

Book Reviews

THE PROBLEM OF DELINQUENCY:

Edited by Sheldon Glueck.

(Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.)

London: Oxford University Press.

1959. pp.1183 60s. 0d net.

"THIS LARGE BOOK", as Professor Glueck rightly calls it, has for its subject matter "the causes of delinquency, its treatment and prevention . . . (and) . . . the legal problems inherent in society's efforts to cope with its maladjusted youngsters".

It consists mainly of articles which have appeared previously in a wide variety of American and other periodicals and of extracts from the books of Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck; together with five chapters under the heading 'Basic Legal Issues' in which are set out some fifty judicial decisions intended "to give a fair and varied sample of the practical legal problems that have arisen in the administration of juvenile court statutes".

Professor Glueck's avowed aim in preparing this compilation was to provide a "teaching instrument" for use in law schools and other university departments. He therefore selected materials which he claims "lend themselves most readily to the art of pedagogy" whilst at the same time being "sound in content". He was also concerned that the text should include all relevant points of view and be "eclectic and far-ranging".

Inevitably the attempt to satisfy these multiple criteria of selection fails and indeed the Editor antici-

pates "questions as to why some particular article was included or excluded". It is certainly difficult to understand in what sense such diverse items as, for example, Lombroso's introduction to his daughter's summary of his views in her "Criminal Man", the extract from "The Report of the Citizens' Committee on Juvenile Delinquency, Cincinnati, Ohio" and Slavson on "The Treatment of Aggression through Group Therapy" can all be said to be "sound in content". Professor Glueck's eclecticism, whilst it is infinitely preferable to the sectarianism too common in this field, appears to have led him astray. Perhaps it would be going too far to say that he should have included nothing which fell below the level of the Glueck's own contributions, but there is a great deal here which is totally undistinguished and of little more than parochial interest. A more vigorous exercise of the editorial function would both have improved the quality of the book and reduced it to more manageable proportions. Alternatively the editorial notes which preface the chapters might have gone a little further towards indicating the relative value of the various contributions. No doubt Professor Glueck repairs this omission in his seminars at the Harvard Law School where this material is used "to provide intellectual meat and drink for advanced law students". Bereft of such assistance, the common reader is liable to suffer from mental dyspepsia.

BOOK REVIEWS—cont.

It is only fair to say that despite these faults it is very convenient that so much important material not otherwise easily accessible is now made available in this one volume. It will be invaluable as a reference book even though as a "teaching instrument" it is blunted by the inclusion of too much mediocrity.

GORDON HAWKINS.

"For this relief much thanks"

a critical notice of

GROUP COUNSELLING:

A preface to its use in Correctional and Welfare Agencies.

Norman Fenton, Ph. D.

Institute for the Study of Crime and Delinquency, Sacramento, California. 1961. pp. 109.

First a personal note as a control on what follows:—

Norman Fenton's latest production aroused in me a welter of confused feelings, smugness and satisfaction mingled with frustrated aggression. Having struggled for years with Fenton's earlier writing, having chipped and chiselled at his earlier material to shape it into a form which satisfied me, but appeared to attract few other people, I am tempted to regard his latest efforts as evidence that since 1957 or so we have both been doing much the same thing in much the same way. It is reassuring to believe this but disappointing to have him get in first. No doubt certain of my American colleagues will try to comfort me by saying: "Well, that's the way the cookie crumbles".

The new handbook gives an

account of how group counselling has progressed since 1954 in Californian correctional institutions. It is directed primarily towards people who are developing similar programmes in such related fields as probation, parole and social welfare agencies. It is of direct relevance to counselling work in our own institutions and deserves as wide a circulation as possible among all staff concerned in any way with this work.

Just how do the sections on prison counselling work out in relation to the earlier *Introduction to the Theory of Group Counselling* (1957)? A general impression will perhaps entitle us to force the pace a bit later.

The present handbook strikes one as the product of a more assured, more restrained and more sophisticated Fenton. Though it is much more concise than the "Introduction" it retains most of the essential material from Part I—whole passages are identical—and reinforces this with sections which are either new in content or different in emphasis. The shorter presentation has brought with it a tightness and economy of exposition which was lacking in the more diffuse, untidy discussions of the earlier volume. A certain repetitiveness remains but this is not too obtrusive. With much more material to draw on from the accumulated experience of Californian prison counselling, Fenton achieves greater definiteness and clarity. He is less obscure, less equivocal, more authoritative. He is still very much the idealist, the optimist, the salesman exploring new districts but, with a successful promotion behind it, the selling has a surer touch.