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AN ADDITIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF CRIMINALS

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In a previous work¹ I showed that a large proportion of criminotic individuals in prison are more or less destined to carry out certain criminotic acts until they have matured and settled at the age of thirty or thereabouts. There is nothing more common than the following sequence of events in an individual. Larceny of a car from the ages of fifteen to eighteen, unlawful entry or burglary from the ages of seventeen to twenty-one, robbery from the ages of nineteen to twenty-eight and then a settling down, adjustment and avoidance of prison. These are important facts to recognize. One so often sees a man released in his early or middle twenties, knowing full well that he will soon commit a robbery in which he may kill someone or for which he may get a long sentence that will keep him in prison until the age of forty or forty-five when all hope of a satisfactory adjustment is gone.

One wonders if it would not be better to keep certain young burglars and robbers in prison until they are about thirty and already matured. To this type of individual I should like to apply the term Developmental criminal, or, to be more scientific, Developmental Criminotic. Anyone who has dealt largely with active problems of crime must have already dimly or clearly seen this issue. In the work above mentioned I found certain of the early findings of the Gluecks inadequate in that they had not as yet considered this problem of maturation. More recently another important work of theirs² has appeared and in this work ideas of maturation occupy the most conspicuous place. It is obvious that these considerations are most important for the legislature that is to make laws against, the policeman who must investigate and arrest, the district attorney who is to prosecute, the judge who is to sentence, the institutional officers who are to rehabilitate, and the Parole Board that is to supervise the criminotic. It is important further to make extensive

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¹ Crime and Sexual Development. The Monograph Editions, Glens Falls, New York, 1936.

² Later Criminal Careers, Sheldon & Eleanor Glueck, The Commonwealth Fund, New York, 1937.

observations and studies of this type, for assuredly the pattern cannot and will not always be utterly consistent. As an example of the practical worth of these ideas in police activity, it is obvious that the police in investigating a burglary could waste a lot of time hunting up youths who have served a short sentence for burglary, for such youths probably are already planning a robbery. The policeman had better devote his efforts to the new crop of burglars recruited from the "joy ride" car thieves or to the burglars already known to be of the repetitive type.

This brings us to a consideration of the second type of criminotic—the Repetitive Criminotic. The most notorious crimes of a repetitive nature are burglary, forgery, sexual crimes, and among the minor crimes, pickpocketing. It is quite amazing to find that once a man has committed a robbery with a gun it almost certainly excludes him as a burglar. It is similarly startling to find that once a man has acted as a swindler he is almost certain not to be involved in a forgery. Any prison records will show this. The police probably proceed on this basis in an intuitive manner. The repetitive criminotic does not mature. He retains his pattern of behavior, only elaborating on the original pattern. His lack of maturation makes him commit the same crime with appalling consistency in his twenties, thirties, forties and even fifties. Of this type we could not very well say—release him from prison at about the age of thirty. The solution of this problem will come only with further and deeper research into the biology, psychology and sociology of criminotic behavior and the institution of curative and preventive measures. Here again lies the importance of the research worker.

The third and last group is that of the Occasional Criminal or Criminotic. The term accidental criminal is not appropriate for we do not know whether these are accidents or not. There are many individuals who carry on a satisfactory adjustment in life until they meet with a circumstance or a series of circumstances which break up that adjustment. They themselves may or may not be responsible for these circumstances. Under the stress of the new situation they may lapse into criminotic behavior. Although judges frequently recognize this type, the nature of his circumstances is too often overlooked in the heavy traffic of a courtroom. That such a type is important to differentiate appears from many points of view. At times such individuals are so shamed and mortified by the crime and arrest that to further separate them from their families and to prevent the immediate return to adjustment is expensive and with-

out reason. If they come to prison, to let them associate with other types of criminotics is hazardous. We are too much inclined to be tender with youth rather than the youth of the criminal tendency even in a man of greater age. Our views still are somewhat distorted.

There are numerous circumstances that bring about the occasional criminal. During the depression (and even today) we had ample opportunity of seeing individuals in all walks of life reverting to an occasional crime; when employment was impossible, when life-long earnings were swept away, when family was in dire want, when ambitions had to crumble. These are mainly the economic factors. Then there are certain responsibilities of life that certain individuals accept with the greatest of difficulty. It is not rare to see men committing a crime while engaged to be married, just before or after the marriage ceremony, or just before or after the acceptance of fatherhood. To many individuals these responsibilities are accepted with ease—to others they are a great temporary strain on established adjustments. Other crises of life also may seriously disturb adjustment and lead to an occasional crime. There are the death or serious illness of a beloved relative, frustration in love, an injury or an insult, infidelity. The occasional crime is also brought about by a great blow to vanity, pride or incapacity in the physical sphere. Thus the acquisition of venereal disease profoundly disturbs some men. The loss of fingers or some face mutilating accident may have a similar effect. Then too a rare alcoholic bout may careen an individual into a crime. Less frequently there are the diseases which actually involve the brain structure and may or may not be spontaneously or therapeutically recoverable—Syphilis, Encephalitis (sleeping sickness) etc. In using this grouping the particular factor would have to show up as directly related to the crime.

It is obvious that a classification of this sort added to any psychiatric or classification report would be decidedly helpful in addition to the already accepted Psychiatric, Administrative and Vocational classifications now in use. I do not pretend to go into the numerous advantages here but suggest that this is an advance in and addition to the previous classifications which can only augment the value of the latter.

THE CLASSIFICATION

1—The Developmental Criminotic (or Criminal)

As an example—The youth who steals a car, then commits a burglary, then a robbery and settles down at about the age of thirty.

2—The Repetitive Criminotic

The repetitive burglar, forger, pickpocket, or sex criminal whose activities often continue well into middle age.

3—The Occasional Criminotic

- A—Situational
 - I Economic Problems.
 - II Crises of life—Engagement, marriage, fatherhood, infidelity of marital partner, frustration in love, serious sickness in family, an insult or hostile act.
- B—Physical
 - I Venereal and other diseases or injuries which are blows to pride, vanity or capacity.
 - II Rare alcoholic bout.
 - III Curable or incurable mental disease, syphilis, sleeping sickness, etc.