children, as they are often touchy and generally very muddled in their own mind; about the whole situation.

If a child is very disturbed he often shows this in extremes of behaviour, either becoming very difficult and aggressive or withdrawn, over quiet or depressed. Inability to work is another sign of disturbance. If a child has a great deal on his mind, if trying to deal with great personal problems, he cannot give his mind to his work, he cannot concentrate on his lessons, as his

own problems keep going round and round in his mind to the exclusion of everything else. Such very disturbed children should be sent for expert psychological help.