

## BOOK REVIEWS

### THE ROOTS OF CRIME

Edward Glover

Selected Papers on Psycho-analysis Vol. 2

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DR. GLOVER is an eminent British psycho-analyst who has long shown a special interest in the psychopathology and treatment of offenders. He is a co-founder of the Institute for the Study and Treatment of Delinquency (now the Portman Clinic) and of the *British Journal of Delinquency* (now the *British Journal of Criminology*). The issue of this collection of his writings on crime since 1922 is therefore an important event, particularly since the articles concerned have been expanded and annotated by the author. Much of the material has to do with 'pathological' crime: but the limits of what is normal and what pathological are so vague that a good deal of the book is concerned with the general clinical approach to crime and with penal policy.

It is plain that there will be a great difference in outlook between one who has gained his experience of offenders in the quiet and seclusion of a consulting room and the prison officer, of any rank, who has to deal with offenders in the mass within the requirements of the law and regulations. This difference is likely to produce a good deal of mutual distrust and undervaluation. The psycho-analyst is liable to view the prison officer as a mere disciplinarian concerned only to secure the submission of his charges and, therefore, an agent in

their further maladjustment and desocialisation. The prison officer is liable to view the analyst as a rather woolly theoretician who ignores most of the fundamental realities of life and prescribes a tolerance for his patients which has to be paid for, not by the prescriber, but by society at large and by himself in particular. There is a feeling that the real problems of management are being shuffled off on to the humbler servants of society without apology or recognition, whilst the psychologist presents himself, from his protected position, as the sole source of enlightenment. It is this sense of injury, rather than any unwillingness to learn, which causes so many prison officers to reject the psychologist of any complexion unless he has shown, by working with them, that his ideas make sense in their own field and have some practical application. The prison officer knows that he, too, is in a transference situation in regard to his charges, though he would not use the term. He knows that he, also, has his successes as he works through his daily difficulties; and he suspects that these successes are much more important in the aggregate than the work done in offices and consulting rooms, however necessary the latter may be as a complementary service.

This angry prejudice is something to be resisted and overcome, since it is so obvious that a careful study and understanding of why an offender has become an offender is relevant to his management and treatment. It is necessary to understand the other point of view and one way to do this is to take time for a careful study of Dr. Glover's book. Those who do so

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will be rewarded in proportion to the amount of effort which they put into it. They will find a good deal more appreciation of their difficulties than they may suppose and they will be enriched by an understanding of some forms of conduct which otherwise seem senseless and obscure. There will be difficulty for some because of the terminology employed; but, if they read on, most of the ideas expounded will become comprehensible.

The book opens with a plea to magistrates, written in 1922, to have cases properly investigated before disposing of them. This was a pioneer effort at the time; but it is still to the point, though much of it is now commonplace because so many of the arguments which were then novel have been taken over by others.

A historical section follows which traces the development of the investigation and treatment of offenders since 1912. There is a note of regret that psycho-analytic teachings have not been more freely accepted; this does not, perhaps, take sufficient account of the fact that it is only through resistance that new ideas get a wide and permanent acceptance. The new psychopathology has suffered very much more from those who have given it an easy and superficial acceptance than from those who have resisted it, since resistance is very apt to cause a movement into the very framework of thought which is being resisted.

Little space is devoted to advances in prison treatment during this time despite the very considerable change which is evident from within the service;

but there is a most interesting section on the diagnosis and treatment of pathological delinquency which runs parallel with the clinical approach to offenders to which so much attention is now being devoted in the training of prison staff.

Two further sections of the book deal with psychopathic and sexual offenders and it is probable that these sections will represent the real meat of the book for most readers, since the marks of experience and authority are here most evident. It is useless to try to summarise these chapters; they need to be read and digested.

Comments are also made about research and its difficulties which deserve careful study, though it seems unlikely that psycho-analysis will play so large a part in research as the author would like. There are also comments on the rather neglected subject of prevention so far as pathological violence is concerned. Dr. Glover's main prescription is for screening out those who are disposed to crime of this nature at the earliest possible stage and for the concentration of a special medico-psychological effort upon them. How this would work out in practice it will be for the reader to judge.

There are notes on recidivism, criminal responsibility and capital punishment which complete a book well worth the study of all those who are prepared to devote time and energy to it. Medical Officers and psychologists, in particular, will be well advised to read it.

W. F. ROPER.