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# FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO JUVENILE DELINQUENCY<sup>1</sup>

K. M. BANHAM BRIDGES<sup>2</sup>

It has long been a problem why some children steal and not others, why some play truant, or why some set fires and damage property. Theories have been advanced from time to time to explain these things, but only in the last ten or fifteen years have extensive scientific investigation been carried out on these problems. Officers of the juvenile courts, child welfare associations, educational bodies, and mental hygiene clinics have been instrumental in bringing together a vast amount of data concerning juvenile delinquency, from which certain general conclusions may be drawn.

Delinquency itself is socially inadequate adjustment on the part of the individual to difficult situations. The factors which go to make up these difficult situations, together with the mental and physical conditions which influence an individual's capacity to adjust, constitute the causes of delinquency.

Each juvenile offense is the outcome of a complexity of causes, some of whose origins date back years before the committal of the offense and others whose origins are more obviously and immediately connected with the act of delinquency. It has been shown that a different set of causes is involved in each individual case. It is impossible therefore to state the group of causes which will invariably result in any particular offense.

The factors which operate to turn a child's behavior in one direction rather than another may be very obscure, many as yet are beyond the detection of expert sociologists, psychologists, physiologists and others. It often appears that quite different offenses are the results of the same group of causes, but further investigation shows that still

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<sup>1</sup>This outline grew out of a study of the literature on juvenile delinquency and some experience with actual cases in the Montreal Child Guidance Clinic and at the Boys' Farm and Training School, Shawbridge. My indebtedness for valuable information gained from the authors referred to in the bibliography, and from many others not mentioned, is obvious. Also I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. J. W. Bridges for assistance in drawing up the outline, in reviewing the literature, in selecting the bibliography, and for helpful suggestions and criticisms. I am, moreover, indebted to Miss J. V. McClenaghan for further assistance in reviewing the literature and to Miss V. L. Davidson for help in preparing the manuscript.

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other factors are present in each case which determine the type of delinquency. For example, a poverty-stricken, unhappy home and irregular earnings in the evening may lead one boy to play truant from school in order to earn more money, may cause another to steal, or may result in another's joining a street gang and gambling. More intensive investigation in each case would bring to light the specific factors responsible for these differences.

In spite of the great complexity and diversity of the causes of delinquency, cases are found to have many factors in common. The different combinations of these factors are largely responsible for the differences in offenses. It should be possible, therefore, to draw up a list of conditioning factors from a study of a large number of cases which would cover most of the possibilities, and from which could be isolated any group or combination of factors applicable to a particular case. Such a list should prove to be a diagnostic aid for all workers in the field of juvenile delinquency.

The following outline comprises the factors which have been found to operate in some thousands of cases studied and reported on by various authorities. These factors are classed under six general headings: Physical factors, Mental factors, Home conditions, School conditions, Neighborhood conditions, and Occupational conditions. The first two groups include all factors dependent upon the bodily and mental condition of the delinquent. These are the product of both heredity and environment. The other four groups consist of environmental factors: unfavorable conditions in the home and the family of the child, unfavorable conditions in the school environment, the neighborhood, and occupational environments.

An itemized list is presented first, followed by a short discussion of each factor. A brief analysis is given and the way in which each factor may determine delinquency is indicated. No attempt has been made to evaluate the importance of the various factors, because this problem is too controversial and any statement would be merely a matter of opinion. Moreover, the less important factors need to be stressed as they are the most likely to be overlooked. The few quotations included are merely illustrative of the points in question, and were chosen because of their apparent truth rather than their authoritative source.

#### I. *Physical Factors.*

1. Malnutrition.
2. Lack of sleep.
3. Developmental aberrations.

4. Sensory defects.
5. Speech defects.
6. Endocrine disorders.
7. Deformities.
8. Nervous diseases.
9. Other ailments.
10. Physical exuberance.
11. Drug addiction.
12. Effect of weather.

## II. *Mental Factors.*

1. Mental defect.
2. Superior intelligence.
3. Psychoses.
4. Psychoneuroses.
5. Psychopathic constitution (including emotional instability).
6. Abnormalities of instinct and emotion.
7. Uneven mental development.
8. Obsessive imagery and imagination.
9. Mental conflicts.
10. Repression and substitution.
11. Inferiority complex.
12. Introversion and egocentrism.
13. Revengefulness (get-even complex).
14. Suggestibility.
15. Contra-suggestibility.
16. Lethargy and laziness.
17. Adolescent emotional instability.
18. Sex habits and experiences.
19. Habit and association.

## III. *Home Conditions.*

1. Unsanitary conditions.
2. Material deficiencies.
3. Excess in material things.
4. Poverty and unemployment.
5. Broken homes.
6. Mental and physical abnormalities of parents, or siblings.
7. Immoral and delinquent parents.
8. Ill-treatment by foster parents, step-parents, or guardians.
9. Stigma of illegitimacy.
10. Lack of parental care and affection.
11. Lack of confidence and frankness between parents and children.
12. Deficient and misdirected discipline.
13. Unhappy relationship with siblings.
14. Bad example.
15. Foreign birth or parentage.
16. "Superior" education of children.

IV. *School Conditions.*

1. Inadequate school building and equipment.
2. Inadequate facilities for recreation.
3. Rigid and inelastic school system, "the goose-step."
4. Poor attendance laws and lax enforcement.
5. Wrong grading.
6. Unsatisfactory teacher.
7. Undesirable attitude of pupil towards teacher.
8. Bad school companions and codes of morals.

V. *Neighborhood Conditions.*

1. Lack of recreational facilities.
2. Congested neighborhood and slums.
3. Disreputable morals of the district.
4. Proximity of luxury and wealth.
5. Influence of gangs and gang codes.
6. Loneliness, lack of social outlets.
7. Overstimulating movies and shows.

VI. *Occupational Conditions.*

1. Irregular occupation.
2. Occupational misfit.
3. Spare time and idleness.
4. Truancy.
5. Factory influences.
6. Monotony and restraint.
7. Decline in the apprenticeship system.

## I

## PHYSICAL FACTORS

The bodily condition of a child may affect his<sup>3</sup> behavior in one or more of three ways. First, it may be the direct cause of delinquent behavior. Secondly, it may form a handicap to the child's achievement or favorable relationship with other children and adults, as in the case of malnutrition and defects. Delinquency may result as an attempt on the part of the child to compensate for these disabilities. Thirdly, bodily conditions such as certain developmental aberrations and physical exuberance may supply a superfluity of energy which finds outlet in delinquency. The various physical conditions of the child which may thus determine delinquency are outlined in the following paragraphs.

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<sup>3</sup>Although the masculine pronoun is used throughout this article, the factors discussed refer to children of both sexes unless otherwise indicated.

### 1. *Malnutrition.*

This may be the result of :

a. Too little food, sufficient food may not be provided either through poverty or mere carelessness.

b. Improperly selected food, meals may be provided which have deficiency or disproportion in the essential elements of diet: proteins, carbohydrates, fats, inorganic salts, vitamins, and water.

c. Excessive use of stimulants, such as tea or coffee, which may interfere with the normal assimilation of food.

d. Bad cooking, rendering the food unappetizing and indigestible.

e. Irregular meal hours, causing inability to digest the food when meals are too close together, and undue strain upon the system resulting in faulty digestion when they are too far apart.

f. Unpleasant surroundings during mealtimes. Bad physical conditions such as filth may arouse the emotion of disgust and so inhibit the digestion process. Also unhappy personal relationships such as teasing by a brother or sister or scolding by a parent may give rise to disgust or anger and so prevent proper digestion of food.

g. Too much candy between meals. This may produce actual disorders in the bodily organs, such as the liver or stomach and intestines, or it may produce lack of appetite at mealtimes for food more necessary for the complete nourishment of the body.

h. Fussiness on the part of the child, refusal to eat certain foods. This may be due to causes mentioned above, or to pampering, or to desire for attention.

Malnutrition may cause inertia and mental sluggishness or hyperexcitability and nervousness in a child. Any of these conditions may lead to delinquency. The child may become the sport of bad suggestion or the tool of his own feelings and impulses. Or he may compensate for his disabilities in delinquent conduct.

### 2. *Lack of Sleep.*

This may be the outcome of :

a. Late hours, allowing too little time for sleep.

b. Overcrowding in bedroom, resulting in disturbed sleep. This may be due to foul air and heat from inadequate ventilation, or to lights left on, or to sounds and movements of other people in the room.

c. Bad dreams due to other physical ailments, mental troubles and outside disturbances.

d. Physical conditions, consisting of major diseases of kidneys, heart, etc.; and such minor ailments as diseased tonsils and adenoids, colds, strained muscles, poor digestion, over-active digestion due to heavy meals at bed-time, or intense hunger.

Lack of sleep, like malnutrition, may cause feelings of drowsiness and inertia, but in addition to this, it increases irritability, excitability and nervousness. The child, feeling his handicap, may suffer from mental conflict and take refuge in delinquency. Or, he may exhibit bad behavior due to impulses which are easily stimulated and hard to control under a condition of hyperexcitability and fatigue.

### 3. *Developmental Aberrations.*

These may occur in one or more of the following ways:

a. Delayed, premature, or abnormal pubic development. This may be due to glandular disorders, malnutrition or physical diseases.

b. Retarded, excessive, or abnormally disproportionate growth of frame or organs of the body. Again this may be the result of glandular disorders, malnutrition or physical and nervous diseases.

c. Poor development, or excessive development of muscular strength, which depends upon other developmental factors, nutrition, and opportunity for vigorous exercise.

Delinquencies the result of developmental aberrations may be compensatory in nature where development is delayed and poor, the boy wishing to prove his manhood to himself and others and the girl wishing to prove her womanhood. Sex offenses may be of this kind. Abnormal growth and development, particularly excessive growth and strength, may also result in delinquency through the overwhelming energy and impulses to action which they generate.

### 4. *Sensory Defects.*

These may occur in any of the special sense organs, such as eyes, ears, organ of smell, taste-buds, cutaneous sense organs, and kinaesthetic sense organs. But by far the most important as causes of delinquency are:

a. Defective eyesight, which may be due to disease or defect in the eye or neural connections, to ill-health, muscular strain, or to fatigue.

b. Defective hearing, which may be due to disease or defect in the organ of hearing or its neural connections, to malnutrition or to ill-health.

These defects will set the child at a disadvantage when in competition with others both in and out of school. He may try to restore self-confidence and a sense of superiority by resorting to delinquency.

### 5. *Speech Defects.*

Such defects as stammering, stuttering, lispings and lolling may be due to:

- a. Congenital defect of the organ of speech or its neural connections.
- b. Diseases of the organ of speech or its neural connections.
- c. Overstrain and ill-health.
- d. Inhibitions, the result of mental conflict.
- e. Lack of early training and negligence.
- f. Adult approbation of quaint speech (baby talk) during early childhood.
- g. Mental defect.

In addition to setting the child at a disadvantage in competition with others and possibly making him a target for childish ridicule, speech defects block one of the most essential means of self-expression and social expression for the individual. A child with defective speech may become introverted and seclusive, partly through shame and partly through inertia to overcome the handicap. He may on the other hand become cynical and foster a grudge or a "get-even complex," with consequent anti-social results.

### 6. *Endocrine Disorders.*

These affect both the bodily and mental condition of the child. The disorder may be relatively localized in one or two glands, or the whole interacting endocrine system may be disfunctioning. The most easily discovered disorders and those which are frequently recorded as causing delinquency are:

- a. Hypo- or hyper-thyroidism.
- b. Hypo- or hyper-adrenalism.
- c. Hypo- or hyper-pituitrism.
- d. Hypo- or hyper-gonadal secretion.
- e. Deficiency in pancreatic hormone secretion (insulin).
- f. Persistent thymus.

Deficiency, in general, results in stunted growth, delayed puberty, fat-formation, inertia, and mental retardation. Such conditions might produce delinquency which would be mainly of the compensatory type.



Delinquency of the uncontrolled impulsive type might also result because of poor mental development.

Hypersecretion, in general, promotes adequate and even excessive growth (as in the case of hyperpituitarism), prevents formation of fat and results in a condition of hyperactivity and hyperexcitability, both physical and mental. It leads to quick, impulsive behavior and lack of caution.

### 7. *Deformities.*

These may be of the limbs or trunk, and can be the result of accidents before, during, or after birth, the result of heredity, or of disease. Whether obvious to others or not a deformity may cause its possessor to feel inferior and ashamed, and he may turn to delinquency in flight from the horrible (to him) reality and in endeavor to compensate for the defect. A particular form of deformity which may cause this result is a noticeable strabismus (squint).

### 8. *Nervous Diseases.*

These may be of various kinds. In particular may be mentioned:

a. Chorea. This may be a result of distressing experiences and an unstable nervous constitution.

b. Epilepsy. This, though in most cases hereditary, may also be the result of a highly sensitive nervous system being subjected to too much emotional strain.

c. Poliomyelitis (infantile paralysis).

Delinquency resulting from nervous disease is on the whole compensatory, but, as in the case of epilepsy, it may be the direct outcome of sudden abnormal impulses, together with diminished power of control.

### 9. *Other Ailments.*

These may include:

a. All forms of disease, for example, diseases of eye, ear, nose, or throat; pulmonary, kidney, or heart diseases, etc.

b. Defective teeth.

c. Congenital syphilis.

d. Head or spinal injuries.

Any of these may interfere with the child's achievements in normal competition and cause him to resort to delinquency for relief from the mental conflict involved. They may also directly cause some kinds of

delinquency, for instance painful irritation may result in outbursts of temper and violence.

#### 10. *Physical Exuberance.*

This is a particularly common cause of delinquency in the case of strong healthy children, who are not provided with adequate opportunity for vigorous activity. Delinquencies of the adventure, burglary, running away, and stealing types are often due to such hyperactivity.

Special instances of delinquency due to physical exuberance are the sex offenses. Many of the young girls who get into court do so on this account. Superabundant energy often goes along with excess of "libido" or sexual energy which the girl in her teens has not learned to understand or control.

#### 11. *Drug Addiction.*

This is not an important factor in juvenile delinquency, though it may play a part in the causation of crime in later adolescence and more particularly in adulthood. It is a delinquency in itself, but, like truancy, it may also be a causal factor in other delinquency, such as stealing, sex offenses, or disturbing the peace. A great variety of mental, physical, and environmental factors contribute to drug addiction as to any other form of undesirable behavior.

#### 12. *Effect of Weather.*

It has been shown that weather has some influence upon moods, attitudes, and behavior of human beings. But nothing very definite is known about the relation between the weather and juvenile delinquency. Children have their "bad days" and these are, no doubt, in part determined by the effect of weather on physical or mental conditions.

## II

### MENTAL FACTORS

Mental factors, like physical factors, may determine delinquent behavior in one or more of three ways: (1) Delinquency may be the direct response to, or expression of, a particular mental state, for example, obsessive imagery. (2) Delinquency may be the expression of certain impulses or emotions left uncontrolled or stimulated by a special mental condition; or it may be a symbolic representation of such

impulses. (3) Delinquency may be an attempt at adjustment or compensation for certain mental peculiarities. Following is an outline of the mental factors which contribute to delinquent behavior:

1. *Mental Defect.*

The term mental defect as used here is synonymous with the word feeble-mindedness and stands for deficiency in mental development to the extent that social care of the defective individual is required indefinitely. The diagnosis of feeble-mindedness depended entirely upon rough methods of observation until the advent of so-called intelligence tests. In 1908 Binet and Simon devised a scale of tests for measuring mental development objectively. This was done originally for the purpose of selecting intellectually inferior children for special classes, but in the course of time and experimentation the use of these tests became extended to the diagnosis of feeble-mindedness. Correlation of these test results with subsequent social failures showed them to be of great diagnostic value for some, though not all, forms of feeble-mindedness with its consequent social unfitness. Many modifications of the original Binet tests and other mental tests have been devised since 1908 which make the diagnosis of a certain type of feeble-mindedness, namely, that due particularly to intellectual deficiency, more and more definite.

A number of estimations have been made as to the extent of feeble-mindedness in the community. According to J. B. Miner, the statistical results of tested deficiency from several countries show that .5 per cent of the total population are presumably feeble-minded, while the next 1.0 per cent of the population may be considered as doubtful cases, some of whom will be "able to live moral lives, as well as earn their living with social assistance, without being cared for entirely in isolation colonies."

Opinions as to the importance of mental deficiency as a cause of delinquency vary enormously among the different scientific investigators of this subject. This is probably due to some extent to the varying conception of feeble-mindedness or mental deficiency held by these scientists. Those who restrict the meaning to intellectual deficiency or lack of intelligence as shown by the scales of intelligence tests, will no doubt consider its relation to delinquency relatively slight. While those who extend the meaning of feeble-mindedness to cover deficiency in any form of mental development are likely to think it has a closer relationship.

Reports of actual correlations between test results and delinquency in the various penal institutions, detention homes, and juvenile courts in the United States show considerable variation. In round numbers, the estimates of deficiency among delinquents vary all the way from 75 per cent to less than 10 per cent of the number tested, when mental deficiency is defined as the lowest 1.5 per cent of the general population.

Miner has further analyzed and compared such estimates of tested deficiency covering over nine thousand delinquents and has arrived at the following conclusions: (1) The different groups of delinquents which have been tested represent highly selected groups among the ordinary offenders. They consist mainly of repeaters, and all of the cases are delinquents who have been caught. Investigations in Chicago, Denver, and Minneapolis have shown that there is a higher percentage of mental defect among repeated offenders than among the ordinary juvenile court cases. From 68 to 89 per cent of ordinary court cases are first offenders, among whom mental deficiency is estimated at 10 per cent. (2) Institutions which care for the same type of delinquency show pronounced variation in the amount of tested deficiency. This fact, Miner considers, marks a significant difference in the care of the defective delinquents in the different institutions, and a difference in the success of the states in isolating their mentally deficient. (3) Mental deficiency is found most frequently among women and girls who are sex offenders. The most closely corresponding class of male delinquents is probably the vagrants, though "the little evidence we have indicates that as a class the n'er-do-wells average higher in ability than the prostitutes. They are probably a more mixed group."

A report of a recent investigation made by Carl Murchison on "American White Criminal Intelligence" shows that the average intelligence of the criminals tested by the Army Alpha intelligence test is slightly higher than that of the U. S. draft army as measured between 1917 and 1919 by the same tests. This report also gives evidence conflicting with that of Miner as to the relative intelligence of first offenders and recidivists. Murchison's results show that recidivists are slightly more intelligent than first offenders in the case of adult criminals.

Murchison differentiates seven types of crime, and shows that difference in intelligence level exists among these seven type groups of criminals. He says, "It would seem that statutory crime and crimes of physical injury are causally related very slightly to intelligence, in so

far as intelligence can be measured by mental tests. But more than half of the individuals who commit crimes of fraud are superior individuals, according to the Army norms. At the same time, about half of the individuals who commit crimes against sex are inferior individuals according to the same standards. Crimes of social dereliction are committed by a large percentage of unusually superior individuals and also by a large percentage of unusually inferior individuals." It is noticeable that Murchison's findings agree with those of Miner and others as to the relatively inferior mental status of sex delinquents under conviction.

Mental defect may be considered to determine delinquency in any one or more of the following ways:

a. Through lack of appreciation of values. Crime and delinquency may be committed as a result of normal or abnormal impulses unchecked by caution and consideration for other people or their property.

b. Through inability to profit by experience or to remember consequences either of the individual's own actions or those of others.

c. Through inability to disguise delinquent actions or to evade the detection of such acts, whether they be self-initiated or merely imitated unwittingly. This is not a cause of delinquency but a cause for its being brought to the notice of adults.

d. Through inability to learn conventional moral codes and make the normal distinctions between right and wrong.

e. Through lack of resources for expression of mental and physical energy, that is through lack of mental imagery, imagination or organized interests.

f. Through inability to meet the demands made upon the individual at school or at home or in competition with others of the same age. The inferior child may become delinquent in order to compensate for his inferiority and to assert himself before others. He may also run away from home or play truant by way of escape from his difficulties.

## 2. *Superior Intelligence.*

A superior child often needs to make no effort to do what little is demanded of him either at home or at school, consequently he has insufficient outlet for his energies and abilities. As a result he may get into mischief, such as trying house-breaking for adventure; he may become impudent and incorrigible; or he may become the leader of a gang and lead less clever children into trouble.

### 3. *Psychoses.*

These may be considered as roughly divided into two groups:

a. Organic psychoses. These are mental diseases which are known to accompany definite structural changes in the nervous system, for example, general paralysis of the insane, or senile dementia.

b. Functional psychoses. These are mental diseases for which no correlated change in the structure of the nervous system has yet been found. The majority of mental disorders belong under this head, which includes dementia praecox, manic-depressive insanity, paranoia, and so forth.

Cases of frank psychoses are seldom found among juvenile delinquents. William Healy diagnosed only 2 per cent of a thousand cases as psychotic. Other investigators have shown similar findings. It seems probable, however, that these diseases grow gradually during childhood and youth; and that, through lack of knowledge of their early stages they escape detection until adult life, when characteristic symptoms of the advanced stages are shown and are easily recognized.

Many investigators think it probable that delinquency is a symptom of the incipient stages of these diseases, showing that the child is laboring under some abnormal mental stress. A more thorough investigation into the causes of children's misdemeanors might therefore throw new light upon the early symptoms of mental disease.

The forms of delinquency most frequently associated with psychoses are vagrancy, disturbing the peace, petty theft and acts of violence and cruelty. The first three are found especially in beginning dementia praecox. The last two occur more often in manic-depressive insanity and paranoia. They seem to be determined by obsessive imagery, hallucinations, delusions or strong impulses from within. In cases of paranoia, for instance, cruel revenge may be attempted against a person or persons figuring in the delusions of persecution. Such acts of cruelty or violence may be made possible in part by the fact that the patient is withdrawn from contact with the real world of people. During this time his own experiences are magnified and normal feelings of sympathy and regard for others are reduced to a minimum. Attempted suicide may be the outcome of another kind of obsession; it characterizes particularly the depressive phase of manic-depressive insanity—a not uncommon psychosis of adolescence.

### 4. *Psychoneuroses.*

These are functional mental disorders not accompanied by ascertainable change in the nervous system. They may be brought on by

emotional shocks and mental conflicts<sup>4</sup> which affect the central nucleus of the personality. The particular shock that precipitates the disease is but the last in a chain of similar shocks and conflicts dating back to early child life. Some authorities believe that these diseases have also as their basis constitutional inferiorities such as constitutional psychopathy and inborn weakness of mental synthesis. The psychoneuroses which may give rise to conduct problems are:

a. *Psychasthenia*. This is characterized by obsessions, fears, impulsions or manias such as kleptomania and suicidal mania, and by feelings of inferiority and unreality, accompanied by mental anguish. It is probably the result of mental conflict and repression.<sup>4</sup> The impulsions and fears may lead to immediate delinquent actions, and the other forms of obsession may produce delinquency as shown in the section on "Obsessive Imagery and Imagination."

b. *Neurasthenia and anxiety neurosis*. These are characterized by irritability, depression, worry, and hyper-sensitivity to noises and bright lights. *Neurasthenia* is particularly characterized by a constant feeling of fatigue and distractible attention. Both *neurasthenia* and *anxiety neurosis*, like *psychasthenia*, are probably the result of mental conflict and repression. The despair produced by either of the disorders may lead to delinquency, such as petty thieving and running away for relief.

c. *Hysteria*. This is characterized by hysterical attacks or fits, paralysis, tics, unconscious acts, increased suggestibility, insensitive or hypersensitive skin areas, impaired vision, and nausea. It is probably developed as a result of mental conflict, repression and substitution.\* In other words, a hysterical symptom may be the substituted expression of a repressed desire. Delinquency due to hysteria may be the outcome of impulsions, may be compensation for disabilities, or may be the result of suggestion received during a period of increased suggestibility.

##### 5. *Psychopathic Constitution (including Emotional Instability)*.

*Psychopathy* or "constitutional psychopathic inferiority" are terms often quoted by psychiatrists and juvenile court officials, to account for acts of delinquency. What these terms stand for is somewhat indefinite, but it seems to be whatever is not accounted for by mental

<sup>4</sup>Factors in the development of the psychoneuroses such as psychopathic constitution, mental conflict, repression and substitution, are considered in further detail under separate headings.

\*See previous footnote.

defect, psychosis, or psychoneurosis, and is largely characterized by abnormalities in the feeling and emotional life of the individual. Persons possessing psychopathic constitutions may be grouped roughly as follows:

- a. Emotionally unstable, including those whose emotions are easily aroused, are very variable and sometimes unusually intense.
- b. Emotionally deficient, those who rarely experience emotion and then only after extreme provocation or stimulation.
- c. Hypersensitive, those who react strongly to the slightest sensation, that is, those who are keenly aware of and very disturbed by loud noises, bright lights, pain, or strong smells.
- d. Hyposensitive, those who are not disturbed by pain or intense sensory stimulation of any kind.

The emotionally unstable and hypersensitive psychopaths are constantly faced with problems of social adjustment which are especially difficult for them to solve. In the process of solution delinquency may occur as an actual attempt at adjustment, being the better of two or more evils, or it may be due to an uncontrollable outburst during the period of mental struggle. The emotionally deficient and the hyposensitive types are more likely to commit crimes and delinquencies of physical injury or ones involving acts of great daring. They feel neither for themselves nor for others.

On the basis of a psychopathic constitution a person may develop a psychosis, a psychoneurosis, or a "psychopathic personality" according to the nature of the situations in life which he is called upon to face. Any one of these mental conditions, as shown elsewhere, will result in abnormal behavior and possibly in delinquency.

#### 6. *Abnormalities of Instinct and Emotion.*

We are all born with certain instinctive tendencies to behave in a more or less definite way to certain situations, for example, we all tend to flee from danger or to fight an opposition. We are also born with tendencies to feel definite emotions under certain roughly definable circumstances, we feel afraid of the unknown, angry at interruptions, and so forth. These tendencies, both instinctive and emotional, vary in strength with different individuals and determine the forcefulness of response in instinct—or emotion-producing situations.

Delinquencies the result of abnormalities of instinct or emotion are of two kinds: (1) Those which are prompted by an irresistible impulse, the goal of which dominating drive is scarcely conceived by



the individual. The urge is to act in some way or other regardless of the end or of ultimate consequences. These delinquencies are caused by too strong instinctive tendencies. Intense emotion may have similar effect. Such outbursts of activity may be in the form of the direct expression of the dominant instinct, but they may also be in the form of some behavior which has become associated with the instinct in the particular individual's experience. For example, Healy quotes cases of stealing where the cause was found to be a strong sex impulse expressing itself in behavior which had come to be associated with matters of sex. The association had become established through companionship with other delinquents who were both thieves and sexually immoral. (2) Delinquencies which are caused by deficiency in normal instinctive or emotional tendencies. Lack of fear and lack of sympathy for other people are the most common of these deficiencies. The former results usually in daring acts, such as burglary, or incendiarism. The latter leads especially to acts of cruelty, but is a factor in many delinquencies.

Following are some of the more important human instincts and emotions together with the types of delinquency which their excess or deficiency may cause:

a. Self-assertion and display. Excess of these instincts may result in any of the forms of stealing, truancy, running away from home, delinquencies of violence, and general incorrigibility to gain attention. Every child must get some boost to his ego; if he does not get it one way he is going to get it another.

b. Acquisitive and nutritive instincts. Excess may result in stealing, burglary, picking pockets, gambling or forgery in order to obtain the desired goods.

c. Pugnacity. Excess may be the cause of any of the above mentioned delinquencies, and in addition, carrying concealed weapons, false accusations, disorderly conduct and assault and battery.

d. Fear. Excess may result in carrying of concealed weapons, homicide, attempted suicide, lying and drug addiction. Deficiency may result in delinquencies of violence, "hold-ups," some sexual offenses, stealing, incorrigibility, truancy, and running away from home.

e. Sex. Excess may result in various sexual offenses and perversions, prostitution, assaults, excessive lying and stealing. Deficiency may also lead to prostitution, use of drugs, alcoholic intoxication and sex perversions.

f. Curiosity and adventuresomeness. Excess may be the cause of truancy, vagrancy, running away from home, all forms of stealing, gambling, and some sexual offenses.

### 7. *Uneven Mental Development.*

The individual whose personality has not developed evenly, thereby leaving some tendencies uncontrolled and unmodified, is likely to become socially delinquent. Three kinds of uneven mental development may be especially mentioned.

a. Lack of development in the intellect, with the result that the instincts and emotions are not governed by reason or caution, and may thus lead the individual into trouble.

b. Lack of development in emotional control, that is, lack of modification and organization of the primitive emotions into socially acceptable sentiments (interests and affections). Without such modification and control the emotions when once aroused will take their most primitive and often anti-social form. Failure in emotional development may be due either to an innate deficiency in the capacity to modify feelings and emotions, or to limitations of experience and inadequate guidance in matters of feeling.

c. Highly developed intellect together with relatively undeveloped feeling and emotional life. This condition produces a particular kind of delinquency, it is the cleverly planned, perhaps cruel type, the performance of which involves great skill, perseverance and foresight and the traces of which are usually well covered up.

### 8. *Obsessive Imagery and Imagination.*

A person whose mind is continually haunted by sounds, voices, or visions of people doing things, is usually suffering from a psychosis or psychoneurosis. The disorder is advanced or mild, according to the frequency and intensity of the obsessive experience. Such obsessions may prompt the person to delinquent action as if upon impulse. Peculiar conduct perhaps of a delinquent nature may be commanded by a voice, or may be carried out in imitation of a vision.

Obsessive imagery may also "drive the person distracted," to use a slang expression, and cause him to commit a crime by way of defense, in attempt to get away from, or put an end to, the haunting ideas or images. These obsessions may force themselves upon the person while he is occupied, or they may occur during idle moments in the form of reverie, and may eventually lead to delinquent action.

Vivid imagination in childhood before the individual has learned to distinguish between fantasy and reality may cause him to tell fantastic stories and make false accusations. Children with such imagination are often branded by adults as "terrible liars."

### 9. *Mental Conflicts.*

A mental conflict exists when one experiences a tendency to act in two or more incompatible ways at the same time. The act may be one of moral decision or judgment or it may be overt behavior and it is always accompanied by a greater or lesser degree of emotion. It is a normal and inevitable experience for everybody, but it can be abnormal under the following conditions: when very much prolonged without a solution being found; when accompanied by very intense emotion; or when the final expression of the activity in the deadlock takes a form which is detrimental to social welfare or to that of the individual. Mental conflicts occur during childhood and later in three types of situation:

a. During adjustment to reality, when the child has to face external physical restrictions to pleasure.

b. During adjustment to authority, when the child has to face social restrictions to pleasure.

c. During adjustments to self, when the child has to face his own limitations and restrictions to pleasure.

The conflict may be relatively simple and relatively without feeling as in the choice between two agreeable or disagreeable things to eat. It may be more complex and feelingful as in a small boy's choice between the two evils, reproof for an incomplete exercise or the chance of being caught copying the next boy's answers. Or, it may be very complex and highly toned with emotion as in the choice between personal loyalty, affection and associated memories, and adherence to a much cherished and believed-in ideal. The more serious and troublesome conflicts are usually those between socially desirable and socially undesirable tendencies or courses of action.

The outcome of a mental conflict may be behavior which is mutually satisfying to the individual and to society. This is the most happy solution, known technically as sublimation. The result of the conflict may also be victory for anti-social impulses which lead directly to delinquency such as stealing, violence, sexual offenses, and so on. Thirdly and lastly, the conflict may result in victory for the tendency to act in a socially approved way and in complete inhibition of a drive or tendency to act in a socially undesirable way. The inhibited (checked) activity will then manifest itself in some abnormal way, perhaps in spasmodic outbursts of delinquent behavior quite out of the conscious control of the individual. Or it may develop into a physical or mental disorder and indirectly result in delinquency.

There is no doubt that a large proportion of all forms of delinquency may be traced to unresolved or inadequately resolved mental conflicts. The persons most likely to experience abnormally intense mental conflicts are those having psychopathic constitutions.

#### 10. *Repression and Substitution.*

Repression is the name given by Freud to the putting out of consciousness of certain undesirable wishes, ideas or feelings. It usually goes along with the inhibition or checking of an impulse, already referred to, as a result of a prolonged or painful conflict. It is an active forgetting of the disagreeable. Very often other ideas which have been associated with the offending idea or experience are also pushed out of consciousness; for, were they allowed in consciousness, the associative bonds of memory would tend to recall their offensive companions.

These repressed wishes and ideas may result in unconscious (dissociated and automatic) delinquent behavior, the direct expression of the wishes themselves. They may also gain expression in an indirect way through substitution of an associated activity. Sex activity may thus gain expression through stealing or violence if the two forms of behavior have been associated together in the individual's experience. Hysterical and other psychoneurotic symptoms are generally considered to be substituted activities for repressed wishes and, as has been previously shown, may be causes of delinquency either as expressions of unconscious urges or as compensatory reactions.

#### 11. *Inferiority Complex.*

A "feeling of inferiority" in any human attribute may be quite conscious, semi-conscious, or repressed and unconscious. The term "inferiority complex"<sup>5</sup> originally coined by Alfred Adler to denote only such a feeling when repressed, is now often used to cover inferiority feeling under all three conditions. In each case the inferiority complex is characterized by strong emotional accompaniment, the individual protesting, as it were against his own inferiority. For example, a person may blush and appear greatly discomfited when asked to join in a musical chorus because he knows very well that his voice is unmusical and untrained, and his instinctive egotism hates to acknowledge this inferiority.

Another person may become very tired, discover a headache and feel generally wretched when playing bridge with strangers who dis-

<sup>5</sup>A "complex" is a repressed system of associated ideas and feelings.

play more skill in the game than himself. In this case he may only be partly conscious of the inferiority, but probably wholly oblivious of the relation between his physical symptoms and his skill at bridge. The child who is always too tired to join his fellows at games may be in a similar plight.

Illustrative of the unconscious complex would be the case of a boy who has a strong tendency to bully a smaller boy in his class who is cleverer at lessons. The young bully may develop a tremendous antagonism to the cleverer child without himself knowing the reason, he may take every opportunity to get "a rise out of" the little fellow by practical jokes, by stealing his belongings, or spoiling his exercise books. This form of expression of an inferiority complex is compensatory in nature. The child is endeavoring to assert himself in some other way than achieving merit in school lessons. Adler has termed such a compensatory reaction "a masculine protest," after the traditional belief in the male as the dominant sex.

An inferiority complex may arise out of an actual defect, physical or mental; or it may develop on the foundation of a supposed deficiency. In cases of the latter type, the belief in his own inferiority is often instilled into a child through his natural suggestibility by ignorant or careless mothers, nurses, teachers, or playmates. A child may be stupid at his lessons just because he has been called dull. He will not try when the task appears fruitless. There are thus two forms of expression of an inferiority complex:

a. Direct expression, as in the immediately previous example where the child will not exert any effort to improve upon his real or assumed deficiency. He is shy, retiring, disconsolate and may lapse into delinquency for want of encouragement to better behavior. He may resort to easy forms of stealing, truancy, vagrancy and the like.

b. Compensatory reaction, as in the case of the child with a "masculine protest." His little ego, refusing to admit its defeat in some respect, attempts to assert itself in the easiest possible manner, very often in delinquency. The boy who has been pampered at home and who is nicknamed "sissy" by his playmates, the one who is not so skilled at games as others, or the boy who has less pocket-money than other boys may endeavor to become a hero in their eyes by committing daring thefts, damaging property, and so forth. A dull boy will often become incorrigible in school just to gain the attention that he would otherwise get if he were successful in school subjects. Another type of compensatory reaction is a "flight into disease" as a refuge from the

hard knocks of life. The disease usually takes the form of a psycho-neurosis such as has already been mentioned.

### 12. *Introversion and Egocentrism.*

By introversion is meant direction of attention inward upon one's own fantasies, feelings, and impulses. In exaggerated form it becomes morbid contemplation. Brooding over troubles and ills causes them to develop in the mind and to appear more serious than they really are. The physical handicap, the ignominy of poverty, the teacher's injustice and the like may gradually fill the whole of a child's attention, becoming more and more intolerable until a violent impulse is experienced to do something in compensation, to run away from school, to cheat, to steal or to become incorrigible in class.

A boy or girl who is looked upon by elders as a good, quiet child may be just one of this introverted type who will break out unexpectedly into delinquency. Such children are often retiring, prefer to play by themselves, take little interest in group games, and seldom chatter or laugh with others. They may be morose and sulky or they may develop a dry sort of humor all their own. The children who are most likely to develop egocentric and introverted types of personality are those who have been very much pampered at home, those who are very different in one or more respects from other children with whom they have to associate, or those who have no opportunity for pleasurably occupying their spare time.

In all cases the child's attention is drawn in upon himself, he becomes increasingly unaware of the external situation, and increasingly unsympathetic, while his entire thoughts and feelings become more and more centered on his own problems. Healy noted a marked preponderance of egocentrism among children who were "pathological liars." The introverted and self-centered child is likely to become addicted to masturbation or other undesirable sex practices. He may also commit delinquencies of cruelty to animals or other children because the altruistic feelings are not developed.

### 13. *Revengefulness (get-even complex).*

Strong instincts of pugnacity and self-assertion when aroused and refused outlet, perhaps because of social taboo, fear of punishment or both, may be repressed out of consciousness but remain potentially active, as a "get-even complex" or attitude of revenge. A child when constantly teased and slighted by an older brother may not kick him,

as he would like to do, for fear of being beaten by his father, but he may cherish a grudge against the brother to take effect in some subtle way calculated to evade parental discipline.

Aroused and checked anger together with a thwarted "ego" (instinct of self-assertion) are the causes underlying many of the offenses which come into the juvenile court. A boy may develop a "get-even" complex against the teacher whom he thought had not dealt fairly with him in class. He may steal or damage the teacher's property, or play truant out of revenge. A child who is compared unfavorably with other children, by well-meaning but indiscreet adults, may develop a revengeful complex against them. In this latter case the instinct of self-assertion is the one which has been damned up and therefore provides the greater motive force, while in the former case the boy's pugnacity had been aroused with regard to the teacher and had not found adequate opportunity for expression.

#### 14. *Suggestibility.*

This is the tendency a person has to accept and imitate other people's ideas, beliefs, attitudes, morals, and behavior. A measure of a person's suggestibility is a measure of the ease with which he is influenced or led.

Experimental evidence and observation have shown that children are more suggestible than adults and that some children are much more open to suggestion than others, noticeably many of those of borderline and dull average intelligence. It is to be expected, then, that children who are naturally easily led and whose parents or companions are delinquent, will themselves fall into bad ways. The children may actually be used as accomplices or they may copy the others independently, the mere knowledge of the others' stealing or picking pockets being sufficient to suggest to them to do likewise.

Hypersuggestibility in a child is not sufficient in itself to cause crime, some delinquent act must be committed before the child, told to him in story form, or seen at the movies in order to influence him to act in that particular way. Moreover, suggestibility acts selectively; that is, a child will be more easily influenced by one person than another, especially by the person whom he respects and loves and who is familiar to him in many pleasurable connections. The child will also be more open to some kinds of suggestions and influences than others, determined by his own preferences or natural tendencies. For example, a child with a strong instinct of pugnacity will be easily stimulated to

anger and fighting. Children are normally open to the suggestion of:

- a. Elders, especially older children.
- b. Respected, loved or admired persons.
- c. Groups, especially gangs banded together for play purposes.
- d. Movies, scenes, books or stories of absorbing interest, especially of an instinctive or emotional nature.
- e. Any kind of influence when the vitality of the children is reduced, as under conditions of fatigue, ill-health, nervousness, etc.

#### 15. *Contrasuggestibility.*

A child may be naturally stubborn and resistive to suggestion or he may develop a tendency to stubbornness or contrasuggestibility, that is, a tendency to do the opposite of what is expected or desired. It may arise as a defense against his own suggestibility, as a protest against undue influence of authority, or as a special reaction against baleful influences (so considered by the child) and against detested persons. Thus a youngster who is brought up in a strictly religious home, who is always compelled or coerced into doing what he does not want to do, may revolt against the authorities in the house and deliberately turn delinquent, opposing all their wishes.

A boy or girl in a foster-home may develop a dislike for one or other of the guardians for various deep-seated reasons and especially if misunderstood or denied sympathy and affectionate attention. Such a dislike may be expressed in stubbornness and opposition to whatever the guardians demand, wish, or suggest with regard to the child, and may eventually lead to delinquency punishable by law, such as staying out at nights, truancy, gambling, or petty thefts.

There are many other similar dislikes which children may develop, such as dislike for the school teacher, for the Sunday school, for any member of the family, for a policeman or a neighbor, all of which may determine delinquent behavior through negative suggestibility. The "get-even complex" already described may account for some of these dislikes.

#### 16. *Lethargy and Laziness.*

As has already been said, some forms of delinquency are just the normal outcome of uncontrolled natural instincts and emotions. When, owing to mental or physical illness or defect, conscious vigilance and control are diminished a child may behave in a socially undesirable manner. Lethargy, lack of energy, may be a cause of delinquency in



this way. Such a condition of inertia may have purely physical causes, as malnutrition, autointoxication from bad hygiene, illness, defective organs or nervous system, or physical fatigue. The causes may also be partly mental, the result of mental diseases, mental conflicts, mental fatigue, refusal to face reality, and so forth. With lethargy and lack of energy usually comes a lack of interest, a lack of concern for others, and even in some cases lack of self-respect. Conduct becomes careless, old habits take the place of more recently acquired and less stable ones, and stealing, lying, vagrancy and other delinquencies may result.

Laziness may be a form of lethargy and have causes outside of conscious control by the individual, just as malingering may be a symptom of a mental or nervous disorder. Much laziness in children that is condemned by adults is no doubt of this kind. On the other hand, there is the laziness of the spoiled child who has never found the need to exert his own initiative or to curb his instincts. His character remains undeveloped and instincts remain in their primitive unsocial form. The child is so in the habit of having his selfish whims satisfied that if anything prevents this from happening he will do whatever may cost him the least trouble, whether delinquent or otherwise, to get what he wants. If he cannot have the playthings he wants he will steal them. If he is an older boy and does not want to work either at school or at any job he may have undertaken, he will stay away. A young adolescent or even an adult who is too lazy to compete with others for an honest living may turn vagrant, hobo, or burglar instead.

#### 17. *Adolescent Emotional Instability.*

The hyperemotional condition of adolescent boys or girls often leads them to do things for which they are sorry later in life. Strong emotions are aroused which impel them to action before they are able to contemplate their conduct and check the socially undesirable elements in it. This is especially true in the case of boys or girls who have little recreational opportunity of an active outdoor nature, and who have not been educated, through stories, example, pictures, etc., in the control of such impulses as anger, sex passion, jealousy, fear, infatuation or hate.

During this temporary period of emotional instability a psychoneurosis, or even a psychosis, may develop which may persist into adult life, causing the individual to become either a mental invalid, a criminal or both. Such a disordered condition only arises when the boy or

girl is called upon to face an unusually difficult personal and social problem during the adolescent period. This difficult problem is partly or wholly evaded and pushed out of consciousness (repressed), and remains a constant source of torment, producing neurotic symptoms, until it is brought into consciousness again, faced bravely and thoroughly reasoned out by the individual. Death or infidelity of a loved one or refusal of parents to allow an engagement are sometimes the cause of such a prolonged reaction.

During the period of adolescence not only are new emotions experienced and old ones intensified when aroused, but, as a result of the mental stress involved, recently acquired social habits of control and moral conduct become weaker. Old habits re-establish themselves and old emotional attachments of childhood reappear. The affection of the girl for her father, "Electra complex" of Freud, or of the boy for his mother, "Oedipus complex," may be revived and come into conflict with new developing affections. Similarly the old self-interest of childhood and love of pleasurable sensations may be revived and interfere considerably in the development of healthy altruistic love sentiments and behavior. This no doubt is what has happened, quite unknown to them in the case of some homosexual persons and prostitutes.

#### 18. *Sex Habits and Experiences.*

Sex habits such as masturbation or illicit sex experiences may lead to further sex delinquencies or may have other consequences. William Healy has shown that by reason of repression of the much condemned sex impulse and association with some other form of activity this impulse may acquire a substituted form of expression. This substituted behavior may or may not be delinquent. Healy, as has already been mentioned, quotes many cases of stealing as being largely motivated by a repressed sex instinct. This repression is the outcome of shyness, false modesty and ignorance fostered by society and by prudish or indifferent parents who neglect to give their children proper sex instruction.

A child who has been assaulted and who is afraid to speak about it to adult relatives or friends may develop a morbid sex interest followed by sex delinquency, or the aroused instinct may become repressed and gain expression in some substituted way. Social and parental taboo concerning sex matters are here again part causes of the delinquency.

Similarly the danger of masturbation for the child's health and future conduct lies mainly in the atmosphere of mystery, superstition,

and unreasoning condemnation which surrounds it. The child is almost forced by adult society into delinquency through brooding, worry and repression. On the other hand, it is probable that sex habits and experiences, apart from the influence of taboos, keep the child's attention drawn towards matters of sex, thereby intensifying the sex impulse and the consequent mental conflict. The tendency to sexual and other forms of delinquency is thus increased.

#### 19. *Habit and Association.*

One of the most difficult of the psychological causes of delinquency to treat and one of the most potent is that of habit. A delinquency once committed, as the result of suggestion, fleeting impulse, temporary loss of control or from whatever cause, may be repeated more or less automatically by force of habit. A habit develops when mainly pleasant and few unpleasant consequences follow the action. The more often the delinquent behavior is repeated and the more it is attended with pleasant circumstances, the more established becomes the habit. This delinquent habit may persist long after the original cause of its existence has disappeared. A psychiatrist, for instance, may discover and actually remove the causes which led a boy to steal, pick pockets, lie or stay out at nights, but still the young man may keep up his delinquent ways because of habit.

Psychologically speaking, habits exist because bonds of association have been formed between the situation and the response. In the same way, parts of a situation become linked together by associative bonds; a chair calls to mind a table, a cushion a sofa and so on. If one part of an experience is linked with a habit, another part of the same experience may also set off the habitual response. For example, a person may be in the habit of turning on the electric light when he goes into his bedroom in the dark, but he may also automatically turn on the light should he go into his bedroom in broad daylight—going into the bedroom being the common part of each situation. This is what happens in the case of some delinquencies, a course of action and particularly a habit is set off by the stimulation of some associated experience. The previously mentioned case where stealing was associated with, and then substituted for sex activity, is an example of the influence of unconscious association which is quite beyond the individual's control.

Association may also influence behavior when the individual is relatively conscious of it. For instance, a child who reads many cheap mystery and detective stories or who spends most of his spare time

at the movies may get crimes inseparably associated in his mind with manhood and heroism. He may feel that in order to be a "live wire" and a hero like the man in the story he must engage in some burglary or "hold-up," steal a large automobile, or at least run away from home. A similar association between delinquency and desirable character traits such as courage and manhood may develop with regard to respected adult relatives or older companions, should these people themselves be delinquent.

### III

#### HOME CONDITIONS

Home conditions can only be indirect causes of delinquency. They react upon the child's mind and body altering his mental and physical condition which in their turn determine his behavior. The conditions in the home and the family relationships which influence more particularly the mental life of the child are perhaps even more important as causes of delinquency than factors which affect mostly the physical condition of the child.

Coming from the same home environment one child may become delinquent while his brother may become a great thinker or reformer. The reason for this is no doubt partly to be found in the difference between the native endowment of the two children, but it may also be in the fact that the home conditions "apparently the same" for both children were by no means the same. The actual physical, economic and social part of the situation may have been identical for each child, but the psychological part quite different. One child may have received more praise and encouragement from his parents, have excelled more at games and have been idolized by his playfellows or younger brothers and sisters. One boy may have been surrounded by a halo of success and approval and the other boy by a shadow of failure, incompetence and parental disappointment. Moreover, there might be differences in school and neighborhood conditions which would further determine each boy's behavior. Following are some of the home conditions which may contribute to delinquency:

#### 1. *Unsanitary Conditions.*

These directly undermine the child's physical health and indirectly his mental health. They reduce his vitality and his power to control his behavior. Among such conditions should be noted:

a. Filth, unsanitary disposal of waste, bad toilet arrangements, and so forth.

- b. Poor light, heat, and ventilation.
- c. Overcrowding, especially in bedrooms. In crowded homes children overhear conversations and witness scenes between elders which, partly because of the children's immature understanding, may distort their views of life and give them suggestions for delinquency.

## 2. *Material Deficiencies.*

Material factors determine a child's physical well-being, but they also have a far-reaching influence upon his mental development. They determine his self-respect and confidence among his fellows, and his ability to control his natural instincts. Following are some of the possible material deficiencies together with the effect they may have upon a child:

a. Lack of proper clothes. If clothes are too scanty or thin they may cause the child to catch colds and be weak and ailing. He will consequently miss school-days and fall behind his fellows in school achievements. He may then try to compensate in some undesirable way. If his clothes are not of the kind worn by other children of the same age in the district, they may cause the child to become self-conscious, shy, and retiring (perhaps through other children's laughter), and out of his solitude he may develop delinquent habits.

b. Lack of pocket-money. Without pocket-money a modern child feels inferior to his playmates, he lacks independence, but more important still, he cannot learn the value of money or develop the ability to handle it. He may steal or gamble to make up for the deficiency.

c. Lack of toys, play facilities and space. Insufficient opportunity for play deprives a child of the needed exercise and discipline of his instinctive and emotional tendencies. Toys foster constructive tendencies in children and also provide some education and discipline in an acceptable form. Opportunities for games, especially group games, give children the chance to develop social sentiments and allow them socially acceptable outlets for pugnacity, self-assertion, and display, the spirit of adventure, and other primitive instincts and emotions.

d. Lack of personal property. This denies a child expression for his acquisitive tendency, his desire to possess things. As a result he may take to stealing in order to get some little treasure he can call his own. With the normal expression and consequent development of this acquisitive instinct comes due appreciation and evaluation of property.

### 3. *Excess in Material Things.*

A child belonging to wealthy, indulgent, and benevolent parents may have so many good things bestowed upon him that he fails to develop an appreciation of values or to get the discipline necessary for life. He may have:

- a. Too many and too elaborate playthings.
- b. Too much to eat, too many candies.
- c. Too much money.
- d. Too many personal possessions.
- e. Too many clothes.

Novelty is worn off the ordinary things in life for such a child. To feel any intense joy he must do something bigger, more exciting, more daring than other children. His innate egotism is fostered and developed by dint of his, commonly supposed, superior position. His appreciation of the value of property does not become developed, as is also true in the case of poverty previously mentioned. All of these facts may contribute to the child's becoming delinquent and incorrigible and committing offenses ranging in seriousness from petty larceny, setting fires, and damaging property to burglary and homicide.

### 4. *Poverty and Unemployment.*

Upon these causes alone depend many others, such as ill-health, overcrowding, neglect, ill-tempered parents, and so forth. Cyril Burt says, "55 per cent of young delinquents in London come from homes that are below the poverty line." Thefts of all kinds result from the primal urge for food, clothing, and shelter, and from the jealous desire for some of life's luxuries. Unemployment causes a similar condition of affairs. Statistics in the large cities show that during severe winters and depressions in trade, robberies, "hold-ups," and thefts increase in number.

### 5. *Broken Homes.*

Healy, Burt, Leeper, and others have pointed out that this condition may be considered as a very important factor in delinquency. Healy reports 45 to 52 per cent, Lorenz 59 per cent, and Leeper 79 per cent of cases of delinquency where "Home disrupted during the childhood of the individual" occurs in the case-histories. Data from the Boys' Farm, Shawbridge, showed that 60 per cent of the young delinquents came from broken homes. A home may be broken because:

a. One or both parents are dead. The majority of cases seem to fall into this group. Healy found that about 62 per cent of the delinquents coming from broken homes had lost either father or mother or both. Data from Shawbridge showed that one or both parents were dead in 72 per cent of the cases from broken homes, the father dead in 50 per cent and the mother dead in 22 per cent.

b. The parents are separated or divorced. This group would include cases of desertion. Healy found that desertion by a parent occurred in 16 per cent of the cases from broken homes.

Under any of the above circumstances the child may be without the necessary example, discipline or affection which should go to further his complete personal and moral development. According to whether the treatment of the child be too lax or unnecessarily harsh, the child may develop delinquent habits of the nature of uncontrolled impulses or of the compensatory type. From a study of the Shawbridge data it would seem that the absence of the father from the home is a more frequent factor in delinquency than the absence of the mother.

#### 6. *Mental and Physical Abnormalities of Parents or Siblings.*

These causal factors may be roughly grouped as follows:

a. Mental defect. This may influence a child's behavior through inadequate or misguided teaching and discipline, through delinquent example or through other discrepancies in the home life resulting from the parents' defective intelligence.

b. Mental disease. The nature of the delinquency determined by this cause will depend upon the kind of mental disease. When violence, lying, and other delinquencies are among the parents' symptoms the child may develop similar ones through imitation. In other cases the child may develop a disgust reaction or an antipathy against his home and run away or join in the street-life of the neighborhood.

c. Psychopathy and nervousness. Either condition may result in spasmodic or inconsistent discipline, in an atmosphere of depression and melancholy, or in one of nagging and irritability according to the specific form of the parents' psychopathy or nervousness. The effect of inconsistent discipline upon the child will be dealt with under separate heading. The effect of an atmosphere of depression, nagging and irritability is to make the child feel unhappy at home. This may cause him to seek pleasure elsewhere, and possibly to get into mischief.

d. Alcoholism. This may affect the child's conduct directly through suggestion and imitation of undesirable behavior on the part

of the parents. Or, it may determine his mal-behavior through neglect, ill-temper and cruelty, and lack of parental affection, all of which may drive the child to look for a happier life outside of the home.

e. Physical deformities. A child may feel ashamed of his parents, and brothers or sisters, just as he may feel ashamed of his clothes, his own stupidity, deformity, or his lack of pocket-money. In his half-formed world of values many things "count" with him which seem of minor importance to adults. Among these things may be any of his parents' disqualifications including all that have been previously mentioned even to physical deformities. Out of shame and a feeling of degradation a child may run away. Or, as a result of the unsolved conflict between the acceptance of this fact and the satisfaction of his own pride, he may take to some other form of delinquency.

#### *7. Immoral and Delinquent Parents.*

Through the native suggestibility of the child and his tendency to imitate, delinquent parents may influence him to behave in a similar manner. It does not follow, however, that delinquent and immoral parents always have delinquent children. The children may lose respect and affection for their parents and resist their influence or the power of their suggestion. They may develop affections outside of the family and so become more open to these influences than to those of their parents.

#### *8. Ill-treatment by Foster Parents, Step-parents or Guardians.*

A child may resent the fact that he has to have foster parents, step-parents, or guardians and so be marked out from the other children, which will make it difficult for these people to help in his social development. Because of this resentment their influence, by work or example, becomes less potent. The child cannot be guided painlessly and unwittingly along the path to good conduct through the aid of his natural suggestibility. Instead, the child may become stubborn and resist every influence on the part of the guardians which should make for his social and personal development and well-being.

Whether this initial resentment be present or not, it certainly will develop as a result of ill-treatment and lack of care and affection from the step-parents or guardians. The stubbornness involved will keep the child immune from the influence of good example and the benefit which is to be derived from a moderate amount of parental discipline. He will remain more or less a slave to his own instincts and emotions



and will thus become potentially or actually delinquent. At the same time he may keep away from home, the place associated with unhappiness, as much as possible and he may "get in with a rough gang" who will lead him into mischief. He may drift into delinquency in search of pleasure or out of despair, or he may defiantly engage in delinquent activities out of opposition and revenge.

#### 9. *Stigma of Illegitimacy.*

The fact of illegitimacy is taken more hardly by some children than others, depending upon the way in which the fact was originally presented to them, the attitude of adults towards it, and the attitude of young companions and neighbors towards the children themselves. The child who is taught to look upon the fact with shame, who is treated unfairly by adults on its account and who is taunted by other children is likely to develop an inferiority complex and abnormal behavior of some sort. He may become introverted and morose; he may give up trying to be good since he is so bad anyway; he may try to become a "hero in crime" to compensate for his humiliation amongst his young associates; or he may develop a grudge against humanity and commit violent and destructive crimes against the society that so injured him with the stigma.

#### 10. *Lack of Parental Care and Affection.*

The feeling side of a child's personality needs proper nourishment for healthy development just as his body does. The child who is deprived of sympathy and affectionate attention at home misses his first example and training in good fellowship, kindness and consideration for others. He misses the momentary relief and rest from personal responsibility so refreshing and necessary if he is to take on his share of social responsibility, as a child among his playmates and later on as an adult. He misses the sympathy that helps him to bear his adversities bravely. He misses encouragement to effort and to a renewed confidence in himself. He misses the relief from the emotional strain of social contacts and the balm of personal comfort. He misses also the objective stimulus to draw his attention out from himself and towards some loved and affectionately responsive person, preferably mother or father and so ultimately towards the world at large.

Without all this the child may become introverted, caring little for other people, oblivious of social responsibility, selfish and inconsiderate. He may become independent, antisocial and even cruel in his be-

havior. Or, he may become abnormally pleasure-loving or be forever soliciting sympathy for himself. He may turn delinquent through lack of discipline, or in attempt to compensate for the lack of joy in the home or for want of material comfort. Parental care and affection may be lacking through the following causes:

- a. Mother working.
- b. Mother occupied in social activities.
- c. Too many children in the family, and the mother's attention consequently very divided.
- d. Lack of interest and understanding. This might occur if the child was a "not wanted baby." It might also occur where either the mother or child are mentally defective, or where they are so different from one another in temperament and character traits that neither understands the other. It is equally likely to occur where the mother or both parents are lacking in parental instinct and affection.

11. *Lack of Confidence and Frankness between Parents and Children.*

This may show itself in one or both of the following ways:

a. Concerning little personal interests. Every child needs a certain amount of praise and encouragement, an opportunity to show off and an opportunity to "think aloud" and to discuss problems with older people whom he can trust. The child who cannot make a friend of his parents so as to share his interests with them will endeavor to make friends elsewhere, perhaps of an undesirable nature, or he will retire within himself and become introverted. In either case he will become estranged from his parents and apart from their influence.

b. Concerning sex matters. It is particularly necessary that there be frankness between parents and children with regard to sex matters because of the mystery surrounding questions of sex, the erroneous beliefs which persist among ignorant people, and the intense emotion such matters arouse in the growing boy or girl, ready to be expressed in one way or another. A child who finds no favorable opportunity for frank discussion may brood for months or even years over a mental conflict with regard to sex. This conflict may have been set up as a result of receiving false information from an outside source or as a result of the development of an unnatural and unwholesome attitude towards sex. The child may turn delinquent as a relief from the strain or by way of compensation, or as a result of pure ignorance. Many sex delinquencies and some cases of stealing are found to be the result of lack of frankness between children and parents, with the consequent unwholesome attitude on the part of the child and the acquisi-

tion of false information and fears with regard to sex. The very lack of frankness itself may bespeak an unwholesome attitude towards sex in the parents which may be copied by the child.

#### 12. *Deficient and Misdirected Discipline.*

Among the many possible ways in which home discipline can be faulty the following are selected as being the most noticeable and frequent causes of delinquency.

a. Over-indulgence and coddling. This tends to exaggerate rather than control a child's natural antisocial impulses. It may also earn him the disrespect of his play or school companions, which may drive him to compensate for his lack of prestige by delinquent behavior.

b. Over-restriction and severity. This may make the child obstinate and negativistic and thus immune to discipline in its ordinary form. His reactions would then be to oppose his parents in everything. Over-restriction may also intensify the child's desire to do the forbidden things until his impulses get the better of him. And severity may make home so undesirable that the child seeks solace outside, perhaps in delinquency.

c. Lack of coöperation between parents. When parents do not agree in matters of discipline for their children the result is often practically the same as if there were no discipline in the home. A habit of good conduct may be started by one parent but hindered in its development by the contrary influence of the other, so that the child grows up undisciplined in spite of spasmodic efforts to the contrary. When there are two possible ways of behaving so as to gain parental approbation the child is likely to choose the easiest. And when he is reprimanded by one parent for doing what the other allows him to do then he is likely to develop a habit of deceit to avoid reproof.

d. Inconsistent authority. When one parent is inconsistent in his or her exercise of discipline, that is, when the child is scolded for doing one minute what he was allowed to do the minute before, the effect is very much the same as when the two parents disagree on disciplinary matters. The child does not know what to do to please his parent so he pleases himself, and takes his punishment as it comes as a matter of course. Practically no connection becomes established in his mind between the punishment and the behavior it is supposed to repudiate.

e. Nagging and frightening. Nagging and fear are unpleasant things for any child to have associated with home. He will naturally

keep away as long as he possibly can from a place with such associations. Nagging, moreover, often takes the form of a series of "don'ts," thoughtless commands which are quite impossible for the child to obey. His natural reaction is to *do* something and the first thing which presents itself for him to do is generally that which is suggested in the nagging that he must not do. He may disobey because he cannot help it and he may disobey out of obstinate mischief. He may, on the other hand, apparently succeed in obeying the numerous commands to check his natural reactions but only to get spurious satisfaction for his suppressed energy out of concealed delinquency.

Frightening a child is dangerous for his physical as well as his mental health and is of doubtful validity for disciplinary purposes, in spite of traditional usage. Fear is "inhibitory," it interferes with circulation and digestion and other normal functions in the body. It paralyzes effort and "results in discouragement, timidity, secretiveness, and anxiety" (quotation from Gruenberg). Phobias, common in the psychoses and psychoneuroses have been traced to frights in childhood. Terrorizing a child for purposes of deterrence only prevents him from doing the desirable thing and at the same time it fixes the undesirable thing in his mind, there to remain as a haunting fear from which he may attempt to escape through other delinquency. If the fright were severe enough the memory of it might be repressed and a psychoneurosis might develop, with the consequent serious results.

f. Interference from other relatives. Other relatives in the household may use their influence unwisely with children. They may undermine the parents' discipline by contrary suggestions and indulgences, or they may make the children rebellious through too much severity.

g. Favoritism and injustice. Favoritism in a family may cause the less fortunate member or members to develop "grudges" against the object of the favoritism or against the offending parent. The outcome may be delinquency of some form just to get even. Children who do not receive their fair share of praise or attention may, on the other hand, lose confidence in themselves and fall into delinquent ways through despair. Injustice of any kind such as the above mentioned, or extreme penalty for trivial offenses, will cause a child to lose respect for those in authority and often to seek compensation in antisocial ways.

### 13. *Unhappy Relationship with Siblings.*

The following are among the unhappy relationships which are found to lead to delinquency:

a. Teasing and bullying. The child who is bullied and teased by brothers or sisters because of some inferiority or defect or for some other reason, is constantly being stimulated to express his instincts of pugnacity and self-assertion. If he is prevented from expressing them to his satisfaction, which is usually the case, he will develop a "get-even complex" or an "inferiority complex" or both, which may ultimately lead to serious delinquency.

b. Jealousy. Jealousy usually develops in a child with strong instincts of acquisition and self-assertion (egoistic impulse). It may be directed towards any member of the family who is naturally gifted, who is favored by the parents, or who receives benefits from other sources. A jealous child may be delinquent in order to discomfit the object of his jealousy, or he may steal or commit other delinquencies to get something for himself to make him even.

c. Antagonisms. A child may develop an antagonism for any of his brothers or sisters which may eventually drive him to delinquency, especially if the feeling is kept to himself and not expressed in any way. The causes of the antagonism may be injury to himself or his property, insult, teasing, sneaking or tale-telling. An antagonism may also be based on jealousy.

### 14. *Bad Example.*

What has already been said with regard to suggestibility and the part played by immoral and delinquent parents in determining delinquency may be considered to be applicable also to the bad example of any elders or of siblings. Their influence will be greater if they are held in much esteem by the child in question.

### 15. *Foreign Birth or Parentage.*

The problems arising in an immigrant family may contribute to the causes of delinquency. In the case where a family is attempting to maintain its native standards and customs many conflicts are likely to arise in the minds of its young members, and mental disorder or delinquency may result. A young child may get "out of hand," not knowing what standards to adopt, and an adolescent may break down under the conflict of loyalties and ideals. How far the problem of the adjustment of immigrants and the problem of delinquency are

related is not known. But Jarrett, and others, have made attempts to show that such a relationship exists.

16. *"Superior" Education of Children.*

A form of intellectual snobbery may grow up among children who have been given better educational opportunities than their parents and come to lose respect for them. Hamilton-Pearson says, "Consciousness of greater knowledge in one direction, to a mind unchastened by the hard facts of experience, breeds the belief in greater capacity in all directions." As a result a child may get beyond the control of parental discipline and may get into trouble. It is, however, obvious that any form of education which would foster an attitude of snobbishness in pupils is scarcely entitled to be called "superior."

#### IV.

##### SCHOOL CONDITIONS

School conditions, like the home conditions, may be considered as indirect causes of delinquency, although in either may be found the chief source of the trouble. It is the effect which these conditions have upon the particular child's mind and body which actually causes delinquent behavior. Conditions in school which contribute to delinquency are as follows:

1. *Inadequate School Building and Equipment.*

These may be primary causes of unhealthy bodies and general incorrigibility in school children. Overcrowded, badly ventilated classrooms, perhaps also poorly heated and lighted, make discipline as well as good health among the pupils well-nigh impossible. Insufficient staff and non-provision of necessary books and apparatus often means that the children's time is only partly occupied and even then probably in a very dull way from the child's point of view. The forced or the stolen idleness gives them plenty of opportunity to plan and to carry out deeds of mischief.

2. *Inadequate Facilities for Recreation.*

Lack of playground, gymnasium and other facilities for games represents lack of the only means, at the present time, for the social outlet and training of the instincts. Such deficiencies also deprive the children of a valuable general as well as mental hygiene measure.

The playground and the games teacher are probably as important factors in character education as the classroom and the classroom teacher are in academic education.

### 3. *Rigid and Inelastic School System, "the Goose Step."*

A school system which is too rigid may defeat its own purpose and produce young rebels. Three factors in such a system which may contribute to delinquency are mentioned below.

a. Superfluous and unnecessary regulations. These are easily detected and resented by children. In protest against unreasonable rules the children may rebel against all rules in general and become delinquent.

b. Fixed curricula. Curricula not adapted to pupils' abilities and interests may cause some of them to become dissatisfied and play truant, or get into other trouble to avoid the dull and irksome tasks.

c. Lack of individual consideration. The child in a large school run according to some fixed system, is apt to miss the personal interest which every child needs for encouragement and progress. The general plan of teaching, moreover, may be ill-suited to his particular needs. He may become discouraged and disinterested in his work if the tasks are too hard and he may turn to delinquency for greater satisfaction. On the other hand if the tasks are too easy he may get into mischief to fill his spare time.

### 4. *Poor Attendance Laws and Lax Enforcement.*

Attendance laws which include many exemptions from attendance give ample opportunity to the rebellious child, the dissatisfied child, or the adventurous child to play truant and avoid immediate consequences. He can always find some plausible excuse for being away from school. In the same way, lax enforcement of attendance laws makes it easy for a child to "play hookey." Truancy is a delinquency in itself but it often furnishes opportunity for offenses of a much more serious nature. Healy, Abbott and Wallace among others, give evidence of this fact.

### 5. *Wrong Grading.*

This may cause delinquent behavior in two ways:

a. Grading above mental level. This causes a child to fail in his tasks, to compare unfavorably with his classmates and possibly

to receive scoldings from his teacher. He may grow very worried as a result, sleep badly and present symptoms of mental conflict and "nervousness." He may resort to delinquent behavior as an alternative means of achieving "success" among his fellows, or he may slide into lax delinquent ways out of sheer despondency.

b. Grading below mental level. This means that the work is too easy for the child. He finishes his tasks before the others and with less effort. Consequently he has plenty of superfluous time and energy to spend in mischievous ways.

#### 6. *Unsatisfactory Teacher.*

There are at least three ways in which an unsatisfactory teacher may be the cause of a child's turning delinquent.

a. Poor discipline. A teacher who does not keep all the pupils happily engaged, a teacher who allows freedom one minute and who is strict with the children concerning the same things another minute, a teacher who expects mischief and challenges the children (consciously or unconsciously) to defiance of order and authority, or one who is generally incompetent at his task, will be sure to find at least some of his pupils delinquent.

b. Poor teaching ability. Like inability to discipline a class, poor teaching ability tends to produce a lack of respect for the teacher in the children. The more aggressive and assertive among them will take advantage and dominate the situation. Poor teaching ability may also mean that lessons are made dull or hard so that the children will do anything to get away from them.

c. Undesirable character traits. These may be imitated by the pupils, or they may cause rebellion or compensatory reaction on the part of the children. Following are some of the effects which undesirable character traits in teachers may have upon the pupils: Unjust teachers may produce rebellion and contrariness in some children and discouragement in others. Unsympathetic teachers may fail to win interest and devotion on the part of the pupils for school or lessons. Sarcastic teachers may produce rebelliousness, aggression or timidity in children. Noisy teachers may provoke noisiness, antagonism and even violence. Bad-tempered teachers may arouse anger and pugnacity in children, or fear and nervousness. Nervous or psychopathic teachers may induce symptoms similar to their own in the pupils.

General incorrigibility, truancy, lying and fighting may be the



direct outcome of any of these conditions, while stealing and other offenses may be indirectly traceable to these causes.

7. *Undesirable Attitude of Pupil Toward Teacher.*

A child may develop an unwholesome attitude towards his teacher which may make him react abnormally to his school life. The attitude may arise out of injustice on the part of the teacher, or from a delusion on the child's part as to the teacher's attitude towards himself. It may develop as a result of unwise criticism of the teacher in the child's hearing by the parents, or as a result of suggestion from other children who dislike the teacher. Such an attitude may cause the child to run away from school, or to try to "pay the teacher out." It would place him outside of the influence of the teacher's discipline, and he might join in delinquencies with other children.

8. *Bad School Companions and Codes of Morals.*

Children form groups of friends in school for various reasons: because of community of interest in hobbies, games, school-work, or amusements, because of personal and temperamental attraction, because of proximity of age or home, and no doubt for other reasons. They may get together for laudable purposes or to support one another in mischief. But whatever be the cause or purpose for a group's getting together, the individual members will influence one another's behavior through suggestibility which becomes exaggerated in group life.

If the group's aim be entirely mischievous then delinquent example and suggestion will soon "catch on," to use gang language. But even in a group of school children which has no mischievous intent a child who has an undesirable code of morals and undisciplined instincts may influence others in the group to bad behavior, especially the younger ones and those who look upon him with respect and admiration. The children most open to such influence are those whose own training has been neglected or faulty, children who have not learnt to appreciate the difference between good and bad behavior, or those who care little for the approval and disapproval of parents and teachers.

V.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONDITIONS

Neighborhood conditions may determine a child's behavior just as home and school conditions may do, through their effect upon the

child's mental attitude and physical condition. Among the contributing factors to delinquency which have their origin in neighborhood conditions may be mentioned the following:

1. *Lack of Recreational Facilities.*

Just as lack of recreational facilities in school leave a child practically no socially desirable outlet for, and means of discipline for normal or abnormal impulses during school hours, so lack of similar facilities in the neighborhood presents the same and even greater difficulty for out-of-school hours. Investigators have shown us that crimes are mostly committed in spare time, that is, time spent away from school or work. It is therefore considerably more serious for a child to live in a neighborhood without play-ground space, clubs, or game facilities of any kind, than it is for him to attend a school deficient in the same respects. Although, as has previously been shown, this latter deficiency may have serious enough consequences itself. Any and all kinds of delinquency may result from lack of recreational facilities.

2. *Congested Neighborhood and Slums.*

Congested neighborhoods and slums may cause delinquency for the same reason that overcrowded homes and schoolrooms may do. Slums may include additional causative factors such as bad sanitation, damp, dark and badly ventilated houses, proximity of smoky, smelling factories and noisy machinery, and the close contact with undesirable neighbors, perhaps immoral and delinquent. Children are not so likely to get into bad mischief while they are alone, but when they get together in gangs as they do in congested neighborhoods, they become fortified by mutual support and are ready to dare anything. The influence of a gang is further considered under separate heading.

3. *Disreputable Morals of the District.*

These may influence a child's behavior through his suggestibility to what he sees and hears at home or on the streets, or through the influence of his particular neighborhood companions.

4. *Proximity of Luxury and Wealth.*

Children whose parents are comparatively poor and who live near to a more wealthy district may develop attitudes of discontent

or longings for the luxuries of the others, so much so that they commit crimes to get even with the others or to satisfy their material cravings. If their companions are children of more affluent parents the poorer children may steal in order to be of equal standing with their little friends.

##### 5. *Influence of Gangs and Gang Codes.*

The increased suggestibility of an individual in a group of people is one of the most striking features of "mob psychology." Further, if the group be banded together for any set purpose the individual members become more suggestible to thoughts or actions bearing any connection with the aim of the group. For instance, if a gang be formed for the purpose of playing practical jokes any mischievous suggestion from one of the number will be quickly taken up by the others and eventually serious delinquencies may be committed. A boy in a gang, as Puffer and others have pointed out, will be led to participate in crimes the very thought of which he might shrink from when alone.

Not only is suggestibility increased by the presence of the gang, but sense of responsibility and power of self-control are diminished, thus examples and suggestions most readily followed by a gang are those of a crude and instinctive nature. It is quite possible for a group, whose original intentions were quite harmless, to develop into an unruly and dangerous gang. Obviously, still more dangerous is a gang banded together for the express purpose of law-breaking, stealing, or making "hold ups," such as are found in large cities. On the other hand, a gang develops virtues such as loyalty and cooperation which may be cultivated for social benefit as is done in the boy scouts, girl guides, and so forth.

##### 6. *Loneliness, Lack of Social Outlets.*

An only child, one segregated from other children because of illness or isolation of home district, one neglected by parents or guardians, or one strictly confined without necessary play opportunities, is placed in a position which may cause him to become delinquent. He is deprived of any means of satisfying his social tendencies, his natural gregariousness. He is also deprived of socially acceptable means of expression for such strong instincts as curiosity and adventure, rivalry, sex, or self-display. As a result he will be compelled to find some outlet for these pent-up tendencies, and it may

not be a socially acceptable one. He may develop undesirable sex habits, he may become incorrigible and impudent, or he may run away, steal or damage property according to the most urgent demands of his nature.

#### 7. *Overstimulating Movies and Shows.*

Among juvenile offenders many have been found to be ardent frequenters of movies and vaudeville shows. Judge Hoffmann of Cincinnati considers these latter to be very powerful factors in the determination of juvenile crime. It is thought that shows and movies stimulate the children's primitive instincts for adventure, conquest, acquisition, etc.; and that many of them offer suggestions for active expression of these instincts along delinquent lines, which may be carried out later by the children.

Some children's minds may be too immature to distinguish between the lawful and the unlawful, the moral and the immoral of what they see enacted before them; thus, should they copy what they see, they may be led to commit social offenses unwittingly. Others, who are old enough to distinguish between right and wrong, may be urged to delinquency by the excitement aroused within them and the daring suggestions offered by the show.

On the other hand, movies and shows offer many suggestions for socially desirable behavior which are presented in such a manner that they are more likely to take effect than the bad suggestions. It is possible also that witnessing an exciting show may be a good substitute for primitive instinctive and emotional activity and in some cases may be a curative measure rather than a cause of delinquency.

## VI.

### OCCUPATIONAL CONDITIONS

The environment of the child who is engaged in some wage-earning occupation offers a further source for external causes of delinquency. Some of the occupational conditions which may contribute to delinquency are:

#### 1. *Irregular Occupation.*

Irregular and seasonal occupations and those which do not offer steady wages place the young worker in the difficult situation of having too much alternating with too little money. The child who

makes considerable sums of money and has ample pocket-money at one season and who is entirely without at another may be tempted to steal during the "off" periods. He may resort to stealing to keep up appearances and reputation among his companions, or to satisfy a taste or greed for luxuries developed during the periods of affluence. Spare time resulting from irregular occupation may be a factor in delinquency and is considered under a separate heading.

### 2. *Occupational Misfit.*

Young boys and girls engaged in occupations ill-suited to their natural aptitudes or physical condition may develop attitudes of discontent, restlessness, irritability, nervousness or despondency. They may also get over-fatigued and physically sick. These conditions may lead them into delinquency for compensation or because their power of control and resistance is so reduced that they cannot help it. If their instincts and interests are not getting expression in their work they will seek expression outside of it perhaps in undesirable ways. Deserters and truants are usually "misfits" at their jobs.

### 3. *Spare Time and Idleness.*

A youth may have spare time because his work only fills a small part of the day. He may be constantly drifting from one job to another unable to find a suitable occupation, each change meaning time out of work, or he may be engaged in a seasonal occupation which offords weeks of spare time. During these idle hours he may indulge in some form of delinquency for his own amusement and satisfaction, or he may join a gang and be drawn into criminal pursuits.

Statistics have been compiled to show that the majority of juvenile offenses are committed in spare time out of work or school hours. Considerable spare time is needed for rest and recreational purposes, but spare time unoccupied by socialized activities, such as supervised games, hobbies, etc., provides opportunity for undesirable forms of expression of natural energy and impulses. It allows opportunity for day-dreaming, which may lead to introversion and the cultivation of morbid fantasies, delusions and obsessions.

### 4. *Truancy.*

Truancy from work or school provides ample opportunity and spare time for delinquency. It usually happens during the part of

the day when desirable companions are not available for play or other purposes. The truant then must either spend his time in solitude or in the company of other young or older delinquents. He may fall into further delinquency in either case. Healy, Abbott, Wallace and others have given statistical evidence that truancy is a factor in over half of the cases of juvenile offense.

#### 5. *Factory Influences.*

Older men and women may influence the younger workers in a factory to commit social offenses either by example or by bribery. The latter may be for their own careless amusement or profit. The youngster may also overhear conversations which offer suggestions to him for delinquent behavior.

#### 6. *Monotony and Restraint.*

The growing boy (or girl) may find it too difficult to adapt to the restrictions and monotony of the factory system. As a result his pent-up instincts and emotions may drive him to seek relief in delinquency.

#### 7. *Decline in the Apprenticeship System.*

Hamilton-Pearson says, "there is no better teacher of self-control, self-reliance and self-confidence than the practical learning of a trade." In the old days the discipline of learning a craft took the place of school discipline when a boy graduated from school. "The unstable transition period between boyhood and manhood was bridged in the finest way possible. . . . At present there is no provision for this dangerous transition period, except a year or so longer at school learning unpractical things in which in the majority of cases interest, if it ever existed, has been lost." It seems probable that some of the increase in juvenile delinquency of recent years may be due to the decline of the apprenticeship system, with its acceptable form of discipline, and its opportunities for the development of absorbing interests and for the useful organization of youthful activity.

### CONCLUSIONS

Factors contributing to delinquency are thus to be found not only in the mental and physical make-up of the individual, but also in his present and past environments. Unwholesome influences and

difficult situations encountered in early childhood are probably as important causal factors of delinquency as are present conditions. They may even be more important.

In searching for the root causes in any given case of delinquency, prior to treatment, it is therefore absolutely necessary to make a thorough investigation of the past and present life of the individual and of his mental and physical make-up. It is probable that this cannot be undertaken by one person; for it will involve making an extensive survey of past and present home conditions, past and present school, neighborhood, and occupational conditions, besides making complete mental and physical examinations of the case. These latter also include delving into the earlier life of the individual.

A case cannot be treated in a satisfactory manner without adequate knowledge of the causes of the trouble, and this cannot be obtained in a short interview with the young offender, nor in any number of interviews with him alone. A history of the case must be compiled from many sources, for no one person can see all of the truth, neither mother, teacher, employer nor the delinquent himself, and statements may not always be correct.

Lastly, it cannot be too much emphasized that the factors described in this outline are only part causes of delinquency. Probably none of them alone would produce delinquency. The cause always lies in a combination of factors, and no two combinations are found to be alike. Mental defect, for instance, is not a cause of delinquency, but it may be a causal factor along with a strong ego instinct, emotional instability and lack of suitable training in school. It may also be a causal factor in combination with a spirit of adventure, lack of fear, and inadequate play facilities; or in an immense variety of other combinations. Mental defect, moreover, is not always a contributory factor in delinquency, nor is any other single factor. The combinations of causal factors which lead to delinquency are many and diverse.

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