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# STUDY OF ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-ONE DELINQUENT GIRLS HELD AT THE JUVENILE DETENTION HOME IN CHICAGO, 1917

JUNE PURCELL-GUILD<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

This study, on the always interesting subject of the delinquent girl, is primarily the result of the compilation of one hundred and thirty-one questionnaires based on one hundred and thirty-one personal interviews with that number of delinquent girls. These girls were held at the Juvenile Detention Home, in Chicago, during the autumn of 1917, and while I was superintendent of the institution. The study is distinctly, however, a presentation of the fundamental social background of delinquency as it has become clear to me during a period of social service covering almost ten years. The emphasis of the study is placed on the sex delinquent as opposed to the incorrigible or semi-delinquent girl, who, whatever else she may have done, has maintained her moral integrity.

It is not expected that any sensational discoveries, nor radical remedial theories will be advanced. On the other hand, it is hoped that the subject may be briefly analyzed and correlated with some of its related social problems.

The girls tabulated in this study were not especially picked or chosen from the whole number of delinquent girls held at the home during 1917. Unfortunately, it was not always possible to find the time for formally interviewing the girls admitted every day. For this reason, five to ten girls would be carefully interviewed on some days; perhaps then for several days it would be impossible to have more than a very brief, informal talk with the girls admitted. Therefore, some of the most interesting individual cases held at the home during the time the questionnaires were being made, are not included. On the other hand, a considerable number of girls whose stories hold really less than the usual color are included. Consequently the one hundred and thirty-one girls who are presented for study here may be considered as representative of the average type of delinquent girl detained at the Juvenile Detention Home.

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It should be added, that although this survey deals with one hundred and thirty-one specific cases, it necessarily reflects decisions reached through close association with many other delinquent girls detained at the home during the year I was superintendent there; also with hundreds of such girls known during actual case experience as a practicing attorney, a social investigator, and the head worker in a settlement.

Although no systematic plan was followed whereby the statements of the girls interviewed were verified, it is believed the findings here advanced carry with them at least a strong *prima facie* presumption of truth. The girls were not informed of the exact reason for the interview. Although the same set of printed questions was asked of each girl, a great effort was made always to frame the questions in an informal and friendly manner, which would lead the girls to believe that the interview was merely for the purpose of getting acquainted. The actual writing down of replies was done as unobtrusively as possible. The girls were assured a personal interest would be taken in them, also that certain facts had to be known about them in order to determine in what section of the home they belonged. Needless to say, all this is true; such reasons alone make it highly desirable that every delinquent girl admitted to a correctional institution should be personally known to the governing official.

In this connection it may be interesting to note here, that this preliminary interview with the delinquent girls had an excellent effect on the general discipline in the delinquent girls' section of the home. It proved much easier to appeal successfully to a delinquent girl to obey rules and manifest a co-operative spirit when her personal story was known to us than when she was merely a routine case.

The girls all knew that at the time of the interview the superintendent was already in possession of many facts concerning them and their cases, and also that she was in a position easily to verify every statement they made. Usually the girls seemed to regard it as a privilege and an honor to talk about their private affairs to the superintendent. They also seemed somewhat afraid that if they did not adhere strictly to the truth, the home would notify the juvenile court judge of their unreliability. Obviously, they felt that any misconduct after their arrest would be much more reprehensible in the judge's eyes than their previous wrong-doing could be.

Then, too, the interview took place at the time of the admission of the girl to the home, or immediately thereafter, presumably when she was taken unaware and before she had had an opportunity to

formulate a coherent defense. In a majority of the cases the girls remained at the home long enough to give us ample time to become acquainted thoroughly with their general character and disposition, and, to verify, incidentally, much of the information received at the initial interview. In a relatively few cases, it was discovered that a girl had lied in some matter. It need hardly be stated, that in such a case that girl's entire questionnaire had been tabulated with the utmost conservatism. Indeed, it may be added, that in a few other cases, where there was the slightest doubt of the truth of a girl's story, the suspicion has been considered in tabulating the general results of the questionnaires.

It may seem to some that a study of this kind tends to violate the first principle of a definite and accurate questionnaire, because the element of personal prejudice and opinion necessarily enters. Granting the fallibility of human judgment, it may only be said that the best evidence in a court of law consists of oral testimony where the questioner and the witness have been brought "face to face," and the latter has been subjected to searching cross examination, as in this case.

The tabulations and findings of the study follow:

#### THE DELINQUENT EXPERIENCES OF THE GIRLS

Of the one hundred and thirty-one delinquent girls presented here, one hundred had been guilty of sex delinquencies, and thirty-one had been guilty of every sort of delinquency, except immorality. About eighteen of the one hundred and thirty-one had been guilty of larceny; many had committed various other illegal acts against persons and property.

#### *The Girls Who Had Been Raped*

Thirty-five of the one hundred sex delinquents had been the object of a criminal attack, but only nineteen of the one hundred claimed that a rape was their sole sex experience. This makes a total of eighty-one girls who admitted voluntary sex relations. Two of the nineteen, whose sex experience had been confined to rape, admitted that they practiced masturbation. Doubtless others were guilty of this, but unless there was something to indicate that a girl was addicted to the practice, the matter was not mentioned.

Of the nineteen who had been raped, but had not afterward had voluntary relations, according to their statement, one had been attacked

by her own father when she was ten years of age, one by an uncle, two by boarders, one by the grown son of the woman in whose home the girl was employed, one by a fellow employe, a married man many years older than the girl, and so on. It may seem unfair to count these nineteen girls as delinquents, until it is stated that, with one exception, these girls were all guilty of other lesser delinquencies, such as running away from home, larceny, and so forth, which brought them to the institution.

Thirteen girls whose first sex experience had been rape, had had subsequent voluntary experience; three claimed they had had voluntary experience before the alleged forcible relations. Of the thirteen for whom rape had been the beginning of a series of illicit sex relations, one had twice been attacked by her own father, one had been attacked at the age of ten years with the consent and approval of her prostitute mother, one by a brother-in-law, one by a cousin, and so on.

In a total of seventeen cases, the girls had been criminally assaulted by or through the connivance of persons who, as in the case involving the prostitute mother mentioned above, stood in a position of special trust and responsibility to the girls, to-wit:

Boarders or roomers.....	4
Relatives .....	8
Fathers .....	2
Cousins .....	2
Stepfather .....	1
Brother-in-law .....	1
Uncle .....	1
Mother's connivance .....	1
Employers .....	3
Fellow worker .....	1
Son of mistress.....	1

In five of these cases it appears that the attack was probably successfully resisted. This list would be considerably larger if to it were added the cases where parents or others in a fiduciary capacity seemed to have contributed indirectly, but none the less clearly, to the delinquency of the girls.

#### *Married Girls*

Four of the one hundred sex delinquents were married, although all were under the legal age. A fifth girl, fifteen years old, with a thoroughly depraved attitude towards sex matters, claimed she was legally married to a soldier in a Texas camp, but there was little to corroborate her statement. Only one of these five girls claimed that her sex experience had been confined to her husband. The exception was an interesting girl of sixteen years of age, who had been married

at Crown Point, Indiana, two years previously. She had considered herself properly divorced because, shortly after the marriage ceremony, she returned to Crown Point and told the man who had officiated at her wedding that she wished to be divorced because of the flagrant adultery of her husband. She claimed she had lived separate from her husband since then, but she was now under arrest for assisting him in the robbery of the woman by whom she was employed.

#### THE RELATION OF THE UNIFORM TO DELINQUENCY

Soldiers and sailors entered prominently into twenty-three different cases. In fifteen cases, girls admitted immoral relations with soldiers, sailors, or both, but also with one or more men in civil life. In only three cases does it seem evident that a soldier or sailor was the first and direct cause of a girl's delinquency.

In three cases girls who had records of immoral conduct claimed they were formally betrothed to soldiers with whom they had not been intimate.

One immoral girl was under arrest for writing indescribably obscene letters to various soldiers with whom she was not personally acquainted.

One delinquent girl was arrested in the middle of the night and admitted that she was then enroute to the Naval Training Station to see a sailor by whom she had been "picked up, and was crazy about." She claimed relations had occurred and that she believed herself pregnant. Examination strongly tended to disprove her entire story, although she could not be dissuaded. This girl was an ultra-emotional and excitable type, the offspring of an erratic and probably immoral mother. She had been permitted to read sensational novels and sex stories for years, and romanced more naturally than she told the truth.

These figures have a peculiar interest on account of the almost universal presumption that the uniform is the cause of juvenile sex delinquency. There is no doubt that delinquency is increased to a certain extent by the attraction soldiers and sailors must have for the adventure-loving girl. Nevertheless, a close study of these twenty-three cases would seem to indicate that the uniform tended rather to strengthen the potential sex delinquency of many girls than to have been its sole cause.

We have here eighteen cases of illicit sex relations between men in military service and young girls, out of eighty-one possible cases

of girls' voluntary sex experience. In fifteen of the eighteen cases, the girls had had many other experiences, in all but possibly three cases previous voluntary sex experience.

*Example Showing Connection Between Uniform and Delinquency*

In one very interesting case, it is true that the girl, in reply to the request for her own explanation of her rather sudden, complete moral degeneration, said, with flippant sophistication: "It was the lure of the uniform!" Careful analysis of this girl's case, personal interviews with her parents and a well-known social worker, who was familiar with the girl's history, revealed the following situation: The girl was always erratic and hysterical and now showed an amazingly indifferent attitude concerning the effects of her acts on herself and her parents. She was an only child and had been brought up by over-indulgent parents in a comfortable home of more than the usual refinements. These parents considered that they had brought her up in a "strict manner," because they had compelled her to attend Sunday school regularly against her will, but otherwise had permitted her to do just as she pleased. The girl was an ardent "movie fan" and went to shows almost daily. For years she had been permitted to read everything, but had given her special attention to one or two of the popular magazines which deal with lurid sex problems. The mother of the girl was a gentle, ineffective sort of person. She had permitted her daughter to be "picked up" when she and the girl were traveling together, by the uniformed man, with whom the girl afterward had her first sex relations.

This girl is described in some detail because of her interesting story, and because she was one of possibly three cases where the uniform may be said to have been the proximate cause of the first sex delinquency, followed almost at once by other sex irregularities. In the case described, the girl had relations with a married soldier, ran away from her home, became entangled with pimps and thieves, was guilty of larceny and regular street-walking for pay, was arrested, tried, and sent to a correctional institution all in a few weeks. At no time did she show any positive regret, shame or sorrow. Can it be doubted that such a girl has carried within her own make-up and in her own environment the causes for moral disintegration, and that her first misstep merely happened to be with a man in uniform? Does it not seem unduly optimistic to suppose that the career of this girl would have been different in any material respect had fate, at the same period of her life, thrown her with the same or any other equally aggressive man, although unconnected with the military forces?

## MISCELLANEOUS FACTS ABOUT SEX DELINQUENTS

Returning at this point to our general problem, we find that thirteen of the one hundred sex delinquents were known to have been venereally infected. A Wasserman test of each girl would doubtless have increased this number. Five of the girls were found to be pregnant, and eleven others were possibly pregnant, but it was too early to say positively at the time of the examination. Several attempted to commit abortion while in the home, two attempted suicide. One girl already had had an illegitimate child.

## SOME FACTS ABOUT SEMI-DELINQUENTS

The big majority of the thirty-one girls grouped in this study as not having had sex experiences, were girls who had run away from their homes. Most of these were guilty of other delinquent acts as well, especially larceny. One was a serious masturbator. One had left her home and slept on the floor of a "man friend's" bedroom for several nights; she claimed nothing improper had occurred, and this was confirmed by a physical examination. Another fourteen year-old girl, admitted she was boy-crazy and kissed boys frequently; in her case, also, an examination proved her uninjured. Another child told a wild story of an attack in a basement with all the movie embellishments of a gang of men, a knife and a gag, all of which was later disproved. One was a "girl bandit" who was arrested several times for riding in stolen automobiles in the company of the "boy bandits" who had taken the cars. Still another of these incorrigible girls said she had not spoken to her stepmother for two years, so finally ran away from home. She volunteered the information, however, that public dances and cabarets were the great attraction for being away from home, and that they were really at the bottom of all her misconduct. This girl denied sex irregularities. One pathetic twelve-year-old child, who seemed subnormal, but who may have merely appeared thus, because she was a foreigner and terrified at her imprisonment, literally wept for days. At last she told her story haltingly, but frankly. Her father had been ill for a long time, so she and her mother had gone forth and each stolen a pair of shoes for herself. This larceny was the child's first offense. Another girl, with a very bitter and hard demeanor, was charged with borrowing a revolver, with which she openly threatened to kill her brother and herself because he scolded her.

With this rather brief survey of the kind of charges on which the one hundred and thirty-one girls studied were admitted to the



home, some of the more significant facts concerning the girls, their families, and their own recreations will now be given.

#### FACTS ABOUT THE GIRLS' AGES

The average age of the one hundred and thirty-one delinquent girls studied was a fraction less than fifteen years and six months. The youngest girl included in the group was twelve years of age. Although girls may be technically classified as delinquent at the age of ten, there are few delinquent girls received at the home who are so young. Girls are accepted at the home up to the age of eighteen years, although occasionally a girl a few months over this age is received, if she was a ward of the Juvenile Court before attaining her majority. The details of the ages of the one hundred and thirty-one girls may be summarized as follows:

There were	2	girls who were	12	years old
There were	4	girls who were	13	years old
There were	18	girls who were	14	years old
There were	30	girls who were	15	years old
There were	39	girls who were	16	years old
There were	37	girls who were	17	years old
There was	1	girl who was	18	years old

Total....131

#### BIRTHPLACE OF GIRLS

Ninety-seven of the girls were born in the United States of white parents, eleven of colored parents, one of mixed foreign and colored parents, and twenty-two girls, or practically one-sixth, were themselves born in foreign countries.

The following table shows from what country the foreign-born girls came:

6	were born in	Austria
5	were born in	Russia
3	were born in	Bohemia
2	were born in	Poland
2	were born in	Italy
2	were born in	Canada
1	was born in	England
1	was born in	Switzerland

#### NATIONALITY OF GIRLS' PARENTS

Less than one-third of the girls' parents were native white Americans. Seventy-seven of the fathers and seventy-eight of the mothers were of foreign birth. Twelve of the fathers and eleven of the mothers were colored Americans. Thirty-eight of the fathers and thirty-eight of the mothers were of white American birth. The birthplace of four fathers and four mothers, was unknown to the girls. The

following table shows in detail the country in which the girls' parents were born:

Country	Father	Mother
Poland .....	16	15
Germany .....	14	10
Austria .....	10	10
Russia .....	7	8
Italy .....	6	5
Bohemia .....	5	5
Ireland .....	4	9
Canada .....	2	2
France .....	2	1
Sweden .....	2	2
Lithuania .....	2	2
Scotland .....	2	1
England .....	1	2
Albania .....	1	1
Wales .....	1	0
Holland .....	1	1
Denmark .....	1	3
Switzerland .....	0	1
Total .....	77	78
United States—		
White .....	38	38
Colored .....	12	11
Unknown .....	4	4
	50	49
	131	131

Statistics on juvenile delinquency, almost without exception show that the children of foreign parents become delinquent in greater numbers than the children of native white Americans. This does not indicate that our immigrant population is less moral or law abiding than we are ourselves. It does indicate most convincingly, that change of climatic, industrial and social environment, causes domestic maladjustments in foreign families, which lead directly to the degeneracy of the children. It would seem that a comprehensive movement to assist foreigners in a friendly way to adjust themselves to their new home is needed. Foreigners can not assimilate new civic, legal, educational, and ethical standards without prolonged effort. It is not surprising, therefore, that when they are thrown suddenly into the uproar of America's strange city life there is a tendency for them in their bewilderment to lose their influence with and discipline over their children.

#### RELIGION AND CHURCH ATTENDANCE OF THE GIRLS

Sixty-six of the girls were nominally Roman Catholic, fifty Protestant, seven Greek Catholic, and four denied having any faith of religious preferences whatsoever. The word "nominally" is used, be-

cause it must be confessed that religion seemed to be merely a routine matter or vague abstraction to practically every one of these girls.

In eighteen cases, the religion of the girl's parents was different. In five cases the girls claimed to be of a different religious persuasion than their parents; even in these cases the faith professed by the girl seemed to lack vitality.

A definite effort was made to get at the personal reaction of each girl to her religion. Each girl was asked whether or not she went to church regularly, or at all, and to give the reason for her conduct in every case. The following figures show the answers to the first part of the question:

70 girls claimed to go to church regularly  
43 admitted they did not go to church at all  
18 claimed to go irregularly or occasionally

131 Total

These figures do not begin to indicate the very surprising apathy of the girls toward their religion and church. Those who went to church seemed to go because they did, those who did not go, failed to go because they did not go, and that was about all there was to it! It was quite apparent that the question "why" had never presented itself to most of them before. Many of them actually seemed a bit dazed that the question of going or not going to church should be considered or *thought about*. They were nearly all simple children of habit and went to church or failed to go from thoroughly conventionalized motives.

Thirty-eight of those who went to church regularly said they "liked to go," or went voluntarily. Twenty-one "were made to go."

Fifteen of those who never went, could not mention an excuse or reason of any sort. Most of those who never went simply "never had the habit," as many of them said. Six of those who did not go said they were not orthodox or had no faith; five always overslept; three claimed they did not have decent clothes; one was a waitress in a saloon and worked late on Saturday night; one, "liked bumming too well"; one, "the roomers laughed at church-going"; one, "her preacher was a drunkard," and so forth.

The reasons given for going to church irregularly were similar to those given by the girls who went regularly, or not at all. For instance: several were compelled to go sometimes by their parents; one seldom had the proper clothes; the church of her faith was at a great distance from the home of another; one went to dances on Saturday nights; several worked late. One, a very pretty refined mannered

girl, who admitted immorality for several years because "she was weak" was arrested at last as an inmate of a disorderly house, said she went to church sometimes because "it did her good." Another little girl who had attempted to commit suicide "because discouraged with life" after living illicitly with a young boy for sometime, claimed she went to church occasionally "because she wanted to become religious," and so on.

The uncomprehending and matter-of-course religious attitude of so many of these one hundred and thirty-one girls would seem to indicate that one of the most urgent problems of the time is to make religion, or ethical standards, near and real to young people. It is certainly not sufficient for them to accept a creed and go to church without knowing or caring *why* intelligently.

#### EDUCATION OF THE GIRLS AND RELATED DATA

Only thirty of the entire number of delinquent girls studied had graduated from the eighth grade; only nine of the hundred and thirty-one were still going to school. If these nine were to be counted as ultimately graduating, and this is most improbable, there would still be considerably less than one-third of the whole number studied who may be considered as having had as good as a common school education. Two girls had never gone to school at all, but one of these had been given careful, although poorly balanced, instruction at home.

1 girl	had gone to the first grade
1 girl	had gone to the second grade
3 girls	had gone to the third grade
3 girls	had gone to the fourth grade
20 girls	had gone to the fifth grade
20 girls	had gone to the sixth grade
33 girls	had gone to the seventh grade
20 girls	had gone to the eighth grade; did not graduate
13 girls	had gone to the eighth grade; graduated
5 girls	had gone to the first year in high
6 girls	had gone to the second year in high
1 girl	had gone to the third year in high
3 girls	had gone to business college
2 girls	had never gone to school

131 Total

(Note—This table includes the nine girls who were still attending school.)

This table shows that thirteen of the twenty-eight girls who had a common school education or better had graduated from the eighth grade, five had gone to at least a part of the first year in high school; six, the second year in high school; and one, to the third year. Three had attended business college. One of these was an eighth grade graduate, one had had work in the first year, and one in the second year of high school.

The majority of the girls left school "when they finished fourteen," as many of them said, meaning that when they were fourteen, as a matter of course, their school days were over, whether they were in the fifth or the eighth grade. Under the new child labor law they would now have to finish the fifth grade at least.

All the girls were asked to explain why they had not gone farther in school. Fifty-one answered "had to go to work." Twelve girls were required to stay at home and do the house work and care for younger children because of the illness or death of their mothers. Three stated that they had "no fit clothes to wear" and so they would not go any longer.

These figures seem to indicate that inequality of educational opportunity in this country is connected with economic inequalities. This study, therefore, adds merely another scintilla of evidence to the case against our present industrial system. Children are forced into jobs before they have been trained for them. In short, it has become regular procedure for the children to take their places in the industrial ranks because the father's income is inadequate to meet the needs of the family.

However plain this issue may be, it should not be forgotten that there is another side to this question which is equally important. Many parents would willingly make almost superhuman efforts to send their children to school if the children themselves were ambitious to continue. For instance, twenty-two girls frankly stated they stopped school because they did not like to go. A small per cent of these did not get along well and were not of average mental capacity. But the query naturally arises: Is there not something radically wrong with an educational system which not only fails to train the sub-normal child vocationally, but also fails to arouse the ambition of the normal child? Specialists are now achieving marvelous results with every sort of defective, deaf, dumb, blind, feeble-minded and even some grades of insane persons. Should it be unreasonable then to expect equally good results with the girl who is in possession of all her faculties or, at any rate, is not committably feeble-minded? Why should not *every* teacher be a specialist? If we had better trained teachers, better paid of course, men and women with bigger visions and broader human sympathies, who presented a less academic curriculum and a less inflexible routine, is it not possible that all children would have greater regard for the schools? Although only twenty-two girls openly admitted their dislike for going to school, not over two or three of the one hundred and thirty-one showed any positive interest

in or desire for an education. If the idea of education is to train for work, for citizenship, for life, why not make every public school into a glorified social settlement which knows its community and serves each child as a part of a *family unit*?

Many other reasons were given by the girls for stopping school, a few of which are added: One was expelled, one was a witness in a rape case and never returned to school after the trial, one refused to go because her parents would not send her to a private school, one was too big for her age and the others laughed at her, one lived a long distance from the school, all the friends of another stopped going, and so forth.

#### OCCUPATIONS, WAGES AND ALLIED TOPICS

The occupations of the girls come as a direct corollary to their limited education, as the following table shows:

34	girls were factory workers
23	girls were house servants
13	girls were clerks
12	girls were office workers
7	girls were laundry workers
5	girls were tailors' assistants
4	girls were telephone operators
4	girls were bindery workers
2	girls were waitresses
2	girls were inspectors
1	girl was a scrub girl
1	girl was a milliner's apprentice
1	girl was a wrapper
1	girl was a stockyard employe
1	girl was a press machine worker
1	girl was a chorus girl
1	girl was an ammunition plant worker
<hr/>	
113	
9	girls helped at home
9	girls still went to school
<hr/>	
131	Total

The average wage of the one hundred and thirteen girls who worked, amounted to \$7.15 per week. Certainly no girl could do more than maintain her existence on such a sum. It would be quite impossible for her to secure the meagerest luxuries of dress, even if she had her entire pay for personal expenses. As we shall see, however, almost one-half of the one hundred and thirty-one girls had had to give all, or practically all, which they earned to their parents, having no money to spend on the little fineries so dear to their hearts. It will be shown later, that although few girls admitted that they took their first delinquent step for direct financial gain, there is evidence that

money entered into a number of cases ultimately. It can not be doubted that the low wages of these girls cramped their lives and unconsciously caused them to become dissatisfied and reckless even though they themselves could not analyze their own psychology thus clearly.

Two of the girls were earning only their board in domestic service; thirty were earning \$5 a week or less; seventy-one, \$10 a week or less; one amount not stated. Nine of the entire group studied were making \$10 or over a week. Several, however, had been making as high as \$60 a week each for a short time at street walking. There were only four girls who had been making reasonably high regular wages. One telephone operator had made \$18 to \$19 per week; one factory worker \$17 to \$18 a week; another factory worker \$14 to \$15, and an ammunition plant worker \$8 to \$18 per week. It is very interesting to note that three of these "high salaried" girls were those who were making the largest amounts as regular prostitutes when arrested.

Of course, delinquency usually results from a complexity of inherited tendencies and environmental conditions. Prominent among the contributing causes must be mentioned the dissatisfaction of girls with their home conditions, particularly with their lack of spending money. As will be shown later, more than three-fourths of the one hundred and thirty-one girls were or had been runaways from home because of friction of some sort there.

The following figures are extremely illuminating in this connection. Twenty-seven girls insisted they had to give their parents every cent their earned; thirty-two claimed they got only very small irregular amounts for spending "when they begged it off their mother." Nineteen girls received no pay and no spending money, including two in domestic service, school girls and girls employed at home. This makes a total of seventy-eight girls who had a rather obvious reason for complaint against their home environment.

On the other hand twenty-three girls had all they earned for themselves; seventeen had satisfactory spending money, including one girl who worked only in her own home; and thirteen paid regular board, making a total of fifty three girls who had no cause for complaint on the ground of economic dependence on parents.

It should be stated here, that all the girls were asked the occupation of their fathers and what wages they made. Almost none of the girls were able to say what wages their fathers made, and for this reason a detailed statement of the fathers' occupations will not be

given. It may be added, however, they were predominately laboring men. There were no professional men and relatively few skilled artisans among them. An actual existing need for supplementing the family income by the earnings of the girl may therefore be presumed.

#### WORK AND RECREATION

In this division a number of miscellaneous facts about the girls is tabulated. These facts tend to throw some light on their equipment for life, their habits, attitudes, and so forth.

##### *Ability to Cook and Sew*

Every girl was asked questions regarding her ability and liking for cooking and sewing. Perhaps the answers to these questions carry less conviction than any of the others in this study because of the strong element of personal opinion involved and the indefiniteness of standards. In general, however, the girls who claimed they knew how to cook must be understood as meaning according to the standards of their own mothers, generally foreign and very poor standards in the eyes of an American housewife. The girls were all required to assist with the kitchen and dining-room work of the Juvenile Home during their detention. In this way, it was conclusively proven, that not one girl in ten knew how to cook or liked to cook, so that she could have been a satisfactory housemaid in an American household.

However, the figures resulting from the answers to the question "Do you know how to cook?" are given for what they may be worth.

Girls who claimed to be able to do plain cooking.....	60
Girls who admitted inability to cook at all.....	40
Girls who could assist with cooking.....	30
Not stated .....	1

Total .....131

If we were optimistic enough to accept the girl's own opinion here at its face value, there is still not a great deal over which to rejoice. If girls must go to work at fourteen they should have learned at least the rudiments of domestic science before that age.

What has already been said regarding the figures on cooking, applies with equal force to sewing. In the simple hand sewing classes, conducted at the Juvenile Home School it has always been discovered that very few delinquent girls can really sew. Even according to the girls' own very flattering estimate of their accomplishments, over fifty per cent admitted they could not sew at all, or had never done more than the simplest sorts of mending. Most of those who insisted they could sew, admitted their sewing had been confined to the plainest



kind of articles, such as aprons, or corset covers. Several had made waists and thought they could make most of their own clothes.

Girls who claimed to be able to sew.....	52
Girls who admitted inability to sew at all.....	56
Girls who could mend, patch and so forth.....	21
Not stated .....	2
Total .....	131

Perhaps we should not expect girls whose average age is fifteen and a half years to know how to cook and sew. If it were possible to consider these one hundred and thirty-one delinquents merely as naughty children we certainly should not look for specialized knowledge or training among them. A considerable number, particularly those grouped as incorrigibles, were, in fact, just unfortunate little girls. On the other hand, the majority were thoroughly sophisticated in evil and in every worldly pleasure. They were frankly scornful of domestic accomplishments. They knew little about such things and had no desire to become proficient in them.

#### *Passion for Dancing*

Their attitude towards dancing, however, was exactly the opposite. Girl after girl said she "loved to dance" or she "was crazy about dancing," or used other extravagant terms in replying to the question: Do you dance?

Girls who danced.....	79
Girls who did not dance.....	44
Girls who danced "a little".....	7
Not stated .....	1
Total .....	131

It is to be regretted that lack of time forbade a more detailed inquiry of each girl concerning dances and dancing. It is clear, however, that dancing plays an important part in contributing to girl delinquency. A great many of the girls volunteered the information that they attended public dances only—that iniquitous special-bar-permit institution so notorious in Chicago prior to prohibition. Inharmonious relations between girls and their parents had resulted in several cases, because the girls returned at three and four o'clock in the morning from such dances. Two or three admitted they ran away from home when scolded on account of their late hours. Several girls definitely named cabarets and dances as the magnets which had dragged them off the path of decency. The figures presented in the next section show conclusively that the seventy-nine girls who danced had not done their dancing in properly supervised public parks, settlements, or schools.

*Better Supervision of Public Dance Halls*

Dancing seems to be natural to youth. However little enthusiasm we may have for promiscuous dancing among adolescent boys and girls it would be impractical to forbid it. But certainly every effort should be made to surround public dances with safeguards and checks. As one very definite way of discouraging delinquency among girls, the several hundred public dance halls in Chicago should be compelled to conform to the following regulations: No intoxicating liquor should be sold in the dance halls; suggestive syncopated music should be forbidden; no hall should be open after one a. m. The so-called closed position should not be tolerated. The lighting and ventilation in the halls should be of the best; and drinking fountains should be provided. Dances and intermissions should be short. A competent matron or chaperon should be present at every dance.

As an emergency war measure the special bar permit was abolished in Chicago. Every effort should be made to retain this protective war measure in peace times.

*Further Recreation.*

Every girl was asked if she had ever attended regular gymnasium classes in her life. Perhaps no figures in this study are more discouraging than these:

Girls who had never attended gym. classes.....	94
Girls who had attended gym. classes.....	22
Not stated .....	15

Total .....131

When the answers of the twenty-two who claimed to have attended a gymnasium are analyzed, the failure of social agencies to become a real friend to this type of girl is evident.

12 girls had gone to public parks or play grounds
2 girls had gone to settlement gyms.
4 girls had gone to private clubs
3 girls had gone to church gyms.
1 girl had gone to a school gym.
Of the twelve tabulated as attending public parks:
4 appeared to have gone with some regularity
1 had gone in the summer time only
1 had gone at rare intervals
6 had gone for brief periods in past years
Of those who went to private halls:
1 had gone five years previously
1 had gone three times only
1 had gone one month weekly
1 had gone for two weeks, name and place unknown

None of these girls can be considered as having been regular members of a definite, organized group activity. Attendance at settle-

ments, schools and churches had also been irregular and unsatisfactory.

#### *Weaknesses of Parks and Playgrounds*

These figures have been given in some detail, because the question of providing recreation for young people in a large city is acknowledged to be of surpassing importance. There is very little doubt that organized play will do more to keep young persons out of trouble than any other single environmental condition. The above figures show that delinquent girls are not participating in the play facilities offered by Chicago. It is true that the overwhelming majority of these girls did not care to avail themselves of the opportunity for social or athletic activities at their disposal. But consider the query: Of what value is it to provide the facilities for recreation when the places supplied are not sufficiently attractive to arouse the interest of the very ones who sometimes have a natural indifference to their own welfare? This question is similar in its implications to the one above concerning the failure of the public school to arouse greater devotion in the child.

#### *Participation in Games or Sports*

The question "Do you care for sports or games" was asked each girl, also in what sports or games she had participated, with the following result:

Only twenty-one girls out of the one hundred and thirty-one admitted that they had ever taken part in games of any kind. The sort of game or sport in which they had indulged is shown by the next table:

10 girls roller skated
5 girls ice skated
2 girls played tennis
1 girl roller and ice skated
1 girl played golf, ice skated and played tennis
1 girl roller and ice skated and played tennis
1 girl swam

---

21 Total

It will be noted that no game which is pre-eminently a team game like volley ball, basket ball, or base ball was mentioned. Every effort should be made to create an interest among girls for sports and games, particularly games calling for co-operative interest and less individualistic effort. What might be called the instinctive anti-social attitude of many delinquent girls could be modified in many cases by encouraging, possibly requiring, participation in organized social and recreational activities.

*Increased Effectiveness of Parks Desirable*

We have seen that twelve out of a hundred and thirty-one delinquent girls had attended a public park with more or less irregularity. The problem of increasing the interest of such girls is squarely up to the public park and playground system. It would be idle to expect the playground movement as it is now organized to act as a cure-all for delinquency. There is some justification for the belief that more definite results would be seen if the public park and the public school were brought into closer relationship, and the joint organization with less aloofness, less routine, less dogmatism, ministered to the *families* of the various communities with a spirit of broad, personal, sympathetic interest. There is today in the park system, on the one hand, too much straining for the perfection of one or two prize-winning groups, and too little attention to the unskilled and indifferent individual, and on the other hand, there is *too much development of the child as a separate unit and too little recognition of its family and community background.*

With the public school and public park movements unified, it would become increasingly difficult for the sort of girl presented in this study to break the ties which bound her to her local circle. In such a school center we would then have the basis for a community welfare organization, which should eventually eliminate the many overlapping, conflicting, and duplicating social agencies with which industrial districts are now infested. Such an organization should be prepared to form the close personal contacts which we have just seen the institutionalized park is not now making with the wayward girl.

*Picture Shows*

If the public agencies are failing to secure the interest of delinquent girls, this cannot be said of commercialized amusement activities. The enthusiasm of these one hundred and thirty-one girls for dancing has already been mentioned. Even a larger percent were devotees of the motion picture. Eighty-four of the one hundred and thirty-one girls admitted going to the movies as often as they could afford it. Twenty-seven seldom went and twelve never went. Of those who did not go, four had poor eyes and found it uncomfortable to go, and five never had any money. One seventeen-year-old girl complained bitterly because she had been to only three picture shows, and had never been to a real theatre in her whole life, because she had never had the money.

The following table shows in detail the frequency with which the girls attended picture shows:

Girls who went once a week.....	28
Girls who went once or twice a week.....	13
Girls who went twice a week.....	16
Girls who went twice to seven times a week.....	7*
Girls who went daily.....	10
Girls who went once or twice a month.....	10
Girls who seldom went.....	27
Girls who never went.....	12
Not stated .....	8

Total .....131

(\*One of these girls went regularly to a picture show for the purpose of making "pick-ups" there.)

It is doubtless agreed that an intelligent censorship of the pictures which are viewed by young people is imperative. It is hardly less important to insist that no juvenile be admitted to any picture show at night unless accompanied by a parent or responsible guardian; and that good lighting and ventilation be provided. The public is discovering every day however, how difficult it is to regulate and control what it does not own. The picture show is already contributing almost as much towards public opinion as the public school. Therefore why not publicly-owned picture shows!

#### *Reading*

Along with the questions concerning recreation, the girls were asked if they liked to read, and if so, what they read. The result of this line of questioning is shown in the following table:

Girls who claimed to read.....	67
Girls who did not read.....	49
Girls who read a little.....	7
Girls who were unable to read.....	4
Not stated .....	4

Total .....131

Of those who could not read, one girl had been born in Italy, and although she had been in this country since a baby, she had never gone to school; another girl of American birth had gone only to the second grade; one was thirteen years of age and very dull, and although in the third grade, claimed she could not read; the fourth had been born in Bohemia and could not read English.

Few of the sixty-seven who are classified as readers were able to give convincing or encouraging details about their reading. Only a few could remember the titles of books which they had read. Thirteen said they read or liked to read fairy tales, indicating that at heart many of these unfortunate girls were only children. Eight

others admitted their reading was confined to newspapers. Hardly surprising that these eight at least had lurid sex ideas and distorted views of life! One poor child said she liked to read "Three Bears and the newspapers." Seven said they read magazines, two others specified "Movie Magazines" only. One had read Ishmael and magazines. One colored girl read magazines and the Bible, another colored girl the Bible only. One girl read "everything and the Cosmopolitan," another Louise Alcott and the Cosmopolitan. Sex books and Dickens were the choice of one interesting girl.

Eight girls said they read story books, meaning children's books of short stories. Five admitted they read novels and one added only those novels she purchased at the ten-cent store. One mentioned Madame X and Uncle Tom's Cabin. One erratic and oversexed girl said she liked and read such books as Ben Hur and the Scarlet Letter. Seven said they read library books, although it must be confessed that they were vague about titles. A colored girl insisted that King Arthur and Shakespeare were her favorites.

It is interesting to note the number of girls who delighted in "exciting stories of adventure," as one of them phrased it. Three mentioned Alger and Dixon. Three simply said stories of adventure; one, Call of the Wild and Dog of Flanders; another, Alcott and Dixon. Probably the uninteresting work and sordid homes of these girls tended to arouse in them an abnormal desire for romance and adventure.

#### THE GIRL'S HOME

To this point we have been attempting to analyze figures relating primarily and directly to the girl herself. In the next division, some points concerning the girl's home and family environment are briefly summarized and discussed.

#### *The Broken Family*

The so-called broken family was a factor in a very large number of the one hundred and thirty-one cases studied. Ninety-six fathers were living, twenty-eight were dead, and seven were deserted, or the fathers of illegitimate girls. This means that thirty-five girls or over one-fourth were without the discipline of a father. Twenty-two mothers were dead, and the whereabouts of three others were unknown to the girls. This makes twenty-five girls or a trifle less than one-fifth who had no mother's care. More significant perhaps was the large per cent of cases where the parents of the girls were living, but not together.

The following table is a compilation of the answers to the question: Are your parents living together?

Parents living together.....	61 cases
Parents not living together.....	69 cases
Not known .....	1
Total .....	131

Answers to the question: Why are your parents not living together?

Dead .....	46
One parent .....	42 cases
Both parents .....	4 cases
Divorced .....	8
Not married .....	5
Father deserted .....	5
Mother deserted .....	1
Mother insane .....	1
Living apart, reason unknown.....	3
Total .....	69

The tendency of the broken family to produce delinquency in the children is too well known to need elaboration here. The above figures merely again bring to our attention a prevailing condition. Today there are thousands of children who have neither the protection of interested parents nor the guardianship of a socially conscious state. The present modern tendency, whether for good or evil, seems to be away from family solidarity and towards state or social control. Delinquency in the children will not decrease until definitely established principles and policies have been outlined to meet the breakdown of the old-fashioned family stability and discipline.

#### *Step-Parents*

10 girls had step-mothers  
23 girls had step-fathers  
4 girls had both step-fathers and step-mothers

Almost without exception these thirty-seven girls were dissatisfied with their home environment. Their complaints, however, were more general than specific. Many of them were unhappy at home because of the mere presence there of a step-parent, and not because of any actual mistreatment. A very large number of the girls had even run away from home and yet could not explain further than that they "did not like it there." In one case, at least, a girl complained of the cruelty of a step-father when a talk with her mother brought out that the girl had not been harshly treated but was manifesting in an abnormal degree the almost universal antagonism to step-parents. However unfair this general social reaction to step-parents may be, it

explains why domestic harmony so necessary for proper parental discipline is often lacking.

On the other hand, a very considerable number of girls gave genuine and more or less definite reasons for objecting to their step-parents. For instance, one girl stated her "step-mother hit her, so she ran away"; another, "both parents beat her, she had tried to get a warrant for her step-father"; another "step-mother was mean to her, and gave her own daughter better things"; "step-mother would only let her out on Sundays and objected to the girls she ran with"; "step-mother would not permit her to read for fear she would enjoy herself," and so forth.

### *Immoral Parents*

The evil effects of a broken family are nowhere more clearly defined than in cases where the parents have been immoral. In five cases, the record showed that the girls were illegitimate children. In four cases, the mothers were prostitutes, and in three instances the girls said their fathers were living in adultery, or, as one girl put it, her father "lived with different ladies."

There is no doubt that this group fails to show the full extent of parents' immorality. In practically every case where immoral parents were discovered, the facts concerning the parents came out incidentally. The girls were not asked any direct questions which would suggest to them that their parents were being criticized or blamed in any way. Therefore, such anti-social facts concerning the girls' parents as are shown in this study, have been secured during the girl's general explanation of her own history.

A biographic sketch of several of the girls whose immorality may have been the direct result of inherited or environmental immorality in their home will introduce some of the most interesting characters in this study. These examples should make it clear that a fight against juvenile delinquency necessitates a fight against social impurity in general. Also in considering these examples, we should not lose sight of another fact. There are oversexed girls, but they are exceptional. In general an inherited sex desire in a girl is rarely of sufficient intensity in itself alone to cause her moral delinquency. Such a desire may be and very often is a smoldering ember easily fanned into flame by a variety of stimuli, such as desire for finery, pleasures, attention, which her normal economic and domestic situation does not provide.



### *Biographic Sketches of Several Girls*

#### *Example of illegitimate girl who became immoral—Case No. 60:*

Attractive looking, refined mannered, extremely intelligent girl of fourteen, the illegitimate child of a prostitute. Had been adopted when a baby by a well educated couple who gave her a comfortable home, an exceptional education at home, in order "to shield her from temptation," and the highest ethical training with apparently, however, too much stress laid on the dangers of sex. The girl was hard to control from babyhood. When she reached adolescence, she began to show an excessive interest in men and boys. At the age of fourteen she disappeared suddenly from home in the company of a man whom she had known for two days. There was no promise of marriage, and the girl admitted she "knew she was doing wrong, but did it anyway." The girl had stayed all night with this man and was then immediately picked up by a Greek waiter in a small restaurant. The girl stated she "always liked fellows," and stayed all night with this Greek "before he would touch her," that "she was in love with him and more to blame than he was." The girl's foster-parents were overcome with grief and sorrow at her behavior. The girl herself seemed indifferent to their suffering, but showed a lively desire to marry Pete, her Greek friend. Incidentally it may be added, Pete had infected her. This girl was clearly oversexed. Her foster-parents had, by most painstaking methods, attempted to counteract her sex inheritance, but probably erred by overemphasizing the very thing they feared.

#### *Example of prostitute mother encouraging delinquency of daughter—Case No. 59:*

A child of fourteen with the sophistication and poise of a woman of the world, as in fact she was. Her mother, a woman of thirty-four, looked eighteen, according to the daughter; was divorced from her husband and lived openly as a prostitute. Mother and daughter passed as sisters. The girl had needed clothes and the mother introduced her to men who bought her expensive boots, furs and so on. This was the girl's third time in similar trouble.

#### *Example of delinquent girl with immoral father—No. 50:*

A sweet-looking girl with a beautiful voice who admitted having had so many sex experiences she could not begin to remember them all. Her mother had been insane since the girl's birth. Her father "never had any use for any of his children," and had lived in open adultery, while his wife was confined in the insane asylum. This girl admitted frankly that she was unable to control herself. An operation was performed in the hope of decreasing her temptations. This was the girl's second time in trouble. Such a girl is the result of a defect in self-control, probably inherited from both father and mother, and whose environment has in no way counteracted her inherited tendency.

### *Drinking Parents*

Because it would have seemed unkind and unduly inquisitive to ask the girls questions concerning the general habits and character of

their parents, exact figures cannot be presented on the extent of drinking among parents of the girls. However, incidentally and quite innocently, the girls presented convincing testimony on how the drink evil contributes towards delinquency. Nine girls, seven of whom had been immoral, in explaining why they had committed the act which had brought them to the home, mentioned, casually, that one or both of their parents drank to excess. The following phrases from the records are illuminating: "My father and two brothers drank, are now dead, my home was wrecked"; "Father and mother both drank and were mean to me, took all my money"; "Father drank, beat mother and me, would not let me go to school"; "Away from home two years, put out by drunken father"; "Ran away because father and mother drank and quarreled all the time"; "I drink wine and beer, father always gave it to me at home, now get it in cabarets"; "Beer brought to house constantly by father, house full of men and women, all talking bad"; "Father gets drunk, will not run away if father will only stop swearing"; "Mother used to beat me all the time and drank."

Many other girls frequented cabarets, and admitted drinking themselves. As this section deals primarily with family influences, this phase of the drink question will not be discussed at length. Two interesting and typical cases will be noted: One girl "met a fellow at a free dance back of a saloon, afterwards fell for him." Another girl had had as a first sex experience "forced relations with a saloonkeeper in his wine room," and so forth.

#### *Number of Brothers and Sisters*

Other facts on the general topic of the girl's home and family environment are presented in the following section. Only nineteen of the hundred and thirty-one girls had neither brothers nor sisters; sixteen had brothers only; ten, sisters only; eighty-six, both brothers and sisters. There was a total of five hundred and seventy-eight children in the families of the one hundred and thirty-one girls studied. This is an average of over four children to a family. It may be well to remember in this connection that these girls came from homes where the parents were predominately foreign, and where the fathers were laboring men whose wages are rarely above the bare existence point. Four children in such households commonly mean crowded rooms and economic stress. Such conditions tend to cause dissatisfaction among girls who are acquiring American standards.

*Number of Delinquent Brothers and Sisters*

An effort was made to discover whether the girl under consideration was the only one of the children of her family who had departed from the normal standard.

Girls who admitted brothers or sisters had been in trouble..	28
Girls who denied brothers or sisters had been in trouble....	82
Girls who had neither brothers nor sisters.....	19
Not stated .....	2

Total .....	131
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It will be observed that one-fourth of the girls who had brothers or sisters admitted that one or more of these brothers or sisters had also been in trouble. Because it seemed unwise to pry deeply into the remote family affairs of the girls these figures were not subjected to the same rigid inquiry that more direct matters received. A number of the girls exhibited a sort of family pride which possibly made them unwilling to incriminate other members of their family. On the other hand, most of the girls actually did not seem to have definite information concerning their brothers or sisters, and in general displayed an amazing lack of family solidarity. Consequently, the full extent of delinquency among brothers and sisters is possibly not disclosed by these figures.

The sisters who had been in trouble were girls who had run away from home, or had been immoral, or both. The brothers had been guilty of every sort of delinquency. Several had been sent to the Illinois Training School for Boys at St. Charles, one to the Pontiac Reformatory, at least one was a fugitive from justice and wanted for murder.

*Friends of the Girls*

A remarkably large number of the girls admitted that they had had friends or acquaintances who had been in trouble, similar to their own present difficulty. Hence, it may not be unreasonable to conclude that bad company and bad example had proved a powerful element in the delinquency of these one hundred and thirty-one girls.

Girls who admitted they had had friends in trouble.....	64
Girls who denied they had had friends in trouble.....	44
Not stated .....	23

Total .....	131
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Closely connected with this question of how many of their friends had been delinquent, was the endeavor to determine just who the intimates or "pals" of these one hundred and thirty-one girls were.

Here again the figures must be taken with some reservations. Girls frequently insisted that they had only girl friends, when they

had had perhaps several sex experiences. This fact is illuminating in itself and shows the casual attitude many girls exhibited towards matters of sex. Sex relations with boys whom they hardly knew and whom they certainly did not claim as friends seem to have come to these girls as a simple matter of course. The boys frequently passed entirely out of the life of the girl after sex relations had occurred once or twice.

The tabulation of the answers to the question "Are your chums or intimate friends girls or boys?" are given for whatever they may be worth:

Girls who claimed only girls as friends.....	36
Girls who claimed only men or boys as friends.....	20
Girls who claimed both girls and boys as friends.....	60
Girls who claimed they had no friends.....	10
Not stated .....	5
Total .....	131

#### THE GIRLS' OWN REACTION AND FURTHER DISCUSSION OF CAUSES

The following section of this study will deal with the general reactions of the girls to their own problems; also with further reasons and conditions which seem to have contributed to their delinquency.

What may be called the mental processes or spiritual reactions of these girls, seemed of greater interest and significance than any other phase of delinquency touched on in this study. The original questionnaire contained a group of topics which dealt with the girls' interests, ambitions, and plans for the future. It was found practically impossible to elicit definite or even intelligent replies along these lines. The girls were bewildered that any one should expect them to discuss interests in life or plans for the future. The attempt to get information which required independent thinking or reasoning from the girls, or the expression of opinion by them, soon proved so unsatisfactory that this effort was abandoned except that each girl was asked to state in her own way why she had become immoral. Whatever may be said of the girl's own psychology has been based primarily, therefore, on observations of her conduct and general attitude as unconsciously manifested during the initial interview and her entire stay in the home.

#### *Apparently Unrepentant*

In the vast majority of the cases studied, the girls showed the most amazing indifference to the social and personal consequences of their acts. Their regret was confined chiefly to annoyance that they had been caught and confined in the home. Not more than fifteen of

the one hundred and thirty-one girls manifested any real regret or shame for their wrong-doing. It is very much to be doubted if even this many felt the sort of remorse or sorrow which would deter them from a repetition of their delinquent acts. In general they were pitifully bitter and defiant, and exhibited the most unconcerned attitude towards sex matters. This attitude was colored usually by levity, vulgarity, or cynicism. There was much less apathy in the attitude of the semi-delinquent or incorrigible girls toward their misdeeds, but even among this group there was surprisingly little positive sorrow shown.

#### *Number of Times in Similar Trouble*

Of the one hundred and thirty-one girls interviewed, fifty-three admitted that they had been in trouble before. It was the second time for thirty-one, third time for ten, fourth time for five, fifth time for four, sixth time for one. One had forgotten how many times in all she had been in trouble; another objected to stating the exact number, but admitted she had been in trouble more than once. At a conservative estimate, probably at least fifty per cent of the "first timers" will ultimately become repeaters, and even a higher per cent of the old timers will never be reformed. The chances of the delinquent girl to make good are not great after she had been detained in an institution like the Juvenile Detention Home of Chicago, and is then returned, in the majority of cases, to the very environment which at least contributed to her delinquency. In such a case, society is surely expecting too much of the unfortunate girl and her over-worked probation officer and giving too little consideration to the underlying social causes of delinquency. Surely the most adequate defense against immorality lies in preventive measures. Too often reformatory measures fail because they are unable to destroy the newly aroused impulses of the girl.

#### *Consideration of Future Prevention*

The girls' attitude of indifference was possibly the most discouraging fact met in the course of this study. The problem of increasing the moral responsibility of such girls seems almost hopeless. It undoubtedly calls for the most vigorous, persistent and sympathetic consideration. Congregating a number of such girls in an institution should no longer be expected to reform them. Nor should reasonable people think that turning them back into the society which produced them will reform them. What then? Better education, including sex training, more attractive homes, properly directed recreation,

higher wages, in the last analysis the arousing of a *spirit of social responsibility for individual weakness*. All these would help in the final solution of the problem.

Even under such favorable conditions there would doubtless be for at least another generation, a few over-sexed or plus-sexed girls. These difficult and exceptional cases should be given the constant and altruistic attention of the highest type probation officer. An improved training school system should be needed in rare instances only.

#### *Some Details About Immoral Girls*

As already mentioned, one hundred of the one hundred and thirty-one girls had had sex experience, rape having been the first and only experience of nineteen. This leaves eighty-one girls who had had voluntary sex experience, but only seventeen of these eighty-one had had relations with *one* man only. Sixty-four admitted relations with several different men. At least twenty-four of this number had been thoroughly promiscuous.

A very large number of the girls who had had relations with only one or two men seemed to feel that if a man was their "steady" that was sufficient reason for relations. Over and over again in response to the repeated question, "Why did you do it?" girls replied: "Why, he was my steady," or, "I was going with him steady." Intimate relations were indulged in by such girls with childlike simplicity with their nearest male friends. Some of these girls were naturally unmoral rather than immoral. Their attitude probably may have been a distorted result of the pre-nuptial customs of some European countries.

Girls were constantly asked if they did not know that it was wrong or dangerous to do as they had done. Only a very few claimed that they did not realize the significance of their acts. For these few, the teaching of sex hygiene might have had a deterring effect. In the main it must be stated that very few girls attempted to defend themselves on the ground of ignorance or innocence. Most of them seemed to have slipped naturally into immorality without stopping to consider the matter at all.

#### *Immoral Girls' Own Explanation of Conduct*

A few of the many cases where the girls had committed immoral acts without considering the consequences of the acts seriously are typified in the following quotations from the girls themselves: "He begged me so I finally let him," this from a very immature colored girl who wept hysterically because she "did not want to be separated

from her mama"; "I did it just to please him, no thought of marriage"; "I was getting weak from being tormented"; "Finally consented, was weak, couldn't help it"; "Relations last Saturday when fellow forced me, do not know why I didn't yell"; "I can't remember number of times, knew it was dangerous, do not know why I did it"; "Easy lead, fell to coaxing"; "He coaxed for two hours, and promised to stick to the end."

A great many girls indicated that, although they had failed to consider seriously the consequences of sex relations before the acts occurred, they had been urged on by a more or less definite sex desire. The following phrases are typical examples of the replies of such girls to the question, "Why?" "I knew it was wrong, I don't know what gets into me sometimes"; "I did it a lot of times, I couldn't wait until I was married"; "Wanted to do it"; "We were in love, he promised marriage"; "Something coaxed me to it"; "I did it because I liked him." The stories of many of these girls are full of pathos and tragedy. Many of them simply yearned for the affection and companionship which even well-meaning but overburdened parents were unable to give them. Many of them accepted in childlike good faith the only substitute for love that offered itself. The interference of parents in the love affairs of their daughters was the innocent cause of several tragedies. A sweet and intelligent girl of seventeen years said that she had been friends with a young man for three years and had been engaged to marry him for nine months. Their parents had refused to permit them to marry so they had deliberately gone to a rooming house, taking with them another young couple. Sex relations had occurred and the girl in question became pregnant. She and her fiancée were arrested and although the young man was still anxious to marry the girl, he had been sentenced to the House of Correction. Later, a Caesarian operation had been found necessary to save the life of the girl.

#### *The Immoral Parent Again.*

Mention has already been made of cases where certain girls seem to have been immoral because of the influence of immoral parents. In some cases the immoral tendency of the girl seems to have been the expression of inherited oversexed characteristics; in others it seems to have resulted from immoral home environment. A few cases clearly demonstrated how a combination of inherited and environmental immorality may prove the undoing of a girl.

For instance, a colored girl of immoral and vicious habits, who

was pregnant, explained her immoral conduct thus: "I did it because he wanted me to, and because my mother does it all the time with men." Explaining a series of illicit relations with another man she said: "I was going with him, too." This girl had had other experiences besides the two given.

Another pregnant girl, L, gave the following explanation of her conduct: Her mother was immoral, swore at her and scolded her all the time. People talked about L when she had "never done anything wrong herself." She became "disgusted and downhearted." Under promise of marriage, she had frequent relations with a nineteen-year-old boy. The girl seemed more nervous than sorry.

B, a beautiful child of fourteen years, told the following harrowing story: Her mother was a prostitute and had compelled her daughter to submit to a man when she was ten years of age. After that she had been "forced" by boys on two occasions. Finally, "because discouraged," she had gone to live over a barn with a boy a few years her senior. After her arrest the girl attempted to commit suicide and was sent to the State Training School for Girls.

The following case is replete with dramatic situations and seems to be one of those where the delinquency is an expression of inherited oversexed characteristics. This girl claimed, however, that she was regularly called vile names by an uncle who doubted her chastity long before she had ever stepped aside.

B was the offspring of a prostitute and a theological student who were married just before her birth had occurred. The parents did not live together after their marriage; the mother continued as a prostitute and the father gave up his theological studies. The child had been apparently well brought up by her paternal grandmother as the niece of her own father. When the girl was just past thirteen years of age, she had run away from home with a "fellow she loved" and whom she thought would marry her. She immediately thereafter became involved with two Japanese, and, she thought, "not more than six boys." She was arrested and released on probation. She had soon run away from home again with a soldier and lived for several weeks as a prostitute in a near-by camp city. She returned to Chicago, continued her immoral life, frequented cabarets, and become involved with a colored man. She was finally arrested one night at 3 a. m. in company with another fourteen-year-old girl who had had similar experiences. B was again released, but was soon rearrested and found to be suffering from a venereal disease. She was finally sent to an institution. This girl was physically well developed and



most attractive looking. She easily passed for a girl many years older than she really was.

#### SOME ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF DELINQUENCY

It must always be remembered that the cause of moral delinquency is a most complex affair. Every specific case has been the result of a combination of remote causes and a proximate cause or causes. For this reason it is not easy to say to what exact extent economic reasons or desire for financial gain, contributed to the immorality or the incorrigibility of these one hundred and thirty-one girls.

We do know that many girls regularly supplement an inadequate wage by illicit sex relations. But such girls usually maintain a kind of self-respect and rarely fall into the hands of the law. On the whole they are older and more sophisticated and present a more clearly defined problem than the girls dealt with in this study.

A money consideration is known to have entered into at least thirteen of the eighty-one cases of voluntary sex experience described in this study. It is impossible to say how many other girls who had never expected or received a penny from men, had fallen through some undefined desire to lessen the barrenness of their lives. The one hundred and thirty-one girls of this study were sadly deficient in self-analysis. However, the connection between the hardships of their lives and their delinquencies seems no less obvious, because so few of the girls themselves consciously realized it. It will be seen that the hardships were fundamentally economic in their nature. Moral disintegration naturally accompanies unconscious as well as conscious discontent with overcrowded homes, uninteresting and poorly paid work, demoralizing recreation, insufficient and unattractive clothes, and so forth.

#### *Examples of Girls Who Committed Immoral Acts for Gain*

In three of the thirteen cases where girls had been immoral for gain their first experience had been for money. One of these girls had a step-mother who had allowed her to retain only ten cents of her wages each week for spending money. She ran away from home; and while away was offered and had accepted two dollars for relations by a sailor. Another of these girls had refused to stay in an unpleasant home on a farm with a mother who was obviously harsh and unreasonable. She secured a position as housemaid in Chicago for three dollars and a half a week. When she lost this position, in a mood of unreasoning desperation, she had become a street walker. The other girl had been in trouble twice before, once for larceny, but had never been immoral. When she was offered three dollars in a

public amusement park for relations, she had "seen how much money she could make," and had accepted the offer. This girl had never had over five dollars a week to spend on herself at home, but at this new business she found she could make fifty to sixty dollars a week. She became badly diseased and thoroughly demoralized in a short time.

In this group we find one girl who had no mother, one no father, one neither father nor mother. These three had been brought up in squalid homes in the most unattractive portions of the city. Two of them had been prostitutes for regular fees. One had merely accepted gifts from a friend.

Two of these girls had immoral mothers and had had first sex experiences "for love"; both had gone into prostitution for money, although the financial need was not serious in either case. Both were pretty, frivolous girls, who desired better clothes than they were able to secure honestly. Another thoroughly depraved girl had left home two years previously because of the alleged cruelty of a drunken father. Her financial need at the time of the act for which she was under arrest, was patent, but she was unwilling or unable to give many details of her previous experiences.

Two girls who had been raped had afterward become regular prostitutes. One of these girls was especially bitter and claimed her life had been ruined because she had been sent to a girls' reformatory at the age of twelve, because a grown cousin had forcibly raped her. Another girl had had a comfortable home, but very weak and inefficient parents, for whom she had neither affection nor respect. She had had an affair with a married man almost literally under the eyes of her parents; soon afterward she had left home and become a prostitute.

Another handsome girl admitted she was weak and could not get the clothes she wanted on her wages of five dollars a week, so had become an inmate of a disorderly house. This girl had an immoral record covering several years. She said that her home had every material comfort, but she had not been happy there because of a step-father.

The consideration received by this group of thirteen girls varied from "lots of things," gifts from a "steady"; the return of a prized graduation pin from a boy who demanded relations for it; to four cases of weekly incomes amounting to fifty to sixty dollars a week.

Four of these thirteen girls had committed acts of dishonesty as well as immorality. One had a previous record for snatching pocket-books, one admitted that she made it a practice to "roll the men with whom she had relations whenever possible." This girl seemed proud

of her success in this particular line. Another girl had accepted stolen jewelry from the pimp for whom she worked. The fourth admitted larceny from the woman with whom she had lived.

#### *Girls Guilty of Larceny*

There were seven other immoral girls besides the four mentioned above, who admitted larcenies of various grades, but who had not performed the sexual act for pay.

In addition to the eleven immoral, dishonest girls, there were at least seven incorrigible girls who had been dishonest. The pathetic story of one of these girls is in many ways typical: T, was a dull girl of sixteen years, whose parents were both foreign born. The girl's mother had been dead for five years. There were nine children, three younger than T in the home. This girl had worked in a factory, made seven dollars a week, and was forced to give six dollars and fifty cents of her weekly wage to her father. Her father refused to buy her clothes or "leave her out at night." She was required to do the housework and the family washing when she returned from work. She had finally run away from home, and while away stole thirty-five dollars. This girl claimed that she had never been in trouble before, and that she had been tempted because of her need. A majority of all the girls who had stolen had taken articles of clothing or money to buy clothing which they thought they needed.

#### THE RUNAWAY GIRL

About three-fourths of the whole number of girls who have been tabulated in this study were or had been runaways from home. Rightly or wrongly, most of these girls believed that their homes had been sufficiently unpleasant or their parents sufficiently unreasonable to justify their action. The reasons given by the girls themselves for their dissatisfaction must, of course, be accepted with the greatest caution. But even a conservative consideration of the causes for girls running away from home presents an indictment of modern family life. In the present generation young people seem to be struggling with the idea that reciprocal regard and respect must replace the old theory that emphasized the unquestioning homage always due parents. It is a common fault for young people to blame others for their troubles instead of bravely assuming the responsibility themselves. These one hundred and thirty-one girls were not guiltless in this respect. And yet, the lack of sympathy between the parent and child of today, even in many of the so-called "better families," is becoming so real that we should not be surprised that in foreign families an almost tragic inharmony of ideals exists. We can only

hope that the present is merely that unsettled transition period between crumbling and outworn forms of domestic and civil responsibility, and that new era, which must be based on social solidarity and universal co-operation.

### *Why Girls Leave Home*

Because such a large percent of the girls who leave home eventually become immoral, and because so many girls in this study had left home for reasons which reflect directly on their homes and parents, a number of examples which suggest the girls' criticisms are now given:

Girl made \$7.50 a week; had to give it all to her mother, who struck her. Ran away from home.

Father attacked her twice, also threatened to kill her and beat her mother. Ran away.

Made \$8 a week; had only such spending money as she "sneaked out" of her pay envelope; no money for pleasure; father too strict, "no music, not even books." Ran away.

Father took "gun, knife, and baseball bat to her." Ran away.

Mean to her at home. Mother chased her out of house because she stayed out until midnight. Lover rented room for her and first relations occurred.

Would not stay at home because father hit her. He brought beer to the house and caroused in the night since her mother died.

Nice appearing girl; waited until she thought she was of age, then ran away because scolded and beaten at home.

Girl born in Russia, not a cent of her wages to spend; left home, but could not explain why.

Girl never permitted to stay out after nine p. m.; was struck by mother if ten minutes late. Ran away.

Ran away because father beat her and found fault.

Ran away because father "hollered at her all the time" and beat her. Got ten cents of her wages a week to spend.

Ran away because she "had no good living, hard bread to eat."

Father always chased her friends out of the house. He finally put her out because she had lost her job.

Mother always hit her and hurt her, was afraid. Ran away.

Did not like step-father and mother nagged all the time. Ran away.

Step-father mean to her, and mother never wanted her around. Ran away.

Had a step-father and her mother called her names; had only a few cents a week to spend. Ran away.

Many other cases could be given which would show a similar connection between the girls' running away from home and their alleged unsatisfactory home surroundings. It does not seem necessary to go into the matter more fully under this heading, because some mention has already been made elsewhere of the friction existing between the girls and their step-parents; also of the number of discontented girls who had received little or none of their own wages to spend. The related topic of the effect of immoral parents on their daughters has also been discussed.

### THE MENTALLY SUBNORMAL DELINQUENT

The complexity of the inherited and environmental causes which lead to delinquency has been emphasized. This complexity logically

precludes us from asserting that delinquency is due to any considerable extent to mental subnormality alone. It is true that possibly as many as seventeen of the one hundred and thirty girls studied, appeared on careful analysis to be somewhat dull or erratic. But certainly most of these girls were no more mentally deficient than thousands of other girls who are making good and whose mentality is not questioned, but who are born with better surroundings and opportunities. Only one of the seventeen dull girls mentioned was committed to an institution for the feeble-minded. It is possible that a psychopathic examination of these one hundred and thirty-one girls would have discovered mental irregularities which would escape even the trained lay observer. However, the large number of delinquent girls who are mentally subnormal, no more proves that delinquency is due to mental condition, than the enormous number of delinquent girls who are anaemic and under-nourished proves that delinquency is due to malnutrition or starvation.

It would be incorrect to deny that a certain type of actually feeble-minded girl falls an easy victim to promiscuous sex irregularities. In general, however, both the physical and the mental condition of a delinquent girl should be considered in tracing causes for her conduct. Is it unreasonable to suggest that it would be possible to improve mental irregularities often—and thus check potential delinquency—by plenty of nourishing food? The girls of this study were all given medical examinations at the Juvenile Home. Although the exact physical findings are not available here, the writer is sufficiently familiar with them to know that very few of the girls were found to be physically perfect. Indeed, mentally subnormal girls are commonly physically subnormal also.

#### CONCLUSION

This brings us to the conclusion of this study. It is hoped that something of the complexity and inter-dependency of the causes which produce delinquency has been made plain. The time will surely come when delinquency will be as universally recognized as a social disease as tuberculosis is at the present time. No one would now expect to free the world of tuberculosis until bad housing, demoralizing industrial conditions, unclean milk and food supplies, contaminated air, and so on are eliminated. Delinquency is distinctly the result of similar dovetailing, interacting, social maladjustments. It may be vain ever to hope for the complete destruction of delinquent tendencies in mankind. The real fight against delinquency of every sort, however, will not be started until domestic, industrial and civic life are consciously co-operated and socialized.