

THE SUB-NORMAL SCHOOL-CHILD

VOLUME ONE
THE YOUNG DELINQUENT

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By CYRIL BURT, M.A., D.Sc. (GROSS)

VOLUME ONE

THE YOUNG DELINQUENT

VOLUME TWO

THE BACKWARD AND DEFECTIVE

VOLUME THREE

THE UNSTABLE AND NEUROTIC



FIG. 1.—PORTRAIT OF 'B. I' (AGED 15 $\frac{7}{8}$).

THE
YOUNG DELINQUENT

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TO
MY FATHER

P R E F A C E .

THE problem of this book is the psychology of juvenile crime. The volume is one of a series of three; and together, the three books are designed to cover the main forms of mental subnormality to be met with among the young.

There is an old tripartite division of the mind, which distinguishes, as relatively independent aspects of our common conscious life, intelligence, emotion, and character. It views a human being as one who knows, and feels, and wills. In considering, therefore, children whose minds are subnormal, it becomes convenient to recognize three classes or types: first, those who are subnormal intellectually; secondly, those who are subnormal emotionally; and, thirdly, those who are subnormal in morality and character: or, in single words, the backward, the unstable, and the delinquent.

Of the backward, together with the dull and the defective, and of the unstable, together with the nervous or neurotic, I propose to treat in the two volumes to follow. In this I have limited myself, except where different defects are combined and overlap, to the child whose failings are moral. So far as is possible, I intend to examine, in plain and popular language, the causes of youthful delinquency, and the more effective ways of treating it.

Delinquency I regard as nothing but an outstanding sample—dangerous perhaps and extreme, but none the less typical—of common childish naughtiness. Just as the study of the mentally deficient has advanced both our knowledge and our teaching of the average boy and girl, just as the study of the hysterical has explained much that was unintelligible in everyday behaviour, so,

I am convinced, the psychology of the young criminal will throw great light upon the daily disciplinary problems of the classroom and upon the conduct or misconduct of the difficult child.

Crime may be rare; but naughtiness is universal. And the problems of character-training are, or should be, the concern of all. Hence, throughout these pages the argument is addressed, not so much to the lawyer, the psychologist, or the medical man, as to teachers and social workers, and indeed to all who, whether as parents, or as enlightened members of the general public, or as both, are interested in the moral welfare of young people, and are influencing, by their active or inactive attitude, the progress of educational reform.

The substance of these chapters was originally delivered as a course of lectures to London teachers; and both style and matter doubtless still retain some echo of the lecture-hall—here and there an anecdote, a reiterated platitude, a turn of phrase, less appropriate in a scientific treatise than in a popular address. My aim, however, has been exposition rather than proof. I have, it is true, been concerned not so much with results as with methods—methods of inquiry and methods of treatment; for the subject is too new, and experience too recent, to admit of many final generalizations. Nevertheless, the purpose of the book is primarily a practical one: to enable the busy reader—whether schoolmaster or probation-officer, or whatever the motive for his interest may be—to gain some notion how the criminal in the making may best be studied and handled. Needless technicality has, I hope, been avoided. The scientist, should he examine the views here put forward, will find evidence, references, and technical data appended with some fullness in the foot-notes.

The photographs are chosen from a small portrait-gallery of snapshots, and are inserted to give the visualizing reader some concrete picture of the cases that illustrate the text. They are, almost all of them, photographs of early acquaintances, since grown up and reformed. The sanction of the young people depicted,

whenever they have still been accessible, I have, of course, duly obtained; but the chance of their now being recognized from a childish likeness is small. With rare exceptions, I have thought it better not to connect them with individual offences: the reader, however, may find it a profitable exercise to relate the anonymous portraits (if he can) with the particular case-histories they may seem to fit.

To the editors of the *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, of the *Journal of Experimental Pedagogy*, and of *Psyche*, I must express my thanks for their consent, so willingly bestowed, to the reprinting of tables, case-histories, and other matter already published in their pages. To the London County Council I am equally indebted for permission to reproduce statistics, and to incorporate material, from some of my official reports. As one of the Council's officers, I am required by its regulations to state that the Council is in no way responsible for opinions that stand under my name.

My obligations to individual persons are almost too numerous to specify. Without the help of Miss Gladys Bruce, my private assistant, and of the many other workers, both voluntary and official, who have furnished me with information on the cases here analysed, the work could never have been undertaken. To Miss Margery Fry, J.P., one of the Metropolitan Police Magistrates, and to Miss Elizabeth Crosland and Miss Margery Moss, Probation-officers at Bow Street and Great Marlborough Street Police Courts, I am especially grateful for their kindness in reading the sections upon treatment. To my father, Dr. C. B. Burt, J.P., and to my sister, Dr. Marion Burt, I am indebted for similar help in the chapters on physical and pathological conditions. Dr. C. S. Myers, F.R.S., and Mr. T. W. Trought, J.P., have been good enough to read and criticize what I have said on the psychological clinic; my friend and colleague, Mr. J. C. Flügel, Lecturer in Psychology at University College, London, has done the same for the section on psycho-analysis, and Miss Evelyn Fox, Honorary Secretary of the Central Association for

Mental Welfare, for the section on the treatment of defectives. My former colleague, Miss Winifred Spielman, has read through the whole work in manuscript; and my father has undertaken the arduous task of reading and correcting the proofs. Finally, to the patience, the willing advice, and the technical skill of Mr. W. Stanley Murrell, the Manager of the University of London Press, the volume as it is now issued owes an exceptionally heavy debt. To all of them I am deeply grateful for the help they have given and the suggestions they have made.

C. B.

May, 1925

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