

1945

Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

CRIMINAL CAREERS IN RETROSPECT. Glueck, Sheldon and Eleanor. New York, The Commonwealth Fund, 1943. Pp. 380; \$3.50.

The philosophy from which the work¹ of the Gluecks has sprung is that of causal correctional theory and practice in penology. Dr. and Mrs. Glueck have achieved what may be called the most determined turnaway from the old expiatory-retributive theory. Their true problem has been to find methods which would enable the sentencing courts in cooperation with boards of experts to mete out in each individual case that form of treatment which most likely would prevent new offenses. We have purposely used the words "mete out" and "treatment" because the authors themselves do not set any too much stock in a clear differentiation of what is implied in these two terms. They will admit therefore that for shocking, heinous crimes the vindictive element must be retained (p. 290). At a time when political crimes are so much discussed this is an important admission.

The method, then, which the authors suggest for the average case has been modelled upon the prediction tables of life insurance. It is by the use of such tables that the authors think they will finally be able to find the makeup and background of the different types of offenders that are responsible for the behavior and that will consequently enable the courts to foretell the "shape of things to come" and to deal sensibly with them.

Many critics have overlooked that the Gluecks themselves have cautioned that their tables, as incidentally those of any other author, necessarily, for the time being, are of an illustrative, tentative, and experimental character "based as they are on but one series of cases." The authors repeatedly tell us that their method has proven useful so far only in their own material. It will have to be shown that the factors which they found decisive are really decisive in relation to other material. Some of their factors are indeed surprising. Large families with seven or more children have given a better prediction score than the two-to-six or the one-child family. Feeble-mindedness, as may be expected, is an unfavorable factor but the weight of it is relatively small. Skilled fathers have more often unfavorably inclined children than unskilled. And the comfortable economic condition, again, seems to give an unfavorable prediction score in the offender population. Most often has the age factor, as the Gluecks see it, been attacked.

The criticism would be that for all their caution the Gluecks have not yet sufficiently stressed that their sample of the offender population may have been a very particular one. An objection on principle is the following. The authors seem to have overstretched the idea of prediction from tabulated factors. Even in life insurance one has learned that these factors are not isolated to such a degree; that much depends on the attitudes, motivations of the insured.

¹ *Five Hundred Criminal Careers*, New York, Knopf, 1930; *Five Hundred Delinquent Women*, New York, Knopf, 1934; *One Thousand Juvenile Delinquents*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1934; *Juvenile Delinquents Grown Up*, New York, The Commonwealth Fund, 1940.

Otherwise the companies would not pay so much for preventive medicine and preventive health education and propaganda. For the investigation of an offender one should keep in mind that the background and the situation are in continuous interaction and the result will be the continuous formation of attitudes.² In other words it is the factor of attitudes and motivations which the Gluecks have not sufficiently taken into consideration. The clinical observation of the motivation of the offender, far from being an outmoded method, will have to play the first part. If one reads the analysis of the case histories (Chapter 14, "Some Illustrative Cases") he will see that the Gluecks themselves have not overstretched the principle of isolated predictive factors. They have seen that the motivation, as the membrane between the situation and the character, changes not only with the development of character but much more so with the vicissitudes, chances, and unpredictable occurrences in the surroundings.

New York City

W. ELIASBERG.

THE ROLE OF THE SUPREME COURT IN AMERICAN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS, 1789-1835, by Charles Grove Haines. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press (1944). Pp. xiii, 679, \$6.50.

"No attempt has been made to present a nonpartisan account of the development of American constitutional law" (p. 4). Inherent in this statement is the assumption that the Supreme Court cannot be isolated from the political arena and treated entirely as a mechanical tribunal in the field of law. The incontrovertible fact is that the Supreme Court has been an important political agency ever since 1789. The justices have employed their power of judicial review and interpretation to participate in party struggles and to enact their own social philosophy into law. The contribution of this brilliant analysis — a classic in the field of constitutional law and the administration of justice—is that Professor Haines subjects to penetrating scrutiny the point of view that the federalist and nationalist policies of the Supreme Court are sacrosanct and deserving of blind veneration. Instead, for the first time, he brings the weight of careful scholarship to the defense of the "local, particularistic, and democratic principles and traditions in the American way of life."

Dividing the volume into five parts, Professor Haines trods the methodological path of the realists in analyzing the activities of the justices, as well as the decisions of the Court, then bringing into focus the relations of the tribunal with the other departments. We can point to the thorough grasp and profound interpretation of documentary and secondary materials relating to legal and political issues, but the excellence of scholarship, particularly the fairness, and the contribution of the volume to our knowledge and understanding of American government and politics surpasses adequate definition. It is to be hoped that Professor Haines will soon be able to bring his study down to date in the two additional volumes he has under preparation.

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² Cr. the Chapter on "Attitudes" by Gordon W. Allport in Murchison's *Handbook of Social Psychology*, Worcester, Clark University Press, 1935.

ANNUAL REPORT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, THE YOUTH HOUSE. April 3, 1944 to March 31, 1945.

This mimeographed report is a presentation of accomplishment during the first experimental year of Youth House which, under the sponsorship of Mayor LaGuardia, was established in March 1944 as a detention home for the temporary care of boys held on delinquency charges by the Manhattan and Brooklyn Children's Courts.

Youth House operates on the principle that a boy's experience in the detention home is an important factor in his rehabilitation. In carrying out the purpose "to provide adequate and intelligent care, through a program which would seek to minimize undesirable effects of detention through creation of a positive instead of a negative restraining force" the staff has achieved remarkable success with 90 percent of the boys admitted. Through recognition of the need to provide a controlled environment, relaxation of tension, and non-punitive methods of handling individual problems, it has been possible to build morale within the group which, in its impact upon the boys, brings about constructive changes in their attitudes toward authority and toward adults in general.

The report calls attention to the fact that younger children, convalescents, psychopaths and mentally ill boys are not treatable by these methods, and asks that separate facilities be provided in order to safeguard the program for those who are able to benefit. Both case data and statistics are included which are well worth examination for their practical demonstration of social benefits made possible through modern psychiatric, psychological and case work theory in action.

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HELEN SARGENT.

CONTEMPORARY PSYCHOLOGY—A SOURCE BOOK, Edited by Silven S. Tomkins, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1943. Cloth, \$5.00. Pp. 614.

This is a very interesting book in that it tends to bring up to date a number of aspects of abnormal psychology. It is really a collection of individual chapters dealing with the following major topics: Mental Disease in Childhood, Psychoneuroses and Psychosomatic Medicine, the Schizophrenic Psychoses, and Experimental Psychopathology. Since there are forty-five different contributions, all made by different authors, there is no consistent pattern that beginners in the subject of abnormal psychology could follow. There is no attempt, for instance, to cover the whole field of psychodynamics, the interpretation of mental conditions, their mode of formation, or are there descriptions of basic disorders. This is admitted by Professor Henry A. Murray in his introduction, where he points out that this volume is not a volume for training in abnormal psychology in the sense that the earlier book of Dr. Taylor was, but is intended to fill the gap which has been created by advances in research along the lines of abnormal psychology since Dr. Taylor's book, "Readings in Abnormal Psychology and Mental Hygiene," was written. There is no individual paper by the author himself which can be pointed out as can be the contributions of the various authors which he has brought together. His contribution, rather, has been the selection of the material to be included.

There is little in this book which would be of much value in dealing with problem disorders involving the police or the courts, but for a person who has some basic knowledge of abnormal psychology it provides a further easy way of rounding out one's knowledge of the mechanisms of the psychoneuroses and of the schizophrenias. In all, the book is rather sketchy. There can be no complete coverage of the subject; for instance, under Mental Disease in Childhood, the following topics are covered: The Significance of Infantile Sucking for the Psychic Development of the Individual; Disorganizing Factors of Infant Personality; the Predisposition to Anxiety; the Child's Response to Coercive Bowel Training; the Incidence and Character of Masturbation Threats in a Group of Problem Children; Release Therapy, Studies in the Interpretation of Play. It is quite obvious that such things as the estimates of fear, maternal overprotection, food habits, and abnormal patterns, to name only a few, have not been touched upon.

Probably the book would be more of a contribution to the general literature of abnormal psychology and psychopathology had it attempted to cover only one of its four main topics and that more thoroughly. As it is, it does contain a great deal of interesting reading material but provides neither a thorough background on the whole field of psychodynamics, nor does it cover one part of it to satisfy the one who wishes to delve very deeply in it. These papers are already integrated into the literature and are available for the researcher or the person who wishes to make a special study of the literature in some phase of psychodynamics.

The contributors are unquestionably expert. David M. Levy, Thomas M. French, Franz Alexander, to name only three, demonstrate the quality of the authorship. For the lawyer or criminal psychopathologist who wishes to get additional background beyond his basic training, there can be found material of much value. How much one can use of the animal experimental studies which are quoted, in dealing with human problems, is open to doubt, but anyone interested in human behavior should be familiar with Murray's study of "The Effect of Fear Upon Estimates of the Maliciousness of Other Personalities" and Sears' "Experimental Studies of Projection: 1. Attribution of Traits," which are included among the forty-five studies.

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LOWELL S. SELLING, M.D.

THE IDEA OF PROGRESS IN AMERICA 1815-1860. By Arthur Alphonse Ekirch, Jr. New York, Columbia University Press, 1944. Pp. 305.

Contrary to many "run of the mill" doctoral theses Dr. Ekirch has wrought out a study which is not only scholarly but readable. His general conclusion is that "the idea of progress was the most popular American philosophy, thoroughly congenial to the ideas and interests of the age," [1815-1860]. A more extended and explanatory statement of his thesis is set down at the outset of his work, viz., that "the American people felt that, although progress was indeed certain, it could nevertheless be impeded or accelerated by human will and effort. It was, therefore, not only a theory of the past or a prophecy of the future, but also an incentive to action. In other words, progress represented a measurable growth in the pur-

suit of knowledge and in the achievements of science as well as an advance in the ability of men to control for good their own lives and destinies."

Elsewhere he states his thesis as follows: "The American theory of progress in the early years of the Republic may be considered a product of the philosophy of the eighteenth-century enlightenment transplanted to the virgin soil of a new nation." In developing this thesis the author displays admirable assiduity in bringing together not only generally familiar sources, but particularly in hunting out long forgotten men. He manifests much skill in preventing the dust of these early tomes and pamphlets from assailing the reader's eyes. The reviewer is grateful for being introduced to these forgotten pioneers in American social science. Professor Bernard had included some of them in his monumental volume on the sources of American sociology; but even his keen eye had not caught many of those which Dr. Ekirch uncovers. It is interesting to listen to the discussion of a century ago of many themes which some of us may have supposed were red-hot present day issues: for example, isolationism (of the 1850s); anti-war sentiment (of the 40s and 50s); anti-Catholicism (of the 30s and 40s); the menace of socialism and communism, and the doctrine of Germanic superiority; and even fascism in all but name. It might have been expected that the author's method of grouping discussion around topics rather than personalities or narrow time periods would result in some repetitiousness; but this does not seriously blunt reader interest, particularly the reader who may himself have been guilty of allowing the card-file to stick through his writing. The most notable blank space in this review of nearly half a century of American scholarship and politics is in the field of criminalistics. So far as this reviewer was able to discover, not once is the word crime or criminal or delinquency or any cognate term mentioned. Surely somewhere along the line writers of that age must have recognized this problem in the general context of civilization and progress. In the bibliography which on the whole is commendable and adequate a few important omissions of standard works in the field of social progress are to be noted.

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