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## Individual Delinquent

Herman C. Stevens

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## "THE INDIVIDUAL DELINQUENT."

HERMAN C. STEVENS<sup>2</sup>.

In so complex a problem as the cause and treatment of crime, the necessity of segregating the juvenile offenders, for special consideration, was early recognized. To this end came the juvenile court with special judges and court officers to attend to these cases. While the creation of such courts marked an important step in the rational treatment of the problem of crime, penologists, sociologists and judges soon saw the limitations of their opportunity. It was seen that special *legal* consideration of adolescent delinquency served no very important purpose. What the judge needs is insight into the whole interior life of the case before him. The play of instincts and emotions, the mental imagery, the social reactions, the impulsiveness or inhibitedness, the pressure of sexual impulses, the tyranny of habit, the suppression and internal conflicts as well as the social *milieu* of which the delinquent is a part must all be laid in the balance along with the offense itself. The psychological aspect of the case informs and enlightens the legal aspect. Intelligent observers saw the need of expert study of the individual delinquent for the proper adjudication of the offense. With view of furnishing such information in Chicago, private philanthropy in the person of Mrs. W. F. Dummer, and under the leadership of Miss Julia Lathrop, organized the Juvenile Psychopathic Institute in 1909. By the terms of the endowment, funds were provided for five years' work. The author of the book under review was chosen director. In April, 1914, Cook County assumed the responsibility of the Institute.

The seriousness with which the director has conceived his function is attested by this substantial volume. In the preparation of his book, the author has had largely to blaze his own trail. While other books on crime and criminals have been written, the intensive study of the individual offender in the intimacy and detail which are shown in this book, is unique and revealing. A consciousness of the great re-

<sup>1</sup>A review of "The Individual Delinquent. A Textbook of Diagnosis and Prognosis for all Concerned in Understanding Offenders." By William Healy, M. D., Director of the Psychopathic Institute, Juvenile Court, Chicago. Little Brown & Co., Boston: 1915, pp. XVI, 830.

<sup>2</sup>Director of the Psychopathic Laboratory, University of Chicago.

sponsibility placed upon him as well as a realization of his unusual opportunity have been permitted by the author to give color to expressions which with somewhat greater restraint would have been considerably modified. In the preface one finds: "It has been a joy to direct for five years the important scientific task which finds expression in the present volume." "The statement of our findings has gradually assumed the scope of a text or reference book, the first on the subject. We hope for our science the growth that other sciences have experienced: there is great necessity for further research, but extensions and modifications are to be embodied only as their truth is assured." Naturally!

In presenting his material, Doctor Healy has divided it into two books, the first entitled "General Data," the second, "Cases, Types, Causative Factors." The content of these books suggests rather, the titles, "Methods" and "Results." Along with the details of the procedure used in the Psychopathic Institute there is given a comprehensive survey of the literature on the subject. The bibliography of 374 titles gives evidence of the breadth of the author's reading. The problem which is set by the author may best be stated in his own words: "Prior to making a selection, or undertaking the production ourselves, of any tests, we attempted carefully to formulate, with all possible criticism, the definition of our problem. We saw ourselves as students of the causations of delinquency, directly meeting the mental bases of action, those that we have indicated in our chapter on the subject. With the next step we saw that we must ascertain those peculiar mental characteristics, and potentialities, and functionings, and content, which might be correlated with the fact of the offender's delinquency. We needed the mental measurements of those traits or functionings which first, from a common sense point of view, would seem likely to stand in some sort of relationship to the mental background of misconduct. No findings were to be passed upon lightly as indicating the discovery of the causative agents of delinquency, but naturally with the relationship of the intimate relationship between mind and deed, one would first turn in the investigation of causes to those phenomena which lie obviously linked together. Of prime importance, then, should always be the construction of a *psychogram* of the offender, namely, a studied estimate of his mental qualities and conditions, including both the strengths and weaknesses." It will be seen from this statement of his concept of his task that the problem is essentially a psychological problem. Nevertheless, we find the author protesting against the psychological standpoint alone. He states: "We will not attempt to review the opinions of the several

criminologists who upon *a priori* grounds have already declared themselves for the psychological point of view. We can do better by presenting the facts gleaned from life studies which lead us directly to the same position. The concrete argument is to be read in almost every page of our case histories. Mental and moral problems may there be seen to merge. Notwithstanding all this I fully recognize that there are many cases in which sole dependence on the psychological standpoint would be a grave mistake. Repeatedly I have asserted the opinion, still held, that it is very difficult to decide which is in general the most important investigatory vantage ground—social, medical, or psychological. The point is clear, however, that one can most surely and safely arrive at remedial measures through investigation of the mental factors. There is no doubt that certain groups, of physicians and educators will best understand the importance of the above truths—physicians who have been especially engaged with psychiatric and neurological problems, and educators who are interested in applied psychology. Sociologists and psychologists have nowadays rapidly growing conceptions of the value of individual study. Those who under the law have to deal with the offenders are, however, foremost in needing to understand fundamentals. And if it be intimated that these issues are too abstruse, we should feel justified in asserting that those who have not the capacity to appreciate these things are certainly not fitted to pass judgments on delinquents or hold authority over them.”

The attack on the psychological problem has led to the formulation of a definite plan, the main points of which, are the following:

“1. What is the subject’s mental ability, independent, so far as ascertainable, of the result of formal education?

This should be estimated in the terms of strength or weakness of:—

- (a) the subject’s general ability or general intelligence (if such a thing as general intelligence there be);
- (b) The subject’s special abilities—selecting for investigation here those abilities or functions which, since we are dealing with social conduct, seem most likely to be related to social action, success, or failure.

2. What has been the result of formal education, interpreted in the light of its conditions and extent?
3. Does the individual suffer from aberrational mental functionings, whether border-line or fully-developed psychoses
4. What are the individual's preponderating mental interests, as stated in terms of mental content, imagery, ideation and the like?
5. Has the individual important peculiar characteristics, particularly of emotional or moral life, leading to impulsive or other abnormal action?
6. Has the individual suffered earlier experiences, mental or environmental, which have, through the arousal of inner conflicts, complexes, inhibitions or resistances, interfered with the satisfactory, smooth and healthy working of mental life? This is peculiarly, in modern terminology, a study of mental mechanisms." (Page 77.)

The actual data by which the psychological analysis of mental traits is made, is obtained largely from the results of the mental tests and by the method of psychoanalysis. The author has devised a series of tests for the purpose of discovering the special capacities, such as memory powers, ability to give testimony, powers of attention, motor co-ordination, the associative processes, learning ability, language ability, foresight, and constructive ability. In all 23 tests are described. The difficulty, as everyone knows, with tests of this sort is the establishment of norms. Inasmuch as many of these tests are peculiar to Doctor Healy, his statements with regard to the norms is of interest. "The following statement shows what may be expected from our own group of tests from individuals who are to be considered as normal, or as of ordinary ability, among the general social group which one meets in studying delinquents in a large cosmopolitan center. There is not the slightest reason to think that this normal differs to any extent from the normal of a city school in the same community. It does, however, naturally differ from that of a selected group, for example, the pupils in a high grade private school. Binet declared the same difference for his tests. What is subnormal or feeble-minded in our group we generally find has been regarded so by the public school people. Since we deal mostly with older individuals, we may say that what we schedule as ordinary or fair in ability, is the equipment possessed by a young person who shows himself qualified to

succeed under the requirements of employment which call for what we might roughly denominate average intelligence. Other things being equal, the members of this group had usually proved themselves capable of passing one school grade a year." (p. 106). While the statements of the author on this point are not explicit it appears in his statement of the norms that they are based largely on the performance of pupils of a private school. Inasmuch as vigorous efforts are being made to standardize tests which are universal in their application, it is to be regretted that more attention is not paid to this point. It has probably not led to any serious error in the actual working of the Psychopathic Institute, but nevertheless if tests are to be used in estimating mental traits, standards of large groups, selected on the basis of racial and linguistic homogeneity are absolutely essential. Even allowing for the fact that the psychological tests are only a part of the author's method of dealing with the case it hardly seems to the reviewer that sufficient care has been bestowed upon this matter.

It is plain that the author is not prepossessed in favor of the Binet test and for reasons which seem to the reviewer to be perfectly sound. Much harm has been done to the cause of psychography by the premature propoganda which has been made for the Binet test. As Doctor Healy says, "To be able to say to the judge or to anyone with the power to take action, that the offender of 23, chronologically, is mentally an individual of 10 years, puts the matter in an enticingly clear light." And the reason is just what Doctor Healy says it is, namely, that no attempt is made to reach the individual case. In referring (p. 79) to the writers who have discussed the Binet test, it seems odd to the reviewer that no mention is made of the Yerkes Point Scale modification of the Binet test. Many of the criticisms which have been leveled against the old Binet test are successfully met in this new adaptation; for example, the failure of the old Binet test in the twelfth year and after has been almost completely obviated by the Point Scale method.

The categories of abilities and mental peculiarities which have been devised by Doctor Healy are again somewhat individualistic. He has divided the field into thirteen sub-divisions:

- "A. Considerably above ordinary in ability and information—the latter estimated with reference to age and social advantages.
- B. Ordinary in ability and information—the latter estimated with reference to age and social advantages.

- C. Native ability fair and formal educational advantages fair or good, but very poorly informed.
- D. Native ability fair and formal educational advantages fair or good.
- E. Native ability distinctly good, but formal educational advantages poor.
- F. Native ability fair and formal educational advantages poor.
- G. Native ability poor and formal educational advantages poor.
- H. Native ability poor and formal educational advantages good or fair.
- I. Dull, perhaps from ascertained physical causes, including some cases of epilepsy.
- J. Subnormal mentality—considerably more educability than the feeble-minded.
- K. Moron.
- L. Imbecile.
- M. Psychoses." (p. 113.)

The last six classes seem to the reviewer sufficiently distinct for practical purposes. The graduations, however, which are indicated in the first seven groups seem to him difficult of application. The author recognizes this and he points out that, above the group of the subnormal, there are really only three large subdivisions; namely, those markedly above normal, the average or ordinary, and those who are poor in ability. While admitting that there is some over-lapping of definition which everyone concedes is difficult to avoid, he asserts that in the actual operation of his classification his assistants have had little difficulty with it.

Doctor Healy's other instrument, besides the mental tests, for reaching the inner nature of the delinquent's mind and personality is psychoanalysis. His conception of psychoanalysis is essentially different from that which is generally held by psychopathologists. Doctor Healy states: "Induced introspection is the principal method of psychoanalysis. The subject in an atmosphere of perfect calm is asked to remember, to remember; letting the machinery of associative processes have full sway in pulling up for inspection each link of the chain of mental causation which reaches gradually into the past. There are really many chains, and skilled guidance is needed for keeping the right one centered in the field of view. Many links of course are unimportant and can rapidly be passed by. Tangles are met which must be straightened out, if possible, and sometimes there are

interferences, technically known as resistances, to be overcome. In these hindrances perhaps the machinery fails to work well because of deep-set and hardly conscious lack of desire to co-operate. So quietness and good will, skilled questioning without undue suggestion, and, above all, sympathetic understanding, are indispensable to the inquiry." (p. 117). Undoubtedly quietness, good will and skilled questioning can do much to bring to the surface hidden motives and latent qualities. It is very questionable, however, whether 'induced introspection' of this sort is comparable to the method which is employed in the psychoanalysis of phobias, tics and hysterical states. Dissociation of consciousness by crystal gazing, hypnosis, or the word associations is necessary for those deeper anatomizings of consciousness which seem to bring relief in certain of these cases. Doctor Healy's conception of psychoanalysis seems to be that it is composed partly of cross examination and partly of confession. It does not seem to the reviewer that he is justified in making such use of a term which has come to have a definite meaning in contemporary medicine.

With these methods, supplemented by much sociological investigation, Doctor Healy has analyzed the cases of 1,000 young repeated offenders. The general disposition of these cases with reference to the 13 categories mentioned above is of interest.

"A. Considerably above ordinary in ability and information—the latter estimated with reference to age and social advantages.....	31
B. Ordinary in ability and information—the latter estimated with reference to age and social advantages...	267
C. Native ability fair and formal educational advantages fair or good, but very poorly informed.....	69
D. Native ability fair and formal educational advantages fair or good.....	69
E. Native ability distinctly good, but formal educational advantages poor.....	22
F. Native ability fair and formal educational advantages poor.....	123
G. Native ability poor and formal educational advantages poor.....	40
H. Native ability poor and formal educational advantages good or fair.....	53
I. Dull, perhaps from ascertained physical causes, including some cases of epilepsy.....	79
J. Subnormal mentality—considerable more educability than the feebleminded.....	81
K. Moron.....	89
L. Imbecile.....	8
M. Psychosis.....	69
	1000"



This group is sufficiently large to serve as a very fair indication of the types of juvenile offenders that are likely to be met with in a cosmopolitan population. One hundred and ninety-eight, or slightly less than 20 per cent, were found to be subnormal mentally, or feeble-minded. In view of the over emphasis which has been placed upon the factor of feeble-mindedness in the causation of juvenile delinquency these figures are reassuring. The Juvenile Psychopathic Institute of Chicago is to be congratulated in having a conservative director.

Judging from the space that is devoted to the discussion of it, the medical aspects of the case, apart from certain well-defined lines of inquiry, seem not to be as thoroughly studied as are the psychological phases. The medical subjects of especial interest to the author appear to be epilepsy, sexual abnormalities, and defects of eyes, nose and throat. In view of the importance of congenital syphilis, in the causation of mental abnormalities, including feeble-mindedness and delinquency, it would seem that serological tests should be included in the routine methods employed in the examination of such cases. Doctor Healy cites the results of certain investigators on the relation between mental deficiency and congenital syphilis. Oddly enough, the authors whom he cites obtained the smallest percentage of positive Wassermann reactions. He must certainly be acquainted with the very careful work of Dean and of Atwood who found approximately 15 per cent positive Wassermann reactions in fairly large feeble-minded groups. No large groups of adolescent delinquents have been subjected to a serological test for syphilis. The results obtained by Stevens<sup>3</sup> on a group of sixty boys at the House of Correction in Chicago, showed the percentage of positive reactions to be 26. Recently Haines<sup>4</sup> found 20.8 per cent positive and doubtful reactions in 365 cases examined. These results, although they may not finally be correct, indicate very strongly that the influence of this particular factor calls for further careful study.

In the discussion of the causes of delinquency it is apparent that the author does not attach any considerable significance to two of the alleged causes of criminality. The doctrine that there is a criminal type finds absolutely nothing to support it in this volume. Lombroso would derive no theoretic comfort from reading this book. Everywhere Doctor Healy insists on the intricacy of the causation of delinquency: "Take for example the frequent use of a general term, 'the criminal,' in the literature of criminology—'the criminal' being an undersized

<sup>3</sup>Stevens, H. C. Report of the City Council Committee on Crime of the City of Chicago, p. 170, 1915.

<sup>4</sup>Haines, Thos. H. The Incidence of Syphilis among Juvenile Delinquents. J. Am. M. Ass., January 8, 1916, p. 102.

man, or an atavistic phenomenon, or a product of economic conditions as it may be—one would almost think that the offender was some species of animal, which would be accurately described by markings and habits. But any such ascribing of nature and traits in general would seem to us, after our practical work, to be absolutely theoretical and superficial. There are many kinds of criminals, with all sorts of traits, and one would urge great caution in speaking of them in any way as a single group. As Goring has just proclaimed from his authoritative researches, 'The physical and mental constitution of both criminal and law-abiding persons of the same age, stature, class and intelligence are identical. There is no such thing as an anthropological criminal type.' (p. 160). This refutation of a belief which has unfortunately gained wide currency among the laity is most welcome. The doctrine of a criminal type is the recrudescence in pseudo-scientific form of the theological doctrine of original sin.

Heredity is another alleged cause which receives but scant support from the experience of five years of the Juvenile Psychopathic Institute. Indeed, it is to be inferred from much that our author says that the term heredity, as he employs it, refers to family histories and may be largely environmental in character. That Doctor Healy is alive to all the dangers of easy inferences drawn from family pedigrees is evidenced by more than one statement in his book. "From our experience we would warn at this place once more against the danger of drawing easy conclusions about heredity being the main factor back of misdeeds simply because some progenitors or other members of the family were guilty of delinquency. Both mother and child may be prostitutes, and both be victims of environment. Grandparents and parents and children may be liars, or thieves, or misdoers in other ways, and very little cause of their conduct be protoplasmic carrying over of special traits. Some changes or reformations that may be witnessed through alteration of environment, make one very skeptical about deciding the rule of inheritance in criminalism, unless other proof than that of similar misconduct in successive generations is brought forth. We feel certain that absolutely the only fair way to study inheritance in criminalistic families is to ascertain the various causes of misbehavior in individual cases, and then to reckon up these with known heritable conditions. Nothing is more unfair than to offer family charts alone in proof of inheritance of criminality." (p. 188)

In the discussion of some of the general causes of delinquency the influence of senility is mentioned. All that the author has to say about these facts is undoubtedly important. If the reviewer is correct in his understanding that this volume is based upon the experience of

the Juvenile Psychopathic Institute, he is at a loss to understand why discussion of this factor should be introduced here.

It is in his characterization of the types of delinquents that our author is most at home. His experiences in the past seven years as Director of the Juvenile Psychopathic Institute have given him exceptional opportunity for the studying of individual delinquents. No one can read his book at all appreciatively without feeling that his understanding of these types is intimate and profound, and it is in just this intimate and personal knowledge of the characteristics of the offenders that he makes for the most humane and satisfactory treatment of juvenile delinquency. It is as a scientist of the characterology of juvenile criminals that Doctor Healy has completely succeeded. One needs always to remember that it is exactly in this field that he formulated his chief problem. It is not too much to say that his success has been complete. For those who have doubted the wisdom and the value of expert psychopathic work as an adjunct to judicial procedure no more adequate answer could be given than reference to the volume before us. It is to be regretted that our author has not had something more to say about the practical disposition of some of his interesting cases, and something, too, about the social outcome of those who have passed through his hands. Here, as everywhere, the pragmatic test is crucial; the proof of the pudding is in the eating of it. Without detriment to the exposition of his subject it seems as though our author might have found more space in which to acquaint the friends of this movement with the practical success of the experiment in terms which could be realized by all intelligent laymen.

In his discussion of treatment, Doctor Healy makes two recommendations which look towards the improvement of the present system. "One is extension of the juvenile court method and juvenile jurisdiction to offenders up to the age of 20 or 21 years, with powers of committing proper cases (perhaps through the adult criminal courts) to penal institutions. My years of daily work in courts have served to enforce upon me, what everybody knows, that most boys and girls do not cease to be boys and girls at 17 or 18. As we shall say in our discussion of adolescence, the formative period of life is variable in different individuals, but is almost never ended at the limit fixed now as the juvenile court age. Practical workers, as well as scientific students of adolescence, perceive remarkable changes of character taking place between 18 and 20. Every safeguard that society can throw about these important years by virtue of the parental method of the juvenile court, with its properly gathered

knowledge of causations and results of previous efforts, should be continued. The other fundamental is that any court handling an offender should have jurisdiction over the contributing agencies to his offense. The greatest travesties in justice occur through this omission, found almost everywhere. The failure to do justice to the total situation in the case betokens the utter weakness of this branch of social effort. The conveying of a complaint and of evidence to another court, to be tried perhaps weeks hence, without the intimate knowledge of the facts concerning the primary offender and his case, is psychologically and practically a very weak proceeding. There are many other fundamental needs in criminal procedure, which members of the legal profession see, but the above two are matters of organization where decisive human factors are not taken into account." (p. 173.)

The proof-reading of the book has been excellently done. The reviewer has detected but one typographical error; the legend on Plate ix, facing page 310, is said to be taken from Kauffmann's "Psychologie des Verbrechers" instead of "Psychologie des Verbrechens." The title is correctly given in the bibliography.