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## Editorial

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## EDITORIAL

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### EMBARRASSMENT OF RICHES

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He is a rash man who announces that he can place his finger upon the one source of juvenile delinquency that, among all others, is most fruitful. And it is equally rash to assert that multiple factor analysis of the subject can point out the causal factors of delinquency in the order of their importance. There are many intangibles involved in the production of any social phenomenon.

It is generally accepted as a sound theory that whatever produces a settled sense of dissatisfaction with home or school or other institutions with which the youth are in more or less continuous contact contributes toward the development of unstable personalities and hence, indirectly toward delinquent behavior.

One of our correspondents, Dr. Edwin E. Jacobs, of Ashland, Ohio, has lately provoked our attention anew to this theory, and from an unusual angle. "In the schools they (pupils from the less favored homes) meet with conditions so utterly different from their home conditions that they experience a real shock. One must wonder just what the effect must be upon a girl when she comes from a home of poverty. The buildings are warm and clean while the homes from which our future delinquents come are neither.

"In the domestic science courses, the equipment is of the very best, and is far and away better than the poorer girls will ever have of their own, and the same may be said about the courses in manual training. I recently visited a teachers' college where a whole building was given over to showing model bedrooms, bathrooms, parlors, libraries, fruit storage rooms, and a kitchen with the most refined appointments with white enamel and electricity everywhere. The carpets and rugs outdid anything in any home in the city to say nothing of the pianos and other furniture.

"I saw at least one girl whipping eggs with an electric whipper who, at home, would have great difficulty even to get enough eggs for breakfast, and in her home there is no electricity at all. Perhaps as much or more can be said about the boys for here they come in contact with other boys who wear good clothes, drive automobiles, and attend the school dances and other social functions.

"Now all of this can probably be logically defended, but this

is not the main point. The main question is: what is the school doing to help the poorer young people to satisfy these aroused desires? The answer is nothing or next to nothing for when the ordinary boy finishes or drops out, he is as economically helpless as he was when he entered the school. I regard this as one of the prime defects of our public schools today. We drive and drive our students toward ends for the accomplishment of which we do nothing. In other words, we arouse desires (and rightly so), and then do nothing about any means of satisfying them. It's all right to show the upward heights, but what if we cannot scale them?

"Now all of this often leaves the student of unstable type restless and dissatisfied; and too often home life offers no real check toward moral restraint. With a deficiency in home training and the general failure of the schools in character training, and with all too few opportunities to secure a job together with the inability to do the work the job requires, one can hardly expect less than an increase in juvenile delinquency.

"If the above is true even in any degree, two things seem necessary: better character building and offering of courses which really prepare not only to make a life but to make a living. All talk about its being easy to make a living but hard to make a life originates from an idealism that is far removed from the struggles and realities of life. It seems fairly obvious that if boys were separated from the slum homes and from the rowdy gangs for a period of years, trained and inspired, and then sent back, not to such homes, but to better ones and to a congenial job, the greatest incentive to juvenile delinquency would be effectively removed."

We are truly faced with a hard problem. Thorough satisfaction with one's lot would be fatal to the individual even if it were possible of attainment. We cannot refrain from making our pupils acquainted with the best in material and other equipment that our civilization has developed. They would become acquainted with much of our material equipment, at least, without the aid of teachers. And, however long we keep them away from unsatisfactory home surroundings, we cannot guarantee to send them back ultimately to better ones nor to congenial jobs. We are compelled to put our faith in the proposition that time and the most intelligent effort we can direct are great solvents. And departments of domestic science and manual arts *could* teach their pupils the challenging art of getting on with primitive tools.

ROBERT H. GAULT.