

New Light on Delinquency and Its Treatment (Book Review)

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as to whether the transaction is a sale with implied warranty, or merely the furnishing of service with liability only for negligence.

There follow short chapters on Negligence and Damages.

From the title of the book the reader might reasonably expect to find a complete dissertation as to the law pertaining to the sale of food and drink, including among other matters, licensing regulations, penal law provisions as to adulteration, sanitation, *etc.* But as already shown, the book is limited in its scope,—principally to a discussion of the liability of manufacturers, producers, and dispensers of food and drink upon an implied warranty. The bulk of the book deals with the sale of food and drink for immediate human consumption and only sparingly does the author touch on the sale of food and drink between dealer and dealer.

This treatise shows a vast amount of research work in its preparation and admirable legal acumen, in its best form, in treating the problems involved. It should prove of great assistance to the practicing lawyer and professional teacher in any one of the states in this country.

FREDERICK A. WHITNEY.*

NEW LIGHT ON DELINQUENCY AND ITS TREATMENT. By William Healy and Augusta F. Bronner. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936, pp. vii, 226.

Dr. Healy and Dr. Bronner have made another valuable contribution to both the understanding and treatment of delinquent children. They compile in this book not only the results of three years of intensive study and treatment of 103 delinquent children, but also a comparison of 103 non-delinquent siblings. The work was carried on in three cities (Detroit, New Haven and Boston) under the auspices of the Institute of Human Relations.

Careful comparison of the delinquent with the non-delinquent child of about the same age, in the same family, and therefore with the same economic and social backgrounds, clearly reveals one outstanding difference between the two groups. Evidence of deep emotional stress was found in 91% of the delinquent children whereas it was found in only 13% of the non-delinquent siblings. The stress may have been due to real or fancied rejection by a parent, a sense of inadequacy or insecurity in relation to brothers, sisters or school fellows, or to other causes. But the essence of the stress in almost every instance was traceable to a consciousness of unsatisfying human relations during early childhood. Although the mental abilities of the two groups was approximately the same, a marked feeling of inferiority was expressed by thirty-eight delinquents as compared to four non-delinquents.

After carefully studying the family and individual background of the delinquent children, the authors expressed their conclusion that the normal desires

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and urges of children—for love, security and achievement—when blocked by unsatisfying human relations, led to feelings of inadequacy, deprivation and frustration. These in turn led to urges for substitute satisfactions, and provided fertile ground for ideas of delinquency. To treat delinquent children it, therefore, becomes necessary either to remove the cause of emotional distress or, after making the child aware of the cause, to supply socially sound outlets for the normal but unsatisfied desires of the child.

Fortunately, this volume not only gives the valuable data by which this conclusion is reached, but also describes the methods of treatment given, and the results achieved. The basis of treatment was the recognition of the necessity of treating not only the delinquent child, but also the parents or other close relatives whose attitudes and actions deeply affected the child. The treatment was therefore varied and extended to many fields. Medical and dental care were provided; financial distress was alleviated; employment was found; club and social affiliations were established; school placements were changed; hobbies and new interests were encouraged; foster-home placements were made; and psychiatric treatment in varying amounts was given to the children, and in some instances to the parents. In short, everything possible was done to remove the cause of emotional distress on the part of the delinquent child.

Subsequently, a check on the results led the authors to divide the children into three groups for the purpose of prognosis as to the likelihood of securing results from such treatment. The first group, in which they placed twenty-six of the children they had treated, includes children who are abnormal or have such markedly neurotic personalities that there is little hope of successful treatment even though the family and community conditions are favorable. A check on the results of treatment two years after its cessation showed that only five or 19% of this group could be considered as doing positively well.

The second group is composed of those for whom the important social and human relationships are so unsound as to make the likelihood of successful treatment all but impossible without removing the child, at least temporarily, from his environment. It was found that of the fifty children who had to be placed in this group, thirty-nine had parents who had abnormal personalities or were mentally defective, immoral, alcoholic, criminalistic, or psychotic. In addition to being subjected to such human relations, 80% of these children lived in high delinquency areas, marked by overcrowding, inadequate housing, lack of recreational facilities, and generally unsatisfactory economic and social conditions. In this study the authors do not attempt to measure the extent to which such social factors contributed in producing the family situations which in turn made treatment all but impossible. Of the nineteen children for whom the treatment had positive value, eleven were removed from their homes.

In the third group the authors placed the sixty-seven children for whom treatment would most likely be of success. These children, though suffering from serious emotional stress, did not have extreme personal deviations or come from families in which the social pathology was too severe. Forty-eight or 72% of these children had not been delinquent during the two-year follow-up period after treatment.

This control study, in addition to throwing light on the causative factors of delinquency, thus establishes important criteria that must be considered if the treatment of delinquent children is to become more purposive and effective.

JUSTINE WISE TULIN.*

MEDICAL JURISPRUDENCE OF CRIME. New York: Current Legal Thought, Oct., 1936, pp. ii, 93.

While all of the abstracts in this issue are interesting and several represent the opinions of writers entitled by position and experience to speak with authority, the space allotted does not permit a presentation of their views. Dr. Healy's paper¹ has been chosen for comment because, as befits a responsible President of the American Psychiatric Association, his remarks are characterized by a critical and judicious reasoning. No starry-eyed enthusiast is he. Nor is his mind closed to the high value in this field, as elsewhere in science, of research through control studies.

Dr. Healy, considering delinquency and criminality the resultant of the impact of environment upon the individual, assigns the major role to the influence of external stimuli.

In a study of law-breaking tendencies among similar racial groups in different cities, such great variations were demonstrated as to lead the author to conclude that established community attitudes, and local social patterns and values were of greater influence than native tendencies to crime.

An immense percentage of criminals have had their careers determined by childhood situations. Easy opportunities for obtaining illicit satisfactions in early life, condition toward a criminal type of response to the stimuli arising from the social pressures of adult existence. The gang spirit, the gang organization, and the automobile, tempting to excitement and pleasure, are appraised as tremendously important stimuli.

When Dr. Healy surveys the criminal individual, he finds no convincing evidence to support the idea that tendencies to criminality may be inherited. When criminality appears in successive generations, he believes it to be dependent upon the inheritance of mental abnormality or the continuance of environmental conditions. Only exceptionally is the criminal a stigmatized individual.

So far as height, weight, nutrition and body build are concerned, the author and other investigators were unable to find any marked deviation from the norm. In a small number of cases, such factors as physical over-development in adolescence and the compensatory reactions of the undersized type, find expression in crime. Hyper-sexuality, epilepsy, structural disease of the brain and the post-traumatic instabilities resulting from severe head injuries are operative factors of significance, as are alcohol and drug addiction. Dr. Healy displays a healthy

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¹ This paper is entitled "Crime and the Individual" and may be found on page 11 of the issue designated in the title.