

Ill-tempered Teacher

ONCE upon a time the *Pathshalas* (primary schools) of this region used to be controlled by the red-eyed Pundit Moshais (teachers) and their canes. Similarly the *Maktabas* and *Madrassahs* (Muslim religious schools) were disciplined by bearded Moulvi Sahebs (religion teachers) with the help of canes. In both cases these were dreaded teachers who created more awe than inspiration in the hearts of their innocent pupils. Civilisation has come a long way from the days of 'Spare the Rod, Spoil the Child' ambience. Today's children are expected to be taught with love and affection which have proved much stronger and effective than the rule by canes of the olden days. Fear no longer can intimidate a child of today who is born with the sound of jets and vision of satellites. To teach them properly one needs to have great intelligence, understanding and flair for inter-personal communication.

But the cruelty shown by a teacher of Dhanmondi Boys' School on eight-year-old student Mahfuzur Rahman Nion on Saturday as reported in a prominent Bangla daily hurts our sensibilities. The heavy punishment meted out to the child by a lady teacher has been not only grossly out of proportion to the offence he purportedly committed but also patently indefensible as a teaching method. The way he was beaten up with a cane is unthinkable in the present day context. How could she get a cane at all? The parents were handed a bleeding child to their utter surprise and shock. The Headmaster and the Governing Body of the school should immediately look into the matter and take precautions against recurrence of such an incident in the future.