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From Skid Row to the Simon Community

MARTIN WRIGHT

EVEN TO-DAY, a large number of homeless men and women derive little or no benefit from the Welfare State; what is more, they are not happy wanderers or beatnik philosophers, but live outside society because they have no choice. How much choice they had in their downward path is open to discussion, but once they reach the bottom it is almost impossible to climb out again unaided.

It is difficult to find an appropriate label that fits them all—misfits, social casualties? Bryan Breed, who has written the most recent book about them[1] calls them "the men outside". They have little in common except that, after finding themselves in a situation with which they could not cope, they have lost all the props, such as family, friends, status, belongings, which help most of us to remain respectable. Often it is the removal of one main prop, coupled with personality difficulties, that precipitates the collapse. With Charlie Smith, described by Tony Parker in *The Unknown Citizen*,[2] the prop had been the Army. A reception centre worker describes a vagrant who had been an electrical engineer until his marriage broke up[3]. Many are disorientated on discharge from prison or mental hospital. Some are expatriates and, of course, a high proportion have found a substitute prop in drink, including crude spirits which, it has been said, keeps them alive until it kills them. Life histories of 51 Skid Row alcoholics have been described by Edwards and co-workers[4].

It is difficult to estimate the number of "misfits". There must be a considerable number among the 26,884 men and 1,905 women in various types of hostel on the night of the survey made by the N.A.B. (as it then was) in 1965, and especially among the 13,500 who sleep rough or use reception centres from time to time[5]. The number which the survey found sleeping rough on the night of 6th December, 1965, was 920 men and 45 women; the Simon Community, however, considers[6] that this is certainly a considerable underestimate: who can imagine that only two men slept rough in Liverpool, for example, as reported in

the survey, or only six in Glasgow?

Why do they stay "outside", when the N.A.B. survey showed that 5,000 beds in hostels were unoccupied on the night of the survey? Firstly, of course, the vacancies are not evenly distributed over the country; and any one hostel is likely to have vacancies at some times, but to be obliged to turn applicants away at others. Three hundred and forty out of 567 hostels said that they sometimes had to turn people away. More important, most hostels limit the categories of people whom they will accept—in other words some are barred. Among the classes barred from various hostels in the survey are alcoholics, the mentally handicapped, homosexuals, enuretics, epileptics, the dirty, the lice-infested. Nine hostels barred Irishmen and two, Englishmen. Only 76 out of 444 establishments for men said they barred no one. One participant observer had difficulty in being accepted without identification papers[7].

This is not a criticism of the achievement of existing hostels. Many were established specifically to help a particular type of individual, such as ex-prisoners; and even among these there is a limit to the number of problems which one hostel can tackle. Merfyn Turner, in planning Norman House, found that "The more attention I gave to the negative aspect of selection for the scheme I had prepared for homeless offenders, the longer grew the list of unsuitable people"[8]. Even the Simon Community has been confronted with this problem, as will be mentioned below.

The reasons why a man does not go to a hostel (or other welfare agency), even if he knows he would be admitted, are more complex. He may simply be ashamed to present himself in his dirty and perhaps drunken condition. Edwards suggests that, having reached Skid Row, he has probably made a new, although pathological, adjustment to life[4], and does not want to be helped. This attitude, which sometimes seems perverse to the would-be helper, has been sympathetically described by Keith-Lucas[9], as being grounded in fear of facing life outside his familiar though unpleasant rut, and lack of faith in his ability to improve or indeed in the helper's ability to improve him.

It should also not be overlooked that life in a hostel can seem very empty and lacking in incentive. In other words, while a man may fear that a rehabilitative hostel will make too many demands on him, a common lodging house will make too few. The N.A.B. survey found 17,140 men (64 per cent) in hostels for over 100 men, of whom 10,095 (37 per cent) were in hostels for over 300. The Reception Centre in Camberwell can accommodate some 900 men, of whom an average of 34 per cent have some history of mental instability,

20 per cent are alcoholics, a few are drug addicts and most of the rest "casuals", who do not even stay long enough for their problems to be discovered[10]. What treatment or support is possible under these conditions? The fact that a few are re-settled in normal life reflects credit on the small staff, but the average common lodging house is described by Turner[8] as offering no encouragement for the present or hope for the future.

The Simon Community offers friendship to men and women in such circumstances, although it does not impose "rehabilitation" on them or attempt to measure its "success" rate. (It believes, however, that if a research worker did so, the results would not be disappointing.) The house in Kentish Town, London, was the first Simon house, and was started three years ago. It is named St. Joseph's. Other houses have followed, in Liverpool, Glasgow and Exeter, and the headquarters, serving also as training centre and country retreat, is in Crundale, near Canterbury. All are family-sized houses, for a normal maximum of 12 men and women, run by two or three Simon workers (with sometimes one or two trainees, students on attachment, etc.). Two facts which distinguish the Simon Community from most others in this field are that the workers are all volunteers, and that, as a cardinal principle, there is no limit to the number of times a man will be re-accepted after breaking down.

St. Joseph's, the prototype, is a terraced house with six rooms, kitchen, shower baths and basement, in a shopping-cum-residential street. It presents an initial impression of confusion, with second-hand clothing being stored in the hall, for the fund-raising gift shop a few doors away. There is one bedroom for women and two for elderly or infirm men; the remaining males sleep in the lounge, which is also the dining room, and there is an office, where two Simon workers sleep on the floor. Food consists largely of vegetables picked up off the ground in Covent Garden, day-old bread begged from bakers, food given by local supporters, and so on. As little as possible is bought.

The Simon Community has derived many ideas from the "houses of hospitality" started by Dorothy Day in America during the 1930's[11], including that of conducting its own "mission to the misfit" with its own newspaper, the *Simon Star*. Among the other influences on the Simon way of life is the Henderson Hospital where the Social Rehabilitation Unit, which pioneered group therapy, was established in 1947 to attempt to rehabilitate social casualties in

a therapeutic community. This influence is evident in the group meetings which all Simon houses stress: the daily meetings at breakfast, at which the day's chores, such as collecting food, are arranged (if there are no volunteers, the Simon workers do them); the weekly house meeting, at which various matters affecting individuals or the community are thrashed out; and the Simon workers' own meetings.

At one time, for example, difficulties were caused at St. Joseph's by a small number of crude spirit drinkers who had been taken in. When they were "steamed up" their aggressiveness placed new strains on a community which already had to contain a good deal of tension. It was at a house meeting that this problem was discussed. The house decided that even a community for misfits had to safeguard itself by excluding such disruptive influences; no meths. bottles could be allowed on the premises. The meths. drinkers are not rejected, however, one or two are allowed the use of a flat near St. Joseph's, and may enter the community when they are "dry", and the community makes a practical demonstration of its concern by running a shelter for crude spirit drinkers in a near-derelict house in Stepney, where they can find soup, warmth and, perhaps most important, acceptance.

Concern is demonstrated in other ways: "soup runs" are organised to take soup and sandwiches to derelict houses, railway termini, and other places where the homeless sleep. A night's shelter in the basement is often provided for up to three men for whom there is no room in the community, and casual meals are similarly provided.

The border line between caring and cared-for is as unobtrusive as is practicable. In idealistic early days an attempt was made to disregard it, but this experiment brought the realization that the preservation of a permissive family requires considerable self-discipline: there must be two people in each community who are not misfits (or only slightly). It also pointed to the need for training Simon workers.

The majority of the 27 present Simon workers are in their early 20's, but a few are somewhat older; one or two have experience of conventional social work. They normally sign on for six months, a year or two years of voluntary service. Soon after arrival they go to the Community's headquarters, a farmhouse in Kent, for a three-week training course. Here, through lectures and seminars conducted by the Director, Anton Wallich-Clifford, and others, they learn the Simon philosophy, the history of the movement, and such practical details as keeping accounts and community records, recognizing the symptoms of alcoholism, and techniques of

conducting group meetings.

For the next three weeks the course continues with practical training at St. Joseph's, and from here, visits of observation are arranged to the Henderson Hospital, courts, prisons and other social agencies. Then, after a spell of work at St. Joseph's, the trainee is likely to be posted to any of the other communities, or to a new one being started. Postings are normally for at least three months, to ensure continuity; but such is the strain of working long hours in a small community with only one rest-day per week, that the principle of continuity has been modified by introducing a "change of environment" after every four weeks. This means a posting for one week to one of the other communities, which helps workers to keep in touch with each others' ideas, or to the farm, where they can rest and read and think. Every three months they have a week's holiday.

While in the Community they receive £1 0s. 0d. per week pocket money. This is less than the 26s. 6d. which the residents draw from the M.S.S., and in times of financial stringency the Simon workers have on occasion accepted reductions or postponements. They, like the residents, depend on donated second-hand clothes.

They are required to run the various Simon houses on the same lines, with breakfast meetings and weekly house meetings, doing the housework themselves when there are no offers to help, keeping records and accounts. They also maintain contact with the M.S.S., which pays (by voucher) for many of the residents, and with the Companions of Simon, local citizens who help to provide funds and gifts in kind, and sometimes work part-time in the Community.

The M.S.S., and the Companions thus provide official backing and part-time voluntary help to support the work of the full-time Simon volunteers. The last link in the chain is the application of the principle which has been described as "the use of the products of a social problem in coping with the problem"[12].

The atmosphere is very permissive. Authority has, of course, a place in social work, and the ordinary client may by an act of will be capable of "making an effort to stand on his own feet". But the social misfit cannot; he will stay "outside" if such to him impossible, demands are made on him. His first need is a long draught of care and affection. By degrees he may come to admit that he needs help, and to believe that he can be helped (thus far he can be concerned only with himself; appeals to loyalty or consideration for others would fall on deaf ears). But when he finds himself accepted just as he is, in a community/family, he may also find that he cares for their opinion of him, that he has something to contribute. Here the hand-to-mouth level of

existence, and extra activities such as the "soup runs", are useful, because they entail a considerable amount of work, especially in the collection and preparation of food; often a man who has done no regular work for years will find, perhaps to his own surprise, that he has put in a good eight-hour day. No overt pressure to work is applied by Simon workers, nor are men urged to look for jobs outside. It is accepted that some, after a respite in a Simon house, will be able to return to an ordinary occupation; others will come to realize that they need treatment (for alcoholism, mental illness, etc.); and others again will always need to live in a community of this kind.

The plan is to have specialized houses for alcoholics, long-term residents, and other categories, and multi-purpose ones for initial reception. This pattern is in full harmony with the report of Lady Reading's working party on the place of voluntary service in after-care[13], and with the stress placed in the Criminal Justice Bill 1966 on the need to provide an alternative to imprisonment for drunks. Indeed, the procession of "seven-day drunks" at Bow Street was a major reason for Mr. Wallich-Clifford's decision to leave the Probation Service and found the Simon Community. His eventual aim is a village, on the analogy of the children's village or the village for the mentally handicapped, and to judge by the way his plans of two or three years ago have taken shape, this does not seem impossible.

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Sad Saga of the Chaplain of Reading Gaol

L. A. PORTCH

THE FOLLOWING extracts from the Visiting Justices Book of Reports, Orders and Observations for the County Gaol, Reading, Berks., tell their own story. What a pity the chaplain of the day has not left his comments to make us aware of the full picture instead of us now only being half aware of this extraordinary struggle.

23.8.1862. We have considered the application of the chaplain for our opinion as to a period of the day being set apart for teaching prisoners to sing the hymns appointed for the Sunday services; we feel that such considerable objections exist as to prevent our sanction being given.

27.9.62. The chaplain allowed five pounds to purchase books of instruction.

18.10.62. On perusing the chaplain's journal for the present week we observe certain suggestions in respect to want of ventilation and the use of the chapel as a school for the instruction of the prisoners in reading their Bible and we are of the opinion that the experience of past years renders it undesirable to make the alteration proposed. We further notice, with infinite regret, that the chaplain has made his journal of gaol duties a channel of remark upon the observation of magistrates in Quarter Sessions assembled.

8.11.62. The visiting justices do not think themselves justified in spending any more money on the organ: the sum of ten pounds has been paid out as recently as 1858.

15.11.62. The visiting justices are willing to have the barrel organ repaired subject to their approval of the estimate and direct the use of the finger organ to be discontinued for the future.

10.1.63. The governor reports that the Inspector of Prisons has been here this week and expressed himself satisfied. His attention was called to the complaint of the chaplain regarding ventilation and he had no alternative to suggest.

14.3.63. Porter, the schoolmaster, having been reported absent without leave has stated that the chaplain had undertaken to men-

tion the case to the governor which had not been done. The governor, only, can give leave to a subordinate officer and the chaplain's attention is called to Rule 131 in reference to his own responsibility which appears from his journal for 26th, 27th, 28th February not to have been adhered to by him. The justices find it necessary to require the observance of rules respecting the discipline of the gaol.

21.3.63. The visiting justices have read the entry in the chaplain's journal of the 21st inst. and again beg to refer him to their minute of the 14th inst. which they request he will adhere to in future. Schoolmasters are subordinate officers in the opinion of the visiting justices.

8.8.63. The chaplain wishes for 10 days absence on leave but the substitute he proposes is not able to undertake the duty.

15.8.63. We regret to observe from the chaplain's journal from the 10th inst. that the chaplain has been absent during the week without having submitted the name of any clergyman as his substitute for the approval of the justices in obedience to Rule 131. The consequence has been that unauthorised strangers have done chapel duty but the prisoners have not been visited. It does not appear to us that so marked an infraction of the rule involving an example of disrespect and neglect of county interests can be passed over without serious remark requiring explanation. Should such explanation not be satisfactory the obvious course will be a report to the Quarter Sessions.

29.8.63. The justices have read the chaplain's note in his journal of this week and retain their opinion exercised in former minutes. To prevent further irregularity they have to request that the chaplain will in future act in strict compliance with Rule 131 which requires that a chaplain wishing for leave of absence shall obtain the approval of the visiting justices of any substitute proposed to take his duty before leaving the establishment.

19.9.63. The justices will be glad to receive from the chaplain previously to the end of the gaol financial year at Michaelmas a statement of the amount on hand and distributed of Mrs. Deane's charity fund. It would be of advantage also if we were informed of any cases in which the chaplain proposes to make allowances to prisoners about to be discharged, previously to their making grants for the same purpose in the weekly discharge paper.

26.9.63. The justices have no doubt about the Act 24 & 25 Vict. placing the disposal of Eliz. Deane's charity at the discretion of the chaplain—for the time being. But as administration of the fund is in the chaplain's hands only as an officer of the county for the benefiting of gaol prisoners,

it is obvious that the justices and their chaplain should mutually desire an annual account to be placed on record. If, however, the chaplain should wish to consider himself an irresponsible distributor of a gaol fund the justices would be ready to refer the matter to the Quarter Sessions as regards the annual record. As regards the weekly discharge papers it is not interfering in the chaplain's discretion to request that any sum intended to be given to a discharged prisoner may be noted on the weekly paper so that the same prisoner may not be paid from county funds unnecessarily.

31.10.63. The justices regret that the chaplain finds difficulty in providing them the information they asked for solely for the purpose of saving the county unnecessary expenditure in reference to discharged prisoners but probably the course they have decided to effect may be obtained if the chaplain will take the earliest opportunity in his power in acquainting the governor with the amount the chaplain proposes to give outgoing prisoners.

23.1.64. The adoption of the visiting justices' report to the Epiphany Sessions sanctions further the proposition of the chaplain in reference to the services of the schoolmaster and the course of instruction suggested by the chaplain.

20.2.64. Reply sent to a letter of Canon Ringrose of the 16th inst. Leave of absence granted to the chaplain for the 25th and the two following days under Rule 131. With reference to the case of Pat McDonald (lately a prisoner) mentioned in the chaplain's note in reply to the justices minute of the 13th inst. the justices tho' of the opinion that questions of discipline more correctly come within their authority than that of the chaplain do not desire to express any dissent from the course hitherto taken in general cases. They do, however (to avoid misunderstanding), request that the chaplain will in any matter of discipline affecting prisoners of a church or religious persuasion differing from that of the established Church, communicate with the justices before taking a course similar to that taken in McDonald's case.

23.7.64. The chaplain applies for leave of absence from the 30th July to 9th August and proposes as his substitute the Revd. John Gregg, the present chaplain of the Royal Berks. Hospital. Leave granted on his engaging *first* to obtain the consent of Mr. Gregg to do the duties of chaplain and also the permission of the governors of the hospital. Thereto such assent and permission to be made known to one of the justices before the chaplain gives up his duty.

25.8.64. Leave of absence granted to the chaplain. The duty to be performed by Mr. Gregg.

15.4.65. The chaplain having

produced medical certificates stating the absolute necessity for a total relaxation of all duties and proposing to nominate a substitute at his own expense, subject to the approval of the justices—Rule 25 refers. We concur in opinion that the proposition should be accepted and the arrangement submitted to the Quarter Sessions. The chaplain is requested to name the substitute he proposes and to instruct that gentleman as to the duties of chapel services and visiting the prisoners.

22.4.65. Chaplain attended and produced names of substitutes for his duty during his absence on sick leave.

14.10.65. The chaplain has returned to duty after absence since April.

5.4.66. In answer to the three questions asked by the chaplain in his book on this date the following answers are returned:

1. We are not aware that it has ever been considered the duty of the chaplain to undertake ministerial charge of warders or their families residing in the borough and not in the gaol.

2. The families of officers living in the grounds of the prison are within the sphere of the chaplain's duty.

3. The chaplain is not to wait to be asked to visit officers ministerially but is to consider them equally with prisoners under his charge.

2.5.66. The chaplain resigns his appointment. Informed that it is accepted. He is asked whether he wishes his salary to continue to the end of the quarter, he providing a substitute to be approved by us, or whether his salary is to cease from the time of substitute undertaking the duties—also whether he wishes to remain in the house until the end of the quarter.

11.5.66. The chaplain states that he should expect his salary to cease as soon as a substitute can be engaged but would wish to retain the use of the house until such time as he has completed his arrangements.

25.5.66. The chaplain left on Sunday 19th.

15.6.66. Testimonial for the chaplain considered only.

There are no further entries of any sort in the ensuing pages relating to the new chaplain or his acceptance of the discipline and control of the day. Such an absence of comment after such a spate over the previous two years can only lead us to surmise that his successor was much more amenable and quiescent than the un-named reverend gentleman whose one-sided battle with authority is recorded above.

It must be some relief to the chaplain of today that his journal is not inspected weekly by the visiting justices and that he is not subject to the same sort of control as that in vogue 100 years ago.

Conference Report

Partnership in Youth Work

W. J. KEAST

UNTIL JULY 1966, when I attended a conference at Castle Mainau, on Lake Constance, I had never heard of the place. This certainly reflects ignorance on my part and may well be a reflection of how little the adult world cares about the efforts of people working with and for youth. I had been introduced to the "Mainau" approach to youth work by Dover borstal's tutor organiser, Mr. Derek Howard, whose enthusiasm for Mainau decided me to see for myself: the department gave me leave, the International Centre granted a scholarship, I flew to Zurich and then by train to Constance.

The "Isle" goes back to the first century: the Romans used it as a fortress. Later it housed a monastery, firstly Benedictine, latterly Teutonic. The castle-palace, built around 1740 in the baroque style, has belonged to several owners, the present lord of the castle being Count Lennart Bernadotte, a nephew of the King of Sweden, who (besides developing the world-famous gardens) founded, nearly 20 years ago, the International Centre which is now under the auspices of the World Council of the Y.M.C.A. In a world full of political and economic tensions, young people and Christian youth leaders meet on an interdenominational basis.

Fifty delegates, from 10 countries mostly Scandinavian, students, teachers, youth, Church or scout leaders, met to consider "Partnership in Youth Work". There was only one other delegate who, like me, could be described as "government employee working with young people". The average age of the delegates was 22 years.

Formerly a German army officer (and a prisoner-of-war in Russia), Professor Kuchenhoff is the present director of the German Youth Institute. When he talked to us it was interesting to recall that the centre's first task, post-war, had been to de-Nazify the German youth movements. The professor stressed that partnership could only be achieved through positive action in thinking and learning. It was, perhaps, something of a surprise to hear the British sense of fair play and sportsmanship quoted as an example of partnership. Perhaps we don't see ourselves as others see us!

Mr. J. Henk Stitger, a medical

student at the outbreak of war, spent some time in concentration camps. He is interested in the "Open Door" work and making contact with the "Lonely Crowd" through his work as a Y.M.C.A. secretary in the Netherlands. In describing the social and cultural barriers which have to be surmounted he maintained that the division of the Church itself was by no means the least of these. In thinking of the youth leader in terms of group work he illustrated the conflict between the traditional approach and the partnership approach as a struggle on the part of the individual leader to overcome his own prejudices so that he can be neutral and meet people with an open mind and heart.

Dr. Fischer, deputy director, spoke of the youth leader as counsellor; the traditional inward-looking narrow groups of yesterday were contrasted with the complexities of modern life, which he described as "the anonymous society" where young people lived on two horizons, the family and profession as opposed to just the family, and where their protest reaction was against the adult world who seemed to have failed to give meaning and purpose to life. Counsellors were urged "See and recognise your own limitations. Do not merely do something with a person, but teach him to accept himself and make his own judgment. Remember a man has his individual dignity. Man is always changing: accept him as he is now. The counsellor must be Jew to the Jew and Greek to the Greek. Diagnosis alone does not solve a problem: if a man's house has collapsed, telling how and why it happened will not build it up".

Mr. Willi Erl, Y.M.C.A. worker now secretary of the centre, summing up, said: "Partnership is an educational principle based on democracy and tolerance. Age, title or position do not count, only honesty and sincerity. Ideas are power and give energy. Don't try to do everything. Your enthusiasm will be contagious. Be courageous to be unpopular, be patient. If people seem set in their ways, have courage. The leader is at his best if people hardly know of his existence. They will think 'this is what we did by ourselves' ".

In discussion the groups presented very little constructive criticism, only praise and agreement with the speakers. This in itself was very significant because many of the delegates from Scandinavian countries had strict and deep-rooted religious backgrounds stemming from Lutheran and Swedish Free Church teaching which is very contrary to the partnership approach. On the other hand, the Church presented some extremely positive views on the sinfulness of dancing, drinking and smoking.

Conflict for some of the delegates (I felt) was in this area of Church teaching, inward-looking in concept —"keep out the bad apple" and "do not allow bad companionship to corrupt good morals", whereas

those who called themselves more progressive were in favour of attracting into the Church the indifferent element, perhaps by having dancing, a bar and other incentives.

Many delegates were interested in my work as a borstal officer, in our delinquency problems and our attitude to the offender.

Looking back, I do not think anyone could have failed to be impressed by the tremendous enthusiasm of the Mainau staff and the sincere interest of the delegates. It was refreshing to be involved in a real attempt to look at the problems of modern society, how they were affecting young people, and how the young people themselves could be encouraged towards better self-understanding.

My own experiences may have made me something of a cynic. Nevertheless I feel the principle of partnership is an admirable approach in the field of human relationships, although my instincts tell me that this is too much for some people; that is too high a standard to achieve . . . all of which makes it comforting to know that the Mainau tradition goes on.

Two final thoughts:

Dr. Fischer told me that when many young Germans were being taught about the Nazis they declared that they did not accept this as a part of their heritage, and that all the Hitler period was the responsibility of that generation. They were rather taken aback when told that if they considered Bach and Beethoven as part of their heritage they could not just exclude something unpleasant like the concentration camps.

On my return home, on making enquiries about accommodation for a homeless young man about to be discharged I was informed the particular Y.M.C.A. would *not* accept anyone who had been "inside".

Your Letters

should be addressed to

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"I know you've always considered me an old square, but if you ask me, your suit looks even more out of date than mine."

Inside Looking Out*

J. A. V. BURKE

GOD IS FOR REAL, MAN. By Carl Burke. (Fontana. 3s. 6d.)

Delinquency and Guilt. By Michael De-La-Noy. (Newman Neame (Training) Ltd. 2s. 0d.)

A prison governor once said to me: "The general public is always eager to see criminals incarcerated; once they are in prison, the public conscience is tender as to whether the inmates are comfortably housed; when the men come out, public anxiety vanishes and nobody bothers about rehabilitation". Within this cynical frame the two small books under review may be said to have their context.

Delinquency and Guilt, the smaller, little more than a pamphlet, is the more pointed in its comment in that it specifically charges the general public with lack of concern for young offenders. "It is time we stopped labelling the majority of children who come before the courts as 'delinquents' ". Rightly, in my view, the author claims that "Society has only one basic responsibility towards criminals, to reform and educate. Both tasks can be very difficult. Once someone has deliberately embarked on a life of crime, or has slipped into it without wishing to, the further he gets in, the harder it is for him to get out".

But compassion, which all normal people feel for the delinquent is not enough. Where the fashionable modern school of psychiatric penology seems inadequate is that, in my view, it leaves too little room for that mental and physical discipline which all of us, whether inside or outside prison, need, in order to lead complete and useful lives. Religion encourages just such a discipline. The problem is how to make this discipline, presented in stilted terms and often incomprehensible action, acceptable to the young mind, resentful precisely because it is religious. When the young man at the borstal to which I am chaplain replied "Thank God!" to my invitation: "The Mass is ended; go forth in peace", he was not speaking liturgically.

How to get across to them; how to convince them that religious values are real; how to speak to them in their own terminology without condescending. These are some of the problems facing those who have the religious care of delinquents.

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In *God is for Real, Man*, Carl Burke, chaplain to an American prison, has brought together a number of paraphrases of Biblical stories, from both Old and New Testaments, made by young under-privileged people, in their own beatnik jargon. To judge by these essays, which one should regard as enlightening rather than intentionally amusing, the youngsters seem willing to accept, on their own terms, not according to the forms of a Church which has seemingly deserted them, the concepts of God as Maker and Christ as Saviour. They relate the Bible stories to their own experiences of hate and love and meanness and kindness. They are beginning to understand that, maybe, God is for real.

What emerges from both these little books is that children often become criminal because they lack love and understanding from those who should be standing in the place of God to them. They are young persons in need of God's love and care, who cannot be expected to have respect for the idea of God as Father when their own parents are depraved or inadequate. As a young borstal lad once said to me: "Why are they surprised if I am violent? Violence is the only thing I have known in my life".

If these small books, each in its own special way, help anybody to penetrate only a little to the minds of the alienated young ones in prisons and borstals, they will have done well.

CONTRIBUTORS

R. COOPER joined the Prison Service from the Probation Service in 1962. After completing the 19th Staff Course he was posted to Wandsworth as an assistant governor and is still in this post.

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[*Continued on page 48*

Bury St. Edmunds Gaol

J. D. WHEELER

IN WEST SUFFOLK the Borough of Bury St. Edmunds has for many centuries held the position of chief town in the district. But the borough itself was independent from the county, arranging for its own local government and the provision of a town lock-up. Under ancient charter the town's government was provided for under the direction of an Alderman, Capital Burgesses and common Burgesses. Committals to the borough lock-up were confined to the activities of the Alderman and Borough Justices of the Peace and from the Borough Quarter Sessions. From 1733 to 1752 the borough leased a house for a common gaol. The lease signed on 1st May, 1733, for three years commencing from 17th March, 1733, was for a sum of £20 per annum, for a "messuage commonly called the Gaol in Bury St. Edmunds in a street called Great Market between the Woolhall on the south and a messuage called the Red Lion on the north". A new lease was negotiated by the borough for the same premises on 20th April, 1745. At the same time the person appointed to act as gaoler for the Bury St. Edmunds county division of Suffolk and the borough was authorised "to receive prisoners from the Justices of the Peace, the Steward of the Liberty of Bury St. Edmunds or the Serjeant at Mace of the borough. To be allowed to sell ale, beer, etc., by retail on the premises by licence". In the early nineteenth century the borough provided a common bridewell in premises situated in Bridewell Lane, and later part of the ancient Moyses Hall, now the municipal museum, was used as a lock-up.

Suffolk, before the Local Government Act of 1888, was administered by the Justices of the Peace assembled at Quarter Sessions. Adjourned Sessions were held for the Bury St. Edmunds Division, now West Suffolk, and for the three divisions of Beccles, Woodbridge and Ipswich, now forming East Suffolk. Small towns and parishes made their own arrangements for lock-ups, the county jurisdictions being responsible for the larger houses of correction and penal establishments.

The Justices for the Bury St. Edmunds County Division erected the West Suffolk county gaol on the outskirts of Bury St. Edmunds in 1803-1805. The gaol was substantially enlarged in 1819. On 16th March, 1805, the governor of the gaol was authorised to receive prisoners sent by the Alderman and Justices of the Borough of Bury St. Edmunds, and from the Borough Quarter Sessions to the county gaol. These prisoners were kept at the expense of the borough. The County Quarter Sessions and meetings of magistrates in Petty Sessions committed prisoners freely to the county gaol without any expense to the petty sessional area. The prison was divided into nine departments, each of which had its distinct day rooms, work rooms and sleeping cells. The nine departments were calculated for the confinement and employment of:

1. Master's-side debtors.
2. Common-side debtors.
3. Males convicted of small offences.
4. Males for transportation or convicted of greater offences.
5. Males for trial on charges of felony.
6. Males for trial for smaller offences.
7. Female felons for trial.
8. Female debtors.
9. King's evidence and occasionally males confined for slight offences.

There was besides the gaol, a separate house of correction for females convicted of felonies and misdemeanours. However, the gaol receiving books show that there were few committals to this establishment in proportion to male offenders. Up to the year of enlargement in 1819 there had been only one temporary escape from the gaol, during which time upwards of 4,000 persons had been detained. An 1819 account of the working of the gaol by John Orridge, the governor, states that only one person in 20 was sentenced to a second term in the gaol in the case of felony. Orridge's account of the gaol, together with a plan, was made for the Emperor of Russia, who based his organisation of imperial gaols on the Bury St. Edmunds institution. Orridge said that the gaol had three ends:

1. The security of the prisoners.
2. The preservation of the health of the prisoners.
3. The amelioration of morals.

He claimed that the first of these objectives had been obtained because only one temporary escape had occurred in the first 16 years of the gaol's existence. Prisoners were apparently not put in irons unless there was any manifest indication of an escape attempt.

The gaol had a boundary wall 20 feet high which formed an enclosure, the diameter of which was 300 feet, and the different divisions of the prison were 68 feet from the wall. The space between the wall and the gaol building was used as a cultivated garden. The main gaol building itself was constructed from locally produced red bricks. The turnkey's lodge was a stone building constructed to be impressive and to deter those without from finding themselves in a position to be admitted, and to encourage those within to believe that the prison was secure. It was the entrance through which all prisoners passed into the prison. The roof over the lodge was flat, covered with lead, and was used as the place of public executions.* Adjacent to the lodge was a chapel.

The industrial revolution brought with it a variety of machinery, of which the Bury gaol was especially proud of its engine-house and forcing pump for throwing water into a reservoir on the top of the governor's house. From the top of the governor's house the water was circulated to the prisoners' water closets and other buildings within the boundary wall. In keeping with prevailing penological thought the prison had a mill-house, containing a mill for the grinding of corn worked by a vertical wheel. The authorities claimed that the employment afforded by the mill produced the very best effects both on the health and morals of the prisoners, as well as inducing habits of industry. The mill was also used as an instrument of punishment in as much that a person could be compelled to work the machinery for long periods, an alternative to which was confinement.

Much emphasis was placed upon the classification of prisoners and in the separation of the inhabitants it was considered best to class them as much as possible by their character and conduct, and not necessarily by the classification of the crime for which they had been committed or were charged with. It was instanced that a notoriously bad character might well be committed for a petty offence, but he was not necessarily placed with the petty offenders, thereby to subject them all to his degree of corruption. He would, in all probability, have been placed in the department for the greater offences. On the other hand a person of hitherto respectable habits and unhardened in guilt who was charged with a serious offence was classified and placed among the petty offenders. It was considered important that every prisoner should sleep by himself, but during those times when this could not be arranged prisoners were placed three to a room so as to lessen the opportunity of moral corruption, which the authorities feared would occur

if there were only two in a room. Efforts were made to employ prisoners in their various trades in order that upon their discharge they could return to the community with prospects of future success.

Committals to the prison were for short term local offenders. Persons sentenced by assizes or for longer terms of imprisonment by Quarter Sessions were invariably removed for transportation to other establishments.† Records show that for the year ending 30th September, 1854, the number of persons admitted to the prison was 601. For the same period ending in 1855 the number was 612. Of this number in 1855, 109 were committals from the militia garrisoned at Bury St. Edmunds, arrangements then existing for the militia to commit defaulters to the civil prison. For the most part military defaulters were committed for being absent from their billet and not for direct insubordination to military discipline. An 1855 report makes reference to the decline in committals for offences against the game laws, which since the enrolment of some poachers into the military service were less. Of the 612 prisoners committed during the year 1855, 339 could neither read nor write. Of this number 41 were taught to read the New Testament by the prison chaplain and 19 were said to have made considerable progress towards that end. Twenty-four were taught to write. The report indicated that 30 others showed their willingness to learn to read and write but were prevented from doing so by their sentences being too short to permit this achievement. The majority of the offenders were committed for minor thefts, drunkenness, unlawful gaming and similar offences and for infringements of the game laws.

In 1819 the governor was paid an annual salary of £550, out of which he was obliged to provide sufficient turnkeys and the bedding for the debtors. The prison surgeon and chaplain each received £60 per annum.

The three county sessional divisions in East Suffolk erected a gaol at Ipswich to serve the needs of their jurisdiction. By an Act of 1877 the prisons were taken from the local authorities and placed under imperial control.‡ The 1877 Act abolished the gaol at Bury St. Edmunds but permitted the Ipswich gaol to continue under the title of "Her Majesty's County Prison, Ipswich". The West Suffolk County Gaol was sold in 1881.

FOOTNOTES

* Public hanging abolished by The Capital Punishment Amendment Act, 1868.

† Transportation abolished by Section 2, Penal Servitude Act, 1853.

‡ Prison Act, 1877.

A Reading Course for the Adolescent and Adult Slow Learner

H. C. GUNZBURG, M.A., Ph.D.

THE PROBLEM presented by the illiteracy of a considerable proportion of delinquents has become more and more manifest during the last 10 or 20 years. It has even been said that a good deal of emotional maladjustment and the social inadequacies shown by the delinquent may be due to educational incompetence which cannot be explained in terms of lack of intelligence. Practically all young people going through the prisons have enough intelligence to acquire the mechanical skills of reading, writing and arithmetic and even though, in many cases, dull intelligence sets a ceiling on the adequate and flexible use of these technical skills, there is no reason why these skills cannot be acquired. Whatever the reason which led to educational under-functioning, there is little doubt that something should be done in the educational field to give these people a higher degree of literacy which may in some ways even help to make them more settled and more responsive to the pressures exerted by society. Overcoming illiteracy is, therefore, not only important from the point of view of giving people a better skill in tackling ordinary practical life situations, it also contributes substantially to the therapeutic efforts which have to be made to overcome the consequences of deprivation and maladaptation.

This has been recognised for a long time. Many prisons and borstals have developed educational provisions which are intended to give some extra help and assistance to learn the basic skills required for education at a comparatively late stage in peoples' lives. Reading has practically always attracted the main attention and classes have been instituted which have tried to cater for the needs of the completely illiterate to the semi-literate reader. One of the main difficulties encountered in teaching is the fact that very little reading material is available which would appeal, or at least not disturb and upset the adolescent and adult would-be reader by childish content. Being faced with having to return to the school desk and to start learning to read with the help of reading materials which, as he knows quite well, are used for very young children, the adult illiterate is not in the least stimulated or encouraged by having to tackle these "baby books" which provide the only reading matter which he could read at this early stage. This situation creates a major obstacle in the illiterate's desire to learn to read and

in consequence he may develop a very ambivalent attitude towards reading, wanting at one and the same time to learn to read but being repelled by the fact that this would mean a return to childish reading matter.

The new series of reading books discussed in this article has been designed to overcome this particular objection and to provide a reading course which would give a useful reading skill to the illiterate in the very first stage. It is generally assumed that learning to read has to start on an "easy" stage, even so the acquisition itself at that time might be pretty useless from the practical point of view. For example, the fact that Tom plays ball or Ruth caught the ball as learnt in the first books of the usual series of childrens' reading books represents scarcely reading matter which is recognised by the adolescent illiterate reader as worthy of extra effort. A more adult approach is required.

In this reading course, designed for adolescents and adults, the first step consists of "reading" by sight a number of words known as the social sight vocabulary. These words are of immediate social usefulness because they convey warnings, e.g. DANGER, admonitions, e.g. NO SMOKING, advice, e.g. PULL, information, e.g. SALT. These words are a type of shorthand system used by the community to provide guidance and orientation in life by being shown on notices and labels, and they are an extremely helpful first acquisition in reading skill.

Very often it is impossible to plan a course of reading instruction extending over a considerable time and it will save time and encourage the beginner if a reading skill can be acquired from the outset which is of immediate practical usefulness and adult in outlook.

The words of the social sight vocabulary which have been chosen for this series are no more than 45 in number. These words have nowadays been generally accepted as the most important reading possession for people who will not acquire an advanced reading skill. They are being taught even to severely subnormal people in training centres and hospital schools and are now taking the place of the more formal reading instruction based on books for the junior school. For people with limited intelligence who will either not be able to acquire a more advanced technical reading skill or people who have not the necessary intellectual resources to understand what they read, the possession of those words is not only useful because their recognition provides guide-posts in daily life, but because it gives the illiterate a feeling of security by apparently having acquired a working knowledge of reading. From that point of view teaching the sight vocabulary might be considered a therapeutic measure.

The words of the social sight vocabulary are usually best learnt

with the help of flash cards* which display the word on one side and a picture or significant clue to the meaning of the word on the other side. The flash cards which have been developed for this reading material provide not only help in recognising the word as such, but attempt also to convey the fact that many of the words have a more general meaning and are not necessarily only tied to one particular meaning. For example, the words "ON" and "OFF" which are part of the social sight vocabulary are obviously the words usually found on switches of gas and electric apparatus. They are learned in that context but, obviously the words "ON" and "OFF" have a more general meaning. This is illustrated in the flash cards by showing as the cue-picture for ON a boy riding *on* a horse whilst OFF is illustrated by the same boy falling *off* the horse. Such "off key" clues for remembering the social sight vocabulary could assist considerably in the general language development which should be part of a general social education programme.

It is important that the social sight vocabulary should not be learnt mechanically even if pleasantly, but that the words should convey the appropriate meanings. Two packets of flash cards provide opportunities for playing games such as "Snap" and "Remember". Many other games can obviously be invented by the teacher.

Other games which help in memorising the words of the social sight vocabulary and assist in acquiring comprehension are played with the "Word Situation Cards" of the SEFA Teaching Set†. The principle involved in these cards is to show the same situation on two different pictures where only recognition of the social sight word helps to find the right answer. In other words it is only possible to decide which situation is "right" and which is "wrong" by reading and interpreting the social sight vocabulary word.

The acquisition of the social sight vocabulary words by using cards, games, etc. (there is also a bingo-type of card game in the SEFA Teaching Set) should be reinforced and made far more meaningful by using a series of reading books known as the "Clumsy Charlie" series. There are four books in the series called "Clumsy Charlie and those Doors", "Clumsy Charlie at Work", "Clumsy Charlie at Home" and "Clumsy Charlie at Large."‡

The books present the words of the social sight vocabulary in different sizes and different types of print, in the context of a story which illustrates the usefulness of reading and understanding the words which are seen on doors, boxes, packets, etc. Recognising these words and associating them with meaning is important and the stories show how Charlie could have avoided many frustrating and embarrassing situations if he had looked for and responded to these words.

The books consist of a story part read by the teacher, and the words of the social sight vocabulary which are read by the pupil. The method of presenting these books can vary. Generally the story part is read to small groups after the relevant words have been taught and explained by using flash cards and blackboard techniques. The teacher pauses at each word of the social sight vocabulary which is then read by the group or an individual pupil. The response will depend on a lively and well acted presentation by the teacher and this can help much in overcoming wandering attention. Text parts can be shortened if necessary, comments interpolated and stories be acted out. It is important to draw the pupils' attention repeatedly to words of the social sight vocabulary seen outside the classroom and to make their responses as automatic as reactions to coloured traffic signals.

Once the words of the social sight vocabulary have been mastered and the pupil has acquired the feeling that he has learnt something worth while, this knowledge of 45 words can be used for learning to read. For this purpose the 18 books of the series "Out with Tom" §have been designed which extend gradually the vocabulary by adding a few words in each book until a reading skill of about age eight to eight and-a-half years has been obtained.

Well-known words of the social sight vocabulary such as "PULL" and "PUSH" are now read in new forms by adding the simple endings "ing", "es", "ed", etc. forming the words "pushing", "pushes", "pushed", etc. By the addition of a few new words, sentences in a continuous story are presented in a very simple manner. There is much repetition and pictorial material to support the understanding for words which so far have not been encountered. Though the techniques used are those of children's reading books, the difference in content and approach is quite marked and there is not much likelihood that the adolescent will be offended by the childishness of the material even though it is presented in such a simple form.

Tom is first encountered as a chap who paints a wall in a factory. He mixes with other people, goes to the canteen, has a smoke, has to pay for cigarettes and for the food from the canteen and leads, generally the normal life of an adolescent working class lad. Gradually new experiences are added such as a youngster of his age would encounter—going to the cricket match, the pictures, having his trouble with the telephone and on the bus, and many other ordinary every day occurrences.

Though Tom himself is a fairly serious lad who sports a modern Beatle haircut, the lighter side of life is provided for by the appearance of Charlie of "Clumsy Charlie" fame, who quite involuntarily provides all those silly adventures for which he has become notorious in the preceding series. He tears his

bus ticket apart in the bus, walks out by the wrong door when at the pictures and is unable to find his way back, gets himself into trouble at the cricket match, and is generally an example of how *not* to behave.

Whilst the series is primarily designed to help in teaching the illiterate reading skills on a modest level of word recognition, the books illustrate social incidents with which the adolescent should be thoroughly familiar to avoid embarrassing and frustrating situations. Looked at in this way the series provides incidental social education and much opportunity for discussion and widening the reader's understanding at the level with which he is superficially familiar.

This theme is continued in the series "Spotlight on Trouble" ‖. This series does not really need any introduction. It has been discussed in a previous issue of the Journal¶ and only a summary of that discussion will be given here. Generally speaking, the eight books of the "Spotlight on Trouble" series are intended to give the semi-literate reader practice in reading at a level of approximately eight to eight-and-a-half years. At the same time, the books tell him about the world around him—the difficulties one may have with the landlady, with the foreman, the wage packet, clerks behind the counter, when shopping, when going to the pictures, to the dance, to an outing.

George is a dull, well-meaning youth whose difficulties in life are mainly due to his social ignorance. In this respect he is rather different from Charlie who makes avoidable mistakes simply because he is very young and does not care to use the knowledge he has actually acquired. Whilst the average illiterate or semi-literate reader tends to look with amusement at the antics of silly little Charlie in the same way as he would look with a patronising smile at the frolics of a younger brother, George is a different chap. He is the one the reader can identify himself with. George is a chap who encounters the same difficulties as the reader himself has experienced and who goes through similar embarrassments and disturbances. It is well known that many people like to hear about their own lives in reading, to compare and to learn from the experiences of others. The illiterate delinquent is no exception to this and the George of "Spotlight on Trouble" may well help to throw some light on many social difficulties for which academic education fails to prepare. George's adventures are based on actual occurrences as encountered in interviews and conversations with dullards who have troubles in ordinary day to day experiences. To the original four "Spotlight on Trouble" books, four new ones have now been added which include George's girl friend and, of course, Charlie who is George's younger brother.

It has been the aim throughout the course to offer reading matter for adults which would not offend

by childishness, be useful in providing relevant social knowledge and give the beginner, right from the start, the feeling of learning something of importance. The point of departure, namely, the use of an adult social sight vocabulary requiring apparently advanced reading skill, is unusual and perhaps unique. Experience has shown that there is no difficulty whatsoever for an adolescent or adult slow learner to recognise by sight the various words of the social sight vocabulary. Recognising these words and knowing their meanings is far more a gratifying, rewarding and exhilarating experience for the illiterate than learning the simple words of children's books, "dog" and "cat", "ball", even if he learns to analyse them phonetically. It must not be forgotten that by the time the adolescent and adult begin to learn reading he has been thoroughly disappointed and disturbed by his failure to learn to read at school. Presenting the task of learning to read from a completely new angle and with a new type of material will help considerably to make him accessible to teaching, and the easy initial success obtained by simply "barking" at adult words, makes him ready to try the reading course which follows the traditional and well-established pattern of learning a few words, with frequent repetition and with phonic exercises, etc.

Combining the easy reading approach as far as the technical skills of reading is concerned with a primary of social know-how in disguised form should make this series doubly useful to those teachers who look at their work not merely in terms of conveying the three Rs, but wish also to help the illiterate who is generally also socially submarginal in mastering the skills of living required for avoiding many of the disturbing and unhappy events which have often repercussions completely out of proportion with the insignificant size of the original cause.

References

* "CLUMSY CHARLIE FLASH CARDS", from SEFA Ltd., 240, Holliday Street, Birmingham 1.

† "SEFA (SOCIAL EDUCATION FIRST AID) TEACHING SET", from SEFA Ltd., 240, Holliday Street, Birmingham 1.

‡ "CLUMSY CHARLIE" Reading Books (4 titles), from SEFA Ltd., 240, Holliday Street, Birmingham 1.

§ "OUT WITH TOM" Reading Books (18 titles), from SEFA Ltd., 240, Holliday Street, Birmingham 1.

‖ "SPOTLIGHT ON TROUBLE" Reading Books (8 titles), from Methuen & Co. Ltd., 11, New Fetter Lane, London E.C.4.

¶ "READING BOOKS FOR THE ADULT SEMI-LITERATE", *Prison Service Journal* 1964, III, No. 12, pp. 43-48.

Prison People

J. M. SADLER

AS THE ORDINARY citizen goes about his business, he sees something of other people's daily work: shop-keepers, transport workers, policemen, librarians, builders, refuse collectors and many others can be seen in action.

The officers of the Prison Service, by the very nature of their work, are usually out of the public eye behind their high brick walls or tucked away in remote rural fastnesses, as cut off from the rest of the community in some ways as the prisoners in their care—a point which the author of this book does not fail to make.

The man outside the high wall is, therefore, dependent for his ideas on prison life on the accounts given by the more imaginative journalists or by those with experience "inside", as prisoners or staff. The prisoner's view of prison life is likely to be a jaundiced one, tending to be an "exposure of appalling conditions" rather than a tribute to the training—or the food—received. The staff are likely to be too busy to write about their work until they retire and memoirs of a life spent in such a rapidly-changing organisation as the Prison Service are likely to be of considerable historic interest but less helpful to the general reader in getting the "feel" of the present-day Service. (An honourable exception to this generalisation is the recent book* by Joanna Kelley, recently Governor of Holloway and still in the Service but, as *Prison People* makes clear, women's prisons form a surprisingly small part of the prison community.)

In their series "My Life and My Work" the publishers, Educational Explorers, have adopted the policy of drawing the writers of the books from people actively engaged in the profession described, senior enough to have outgrown the beginner's view (but not to have forgotten it) but still immersed in its satisfactions and problems.

Nicholas Tyndall comes in this category. A son of the vicarage, he is a graduate aged 37 and now assistant governor and lecturer at the Staff Training College, Wakefield. He has previously been a borstal housemaster and, briefly, a probation officer. When an assistant director of the

* See review on page 40

Prison People by NICHOLAS TYNDALL "My Life and My Work" series, Educational Explorers Ltd., Reading 147 pages: 16s. 0d. (8s. 6d. paperback)

Prison Department told him of the suggestion that he should write a book giving an idea of the Prison Service as a career, he was unenthusiastic. He did not feel, he says, that he was "one of the dedicated types who knew what they wanted to do, joined the Prison Service and never looked back". Another problem was time, a scarce commodity in the life of an assistant governor, since "penal establishments function on the we-never-close basis and much of the most important part of his work is done in the evenings and at week-ends when the prisoners are not working". His wife (and four children) might also take a poor view of his having even less time to spend with them.

Most of all, he wondered: "Can I ever write a book that will do justice to this Service? This demanding, frustrating, insensitive, wearying Service, that is yet so fascinating, rewarding, stimulating and so essentially human?"

The reader of *Prison People* would probably answer his rhetorical question with an emphatic "yes". John Everyman, who may have picked up the book casually, mildly curious about what goes on in prison, will finish his reading a better-informed citizen—and maybe a potential officer of the Prison Service? Certainly, he will find it difficult to shrug off prisons and prisoners as "no concern of mine". The starry-eyed idealist in the sixth form, anxious to "help people", may find here a vocation he had not considered—but only if he or she is willing to shift the stars in his eyes into a good solid earthy base of practical commonsense. Should he decide the Prison Service is not for him, he will nevertheless have gained in his understanding of a public service the nature of which is too rarely given due recognition.

The book is available in a paperback edition as well as in a library edition and it is to be hoped that this will make it available to a larger number of general readers: the traveller on a long journey, perhaps attracted by the colourful cover, will find the contents at least as enthralling as "The Body in the Boudoir" (and considerably more edifying) for the author writes with humanity, humility and humour.

The title *Prison People*, is significant for borstal boys and prisoners are always people to Nicholas Tyndall—odd, inadequate or difficult people very often, who cannot cope with the demands of living. He does not see prisons as places for locking up "the scum of the earth" but as "transit camps for human beings in difficulty on their way to reacceptance by society".

At this point, a prison officer coming wearily from a spell of duty among a particularly difficult bunch, may be inclined to snort at what sounds at first like a rather rosy picture of the function of the Prison Service, but the author is the first to admit that present

methods succeed only in a proportion of cases. He is disarmingly frank about his own blunders and failure to achieve what should be achieved: the moments of self-congratulation and consequent relaxation of vigilance for a moment, providing an opportunity to abscond for the borstal boys; his early failure to master the ritual of the keys in a borstal.

As a more experienced officer, too, he shows a similar refreshing humility in his approach to his work. He does not assume that a pleasant sojourn in a comfortable country house is necessarily the best preparation for boys returning to urban society on their release—there are objections to farm training on similar practical grounds. He carries his same questioning attitude of mind into his work in staff training. Typical comments are:

> "I blush when I look back on the course I ran for assistant governors only six years ago.
>
> "We are now struggling to free ourselves from the generally accepted notion that the teacher knows everything and the student nothing.
>
> "There is a great danger that people come into Prison Service with firmly fixed attitudes, never examine them and so continue to operate on the basis of their serious prejudices.
>
> "It seems to me essential that the teacher should go on learning".

This is not to say that Nicholas Tyndall is a vacillating man, lacking in personal conviction. Some beliefs he holds passionately. The first is that "Prisons are full of people. Many of them odd or bizarre, some of them likeable. Some of them difficult". His second belief, so often in apparent conflict with the first, is that prisons are also a system, "a complex system that has to be managed and developed". He accepts that the prison system must be evolutionary rather than revolutionary. One can never start afresh for one has the continuing responsibility of keeping in custody those who are serving sentences. Progress must be in one sense a piecemeal process.

On the other hand, the basic questions must be asked, such as: Does a staff structure based on 19th century prisons require radical alterations to achieve 20th century penal objectives? What sort of conditions is it necessary to create to make the needs of security and of treatment fundamentally compatible? His concern for the rehabilitation of the offender is not of the kind that ignores the victim: his concern extends to the old lady living alone who has been badly frightened by the break-in of some absconding borstal boys.

Perhaps the ability to appreciate the special stresses and strains for all the inhabitants of a closed community without getting immersed in them, and to see beyond to the relationship between the offender and

society was enhanced by Nicholas Tyndall's brief period as a relief probation officer, working in the wider community on problems ranging from the depressing inability of the inadequate personality to cope with a hostile environment to the colourful character demanding divorce because his wife would not "constipate the marriage".

The material in this book is arranged skilfully in a kind of Scandinavian multiple sandwich, with slices of personal experience, reflections upon them and descriptions of prison history and evolution, each illuminating and underlining the others. On one level, the reader can find the mixture entertaining, but only the most superficial reader will not also find the book thought-provoking. Some of his cherished stereotypes of officers of the Prison Service will have to go: the grim-faced insensitive bully with his bunch of keys, the remote dilettante governor miles from the sweat and slops of cell life—and recent sensational journalism has perhaps added the corrupt jailer and the inept jailer to the slanderous gallery.

The thoughtful reader may approach the end of the book thinking, "Well, it's nothing to do with me, thank goodness", but Nicholas Tyndall has not finished with him yet. He stresses that a Prison Service can deal effectively with prisoners only in a society with the backing of the public. "There is", says the author, "a constant need to educate the man in the street to understand more clearly why people become criminals and what the penal system is striving to do with them: and to realise that though some prisons look forbidding places they are staffed by essentially humane people, however cut off from the life of the community they may be by the total involvement in their work which the Prison Service exacts".

Nicholas Tyndall points out three specific ways in which the public can assist:

1. By becoming informed of the aims of the Prison Service, working to integrate penal establishments into the local community and helping to counter the sense of isolation often felt by the staff.

2. By helping with the rehabilitation of prisoners, whether as an employer prepared to employ a discharged prisoner or as people willing to offer hospitality and friendship to individual ex-prisoners feeling their way back into society.

3. By encouraging research into new methods of individual and group treatment.

He elaborates the third point thus: "Such research is inevitably costly. But it is essential that our knowledge about personal behaviour and motivation be increased. Institutional casework has to be developed. Group processes have to be better understood. And each new

member of staff requires training in basic casework and in group dynamics.

"As this training grows more sophisticated, both at Wakefield and in colleges of further education outside the Service, so will staff roles develop. An effectively trained staff, adequately prepared to anticipate and meet changing conditions, is an essential ingredient of any progress. Change is inevitably resisted if staff are not prepared for it nor trained to adjust to it".

As an example of glossy recruiting literature *Prison People* would compare unfavourably with the productions of publicity agents working on behalf of some large commercial and industrial undertakings. There is no stress on the prestige of the work though plenty implicitly on its importance. Nothing is made of security (in a career sense!), pension schemes, accommodation provided, congenial surroundings and the usual superficial attractions paraded before the career chooser. Young people, or older ones, who are tired of being "tackled" by such means will, however, welcome a sincere and honest description of his work by a man who combines to a rare degree passionate involvement and objective assessment. The writer of this review confesses to a closer acquaintance with careers literature than with prisons and could wish that more so-called careers books were of this calibre.

It is to be hoped that *Prison People* will find its way not only into public libraries and on to station bookstalls but also into the libraries of secondary schools, adult education colleges and of colleges training teachers. Institutions training social workers of all kinds should have it if only for the brief reflection on the relationship between "administration" and "grass roots" summed up in two short paragraphs at the end of chapter 5:

"When I went to Rochester I looked on my job as helping people in trouble and if anyone had questioned me I would have replied that I thought of myself as the person to give that help.

"But a house of 60 boys convinced me that this was unrealistic thinking. Certainly I could be an influence on some boys, but my task as housemaster was rather to encourage all members of staff to be helping people and to canalise their energies and potentialities".

Perhaps, too, the Prison Department or a Nuffield or a Gulbenkian on its behalf should acquire a considerable stock of *Prison People* to distribute to new entrants to the Prison Service, to more experienced officers afflicted by doubts or stuck in a rut with a special edition for issue to all girls contemplating marriage to a member of the Prison Service.

Group Work in a Large Local Prison

R. COOPER

FOR ME, group work in the institutional setting means group work at H.M. Prison, Wandsworth, for this is where most of my experience has taken place. I am, however, convinced that, basically, some of the approaches, problems, advantages or otherwise are common, no matter where one embarks on this or other new approaches in our institutions. I have tried to set out the situation and developments as I saw them at Wandsworth and would hope that other readers would do the same. Out of our sharing experiences in common areas so we may progress.

In 1958/59 Mr. Richard Hauser came to Wandsworth. Amongst other things he introduced a form of group work with groups of officers and inmates. The effect of his impact on the prison was to seriously divide the staff for and against him and his ideas but group work was started and was maintained. After Hauser left a handbook was taken into use. This handbook consisted of an elaborate working out of some of Hauser's "sociological" theories, some use of Freudian terminology and a concept of social age. The book was intended as a guide to be studied by groups of inmates. A "reader" would read a passage and then lead a discussion. The terminology and sentence construction were such that the handbook was probably understood by only a small group of inmates. This tended to create a "status" position for the "readers" and an avenue of escape when discussion placed any individual or individuals under pressure. Nevertheless, group work continued in this form in a small area of the prison with a small number of staff but so did the staff split. Space does not permit further discussion in this area as the purpose of this article is to describe an approach to group work which was felt to be more acceptable in the Wandsworth setting at that time.

My first introduction to group work in any form was as a teaching technique in the Probation Service,

for staff, not for clients. At the Staff College I was a member of a "counselling" group for almost six months, meeting at the same time for the same period, with the same "worker" each week. Prior to joining the Service I had visited Pollington B.I., a counselling establishment, when Mr. Bishop was the governor. Since then I have attended a supervisors' course, have visited Grendon, Holloway, and the Henderson Hospital and sat in on a two-week course for staff at Portsmouth B.I. I have been group work supervisor at Wandsworth since 1964 having been involved from the start. It is from this background that this paper is prepared.

The introduction of anything new to the Prison Service as a whole or to an individual establishment is usually seen as a threat. There is the combined fear of the unknown and the automatic desire to maintain the safety of the *status quo*. It is one of the few areas where the feelings of staff and inmates are alike, suspicious and resistant. In this situation it is essential that sufficient time is set aside for efficient planning, the ground must be prepared and there must be an acceptable form of introduction.

At a later stage I shall be expressing my general views about group work but I am primarily concerned with its implications at Wandsworth. Here it was introduced, rightly in my opinion, as part of an overall staff training scheme.

The first stage was the setting up of a staff training sub-committee which was fortunate in that it had the services of a very able and well-liked P.O. who was later promoted chief officer *in situ* and has continued to maintain an interest in, and support of, staff training. An acceptable father figure. All aspects of in-service staff training were discussed together with methods of introducing a variety of useful and acceptable courses. The advice of the Assistant Director i/c staff training was sought and he attended meetings in the establishment. Approval was given for Wandsworth to be placed on the list of establishments approved for Group Counselling and approval was given for an increase in authorised complement in order to release members of staff for training. This new staff complement was in post for one day in February 1964 but on no other occasion since.

The planning having taken place and the decisions having been made, a full explanation of all aspects of training was prepared by the governor and was delivered to staff verbally and as a document. Courses for staff in Group Counselling were included as part of the Wandsworth In-Service Training Scheme.

We were perhaps fortunate that the discussion, planning and introduction all took place shortly after

the passing of resolution 8 at the P.O.A. Annual Conference 1963. This timing at the outset assured a large measure of support and 119 members of staff volunteered for group training.

It would be useful at this stage to express how I see the value of group work and how group work was seen at Wandsworth.

It is my convinced opinion that to refer to Group Counselling in the institutional setting and to refer to it as primarily a therapeutic aid is wrong for three reasons. Firstly, we do not at present have the necessary training or skills to be therapists in the full sense. Secondly, to do so sets up unreal expectations in staff and inmates that cannot be met, creates false approaches and relationships and cannot fail to do anything but lead eventually to frustration. Thirdly, it sets up group counselling as the panacea which it most certainly is not.

To me, group work is a way of providing an efficient means of communication at all levels. As a result of better communications there is better understanding, there is a change in atmosphere. In a changed atmosphere people can express themselves honestly as the people they are, in the variety of ways that is necessary to deal with the wide range of problems and problem people that are in our charge. In this group situation, therapy may incidentally take place.

In Wandsworth the introduction of group work was seen as a means of reducing staff/inmate tensions: as offering some increase in job satisfaction; as offering status and career prospects to the counsellor/worker: as a source of overtime payment; as an opportunity for junior members of staff "to speak their minds" to senior members of staff; as something a bit more hopeful than traditional methods or lack of them for "helping inmates to go straight" or "helping them to keep out of trouble".

Training was to be the responsibility of myself as supervisor with the principal psychologist as adviser and I found his help invaluable. Subsequently a senior psychologist became assistant adviser. Another useful event was that the chief officer I have previously referred to became actively involved in the group work and became deputy supervisor. He was the first uniformed officer to take the supervisors' course.

In January 1964, we were ready to start and ran two five-day courses. The purpose of the courses was to attempt to provide some factual information but the main emphasis was to attempt to provide training through experience and participation in a non-directed group.

Since we started group work there have been 12 courses and

110 members of staff have taken part as volunteers. These include 86 discipline and hospital officers, 12 principal officers, one chief officer (deputy supervisor), three welfare officers, two A.Gs., two chaplains, one psychologist and one psychological tester. There have been inmate groups involving nearly 1,000 prisoners.

At the end of each course it was left to the participants to decide, over the period of about a week, whether or not they wished to take an inmate group. Immediate responses were not accepted and no pressure was applied, every attempt was made to make this a free choice. There were no specific instructions as to what type of group the member of staff should take, i.e. directive or non-directive group, for it is my opinion that in this situation the worker must be seen to be himself in a position where he can express himself honestly. It is ridiculous after a five-day training course to expect the group leader who is naturally verbose to run a non-directive group and similarly the reticent group leader to run a directive group. Briefing sessions were held to clarify any points raised and to remind staff of the interactions that would take place in the group situation as had been illustrated in their own group.

The working week for inmates is already limited so it was decided that the groups would be restricted to evenings. It was also decided that it would be compulsory for inmates, as many inmates would volunteer for the wrong reasons or would not volunteer at all. Similarly some inmates who might derive benefit would not volunteer. There was also the general agreement that if staff were prepared to volunteer for and undergo training then there must be the required number of inmates available to allow for staff expression and experience.

With some attempt at rehabilitation already taking place in H and K Wings the first groups started there. With increasing numbers of "trained" staff it was possible to introduce group work into the main prison in June 1964.

There were in the first instance two major difficulties. The high inmate transfer rate and loss of continuity which was combatted as far as was possible by the allocation of inmates to groups of common discharge or likely transfer dates. Secondly, escorts and other duties made it extremely difficult to have members of staff regularly at staff group meetings. With the limited training in the first instance it was thought vital by both training staff and group-workers alike that training should be an ongoing process with regular group-workers' meetings. Our failure to maintain such meetings is probably one of the major contributory factors

leading to our present sorry state of affairs.

Despite the difficulties of arranging staff courses, maintaining staff groups and real continuity, work progressed until mid-1965. In June 1965 the shortage of staff and steadily increasing inmate population made it impossible to run further basic training courses let alone the advanced and refresher courses that were now felt to be necessary. Interest was maintained by some members of the staff who attended the now irregular staff group meetings but the wastage of practising staff group leaders was considerable. Whatever the reality of the situation the result was interpreted by staff whose interest and support is essential, as a lack of interest or support from "the top". A loss of continuity combined with such feelings cannot but lead to feelings of frustration and "opting out".

At the Prison A.G's Conference this year I said that group work at Wandsworth was now just about a corpse and would be a difficult one to resurrect. Our staff situation has worsened and the inmate population has continued to grow. I believe that the situation is now worse than I had previously described it but I am still convinced as to the value of group-work and feel that our experience has been of tremendous value.

Out of the staff and staff/inmate groups has come about a staff/inmate spastic group which continues to do valuable work. An advisory committee of staff group representatives has been set up to look at inmate training and staff involvement. Despite the fact that this group was unable to meet because staff were not available, there was still interest and hope for some time. This too has now died.

It was found in the early stages that demands for action from both staff and inmates are predominant. This means that as staff groups are at different stages of development, whilst there is a need for reassurance and support and the sight of positive action, the timing of any action is of vital importance. Experience has shown us that whilst the feelings of frustration are particularly high in those first trained, this frustration, with reassurance examination and support can be contained. Changes can only be arranged as the temperature of the total institution changes and change it most certainly does.

Through the staff group meetings it became clearly apparent that a large number of staff are not only anxious to change their role but have the ability to do so. It became equally obvious that group work/counselling is not the only approach in that many members of staff prefer to use the person to person relationship and are

capable, with guidance, of doing so to the advantage of staff and inmates. I am sure that it was also clearly demonstrated that even in Wandsworth, if nothing else, group work can create a situation where communications can be effective where there is a growing awareness in staff and a desire for positive expression. It can also promote an atmosphere where a variety of purposeful staff/inmate interactions can take place, both within the group situation and the wider context of the total institution.

As a result of facilitating better communications at all levels there was a better understanding and changes in attitude. Whatever the direct effect may or may not have been on inmates there was a considerable effect on staff with growing demands for change and greater staff involvement. Unless these demands are met in some way and this is another area in which we failed, the result is frustration followed by further "opting out". It is difficult to meet these demands in an institution such as Wandsworth where the prime concerns are discipline, movement and security, with an ever changing and growing population. It is even more difficult to plan staff involvement when there is an acute shortage of staff and the future role of the establishment is under review. One can only hope that change will result in a situation where we can once again use the material that is available to us to the best advantage.

When I attended the group supervisors' course a practising A.G. supervisor described his relationship with the institution psychologist/adviser as a "David and Jonathan relationship". I must comment that this was my experience. The pressures that are on the supervisor are such that he must have the constant provision of the skilled advice and support of the psychologist.

When starting a group training programme there can be a natural impetus in that there is the offer to staff of involvement and a change of role. In our case there was the offer of an addition or alternative to a situation that was not acceptable to staff. As the programme develops some of this impetus seems to be lost and group work in a large local prison tends to be seen as a peripheral activity accorded little priority. When the working day for the inmate is already short it is difficult to justify group activities during the working day. Staff already subjected to a considerable amount of evening duty find it difficult to justify to themselves and their families that group work should be an extra evening activity.

If group work is to be effective it must be accorded the right priority and this must be demonstrable.

New Thinking about Administration

Published by The Association of Social Workers, Denison House, Vauxhall Bridge Road, London S.W.1 (5s 0d.)

SOCIAL WORKERS, ranging from N.S.P.C.C. to prison, met at Oxford to study the inter-relationship of casework and administration and to discuss, in both one-agency and inter-agency groups, ways of thinking about the administrative process. This report on their findings is of considerable interest to staffs of penal establishments because behind the walls there is always a good deal of discussion about administration: recent numbers of this Journal have included articles such as "Managing to Govern" (and there was some correspondence following this) and others describing the administration officers' own views. Nobody yet has written "Just Managing" or "Managing to Manage" but one expects these at any time.

Meanwhile, what do social workers think about their own administrative duties? This is what the conference was really about. They are aware of other people having to "administer" but, on this occasion, it is their own paper work, their own office timetables and so on which they are examining.

In conferences of this kind much of the hard work is done in discussion but this does not mean that the speakers' work is merely introductory. Unless some challenge is thrown out there is a danger that the ensuing small-group meetings will tend towards self-congratulation rather than self-criticism. One opening speaker on this occasion, Mr. A. D. Newman, Principal of the Glacier Institute of Management, examined the three elements of objective, work and resources to be found in any organisation.

The fundamental objective of all real organisations, says Mr. Newman, is viability, and this leads in some fields to a primary objective plus, usually, secondary objectives. Later, the discussion group comprising workers from prison, borstal and psychiatric hospitals staffs considering their primary task, used a phrase which is described in the report as "ambiguous". They said their primary task was to hold the inmates. Incidentally it is interesting

to note that the date of the conference was 1965, a long time before certain events emphasised that phrase. The group went on to quote the old Rule 6 and to paraphrase it as "to train people in captivity".

Work must be relevant to the objectives, continues Mr. Newman, adding: "When we, as individuals, have objectives which we cannot achieve as individuals alone then we must accept the assistance and constraints (and we note our ambivalence here) of organisation". To do work, resources must be available, converted from money into time and human capacity. Miss S. Watson, Hertfordshire's Children's Officer was tempted to define administration. "It is", she said, "any arrangement which helps an agency to run smoothly, and it is a living process". A good illustration was "The primary task of the Children's Department under the Children Act, 1948, is to provide a home for every child who needs one. To see that before nightfall every child has a roof, warmth and food, could be looked on as an administrative job, but interwoven with this are the tasks of providing a home which will meet the needs of the individual child and of helping the child to adjust to the home provided. These are matters not of administration but of human relationships".

Miss O. Stevenson, Tutor in Social Work at Oxford, summing up the conference and its implications for social workers, has a couple of paragraphs of particular interest to us in the penal field. After suggesting that the rate of change in society itself, highly mobile and industrialised, is itself accelerating with resultant strain on individuals and families with consequent demand for more social work help, she says that, "linked to this, is the fact that the institution, whether it be hospital, children's home, old people's home or prison, has gone out of favour and 'community care' in the widest sense of that word has become an ideal. Rigid distinctions between the institution in which the problem is encapsulated and the community, the 'outside', are breaking down in innumerable ways and this inevitably affects the primary functions of social work. It is generally felt that if the demand for social work services is stretched beyond any limit of its resources to try and realise this ideal, it may well lead to a discrediting—unfairly—of the whole conception of community care".

Harking back to the discussion groups (whose deliberations are edited by Miss B. Butler, Lecturer in Social Studies at Bristol) Miss Stevenson reports one of them as considering the conflict between the caring function and the controlling or holding function. It is interesting to note that while this

fell more acutely in the penal field, it is regarded with some concern in social work generally.

When we consider relationships between senior and junior staff (says Miss Stevenson) we see that some of these difficulties arise from this conflict between care and control with a fundamental reluctance on the part of the senior staff to acknowledge the importance of the "controlling" side of things. There are many reasons for this, she adds: "it may, in some services, be due in part to the preponderance of women, upon whose shoulders authority does not, by and large, sit so easily". While this does not apply in the majority of our predominantly male-run, male-manned establishments it has some relevance in the relationships between governors and administration officers, prison welfare officers and chaplains and/or assistant governors, and perhaps between officers and principal officers. Miss Stevenson's opinion that "it may be that social workers' selection and training has in the past emphasised permissiveness excessively and that this has got carried over into the managerial task" could well provide a useful subject for any staff study group.

There is much more, of general interest, in this pamphlet which deserves a place in every institution's staff library.

M. W.

INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY SHORT-TERM FELLOWSHIP

It is announced that the University of Cambridge's Institute of Criminology, thanks to a benefactor who wishes to remain anonymous, is now in a position to offer occasional short-term Fellowships to persons having responsibility in the field of criminal justice and the treatment of offenders. The object is to enable the Fellows to be attached to the institute for a period of study concentrating on a definite objective. This might involve undertaking a specific piece of research (or completing an enquiry already begun elsewhere) and presenting the results in the form of a short monograph or article; preparing special lectures; or intensive reading on a particular topic of direct practical concern.

Fellowships will normally be tenable for a period of six weeks, three months or six months, their exact duration depending on the scale of work which is proposed. The award will be sufficient to cover living expenses in Cambridge. Fellows will have full use of the institute's extensive library; accommodation for study will be provided. The senior staff of the institute will be available for consultations or guidance.

No formal qualifications for candidates will be laid down, the essential requirement being that of responsibility and experience of work in the field of law enforcement, the administration of justice, or the prevention or treatment of crime and delinquency (prevention will be interpreted widely to include aspects of child-care and youth work). A well conceived plan of study is required as evidence of capacity to take full advantage of the opportunities offered.

Applications should be sent to the secretary/librarian of the institute at 7 West Road, Cambridge, to reach him not later than 15th September 1967.

(It is anticipated that, by the time this announcement is published, a notice to staff on this subject will have been issued.—Ed.)

When the Gates Shut*

F. McN. LIESCHING

WHEN THE GATES SHUT is a simple, straightforward account of life at Holloway Prison. There is something extraordinarily attractive about this book. Writing as one who is in charge of a Prison Service establishment and who is constantly asked to speak of the work going on there to a large variety of groups, I know how easy it is to paint a picture which, though not untrue in any detail, nevertheless presents the establishment to an ignorant public in a much more favourable light than the facts justify. It would have been so easy for Mrs. Kelley to have done the same—to have stressed the positive, constructive work carried out at Holloway and to have glossed over, or entirely to have omitted, the more seamy side of the life of a women's prison. This book is so attractive because it is written with such candid honesty. It is an honesty enhanced also by an almost childlike simplicity and a compassion for people. Further, there is no trace of cynicism in the author's outlook, and it is heartening to reflect that though Mrs. Kelley has served for so long and throughout her service has dealt with surely the most difficult of the Prison Service clientele—the womenfolk—that her outlook has remained untainted.

Here are some examples of her candid and honest reporting:

"There is supposed to be one hour's exercise in the open-air on fine days—there is no exercise if it is wet. In practice only about half an hour is spent crawling around the exercise ground; the women have to be collected from the workshops and taken to the ground at the pace of the slowest; an equal amount of time must be allowed at the end for them to be returned to work or taken into the prison. . . . The exercise at Holloway is one of the most depressing sights to be seen there" (p. 19).

"A great deal of talk about sex goes on among the women. . . . There is quite often lesbianism amongst the recidivists" (p. 26).

"Sometimes a woman becomes completely lackadaisical and appears merely to be plodding on without caring about anything

* *When the Gates Shut* by J. E. KELLEY (Longmans, Green & Co. 25s.)

either in or out of prison. The more experienced officers then say, 'So-and-so has got gaol rot'" (p. 33).

"A woman who is really determined to do so can, in fact, avoid work most of the time" (p. 68).

"A male prisoner comparing life in a closed prison with the more rigorous regime at borstal, described it as 'one long kip'; far from preparing prisoners to cope with life outside, such conditions can be completely character destroying".

"Those who come from rough and violent backgrounds, who are used to resorting to kicks and blows, may easily intimidate those who come from more sheltered environments. Officers cannot always be present and dark hints of what can happen in a recess or association room can inspire great terror, often not unwarranted" (p. 177).

Mrs. Kelley's candid reference to these various problems which face the governor of any women's prison greatly enhances the value of her book. But together with this plain reporting of the uglier facts, she brings a compassion for people which shows itself again and again throughout the book. Her story of the night stoker (p. 64) who risked his job by pushing through the window bars of a punishment cell, cheese sandwiches and cigarettes to a man who was in trouble and the remarkable effect this simple act of kindness had on this particular prisoner is illustrative of this. Her charming little parenthesis when writing of visiting rules (p.21): "On one occasion it became necessary to decide whether or not a cat was a 'person' within the meaning of the rules", again demonstrates her understanding of how much an apparently trivial matter can mean to a woman.

How well also those of us who have governed an establishment can appreciate her remark on page 23, where she is speaking of a woman she has placed in solitary confinement and on bread and water. "A governor has to visit each day anyone she has put in cellular confinement or on bread and water diet and often, after sitting on their mattresses with them and talking, it is possible to leave feeling that a friendship has been established; one can try to make them understand why they had to be punished and attempt to understand why they had to rebel". Recently the writer took the other end of a cross-cut saw with a boy under punishment. Some days later, the boy having completed the punishment, he chanced to meet him coming down a passage. A great smile spread over the boy's face and he said: "Any time you wish to do any more sawing, Sir, just let me know". It is a pity that our critics, so ready to point out our weaknesses in Press and elsewhere, do not give some publicity to this kind of relationship which exists

between so many individual members of the staff and prisoners in Prison Service establishments throughout the country.

The sequel to Mrs. Kelley's willingness to sit on a mattress with folk under punishment is to be found on page 41 where a girl who grew to know the governor very well simply because she was punished so often asked her to visit her after she had been transfered to a closed ward of a mental hospital, as "no one else would want to visit her". The governor's visits continued, even after she had refused to provide the money for a bottle of gin to be smuggled in to the hospital".

On page 57 there is quite the most delightful story of a woman shop lifter that the writer has ever read. "Another stole a large piece of bacon from a well-known supermarket. When she got home she found it was slightly mouldy. She flounced back to the shop. The manager apologetically offered her another piece but she said no, it had put her off bacon. She would rather have her money returned, which was done. She then graciously agreed to treat the incident as closed".

The references to prostitution are of interest. On page 100 we learn that some prostitutes regard themselves as performing a valuable service, at least as useful as that of the dustman and far more useful than that of the policeman. The reason why a woman turns to prostitution may often surprise, and it is interesting to learn of a woman (p. 111) who turned to prostitution because she could not any longer face the loneliness of living with a good but taciturn husband. Not only this, but she claimed that many of her clients did not really want sexual intercourse, but only someone to talk to.

On page 138 we find the delightful account of the woman who interviewed the governor. "As she sat down, she said, 'I have been meaning for some time to ask you a question. I notice that you are much better dressed than you used to be and really wear some quite pretty things these days. Is this because you have more money to spend and so are able to buy from better shops, or is it that you are taking more trouble, or is it simply that your taste has improved?'" Alas, we are not treated to the governor's reply!

When the Gates Shut is simply an unvarnished factual account of life in Holloway Prison albeit presented with an attractive sympathy and understanding. Further than this the author does not go, the more the pity. This is the first book ever written and published by a serving prison officer in this country. To-day the whole field of criminology is bedevilled by experts, and every so often these experts gather in conferences and make known their ideas. The writer attended the United Nations Congress on Crime in Stockholm

in August, 1965. He sat through the recent conference organised by the Howard League and held at University College, London. For many days at both these conferences he listened to expert after expert speaking on the treatment of criminals. He came away from both conferences distressed by the sheer poverty of thought of the world's experts in this field. As far as successfully tackling the mounting crime wave was concerned, the experts had little or nothing to offer. But now, here is a book written by a serving prison officer, a woman of great experience in dealing with delinquent peoples. Perhaps she would have some positive but practical contribution to make to penal thought. Perhaps maybe for the first time ever the experts would be shown the way by a serving prison officer. Alas! Mrs. Kelley remains content simply to describe what she sees, but makes no attempt to indicate how present methods could be improved or even radically changed. Her book is disappointing in that she confines herself simply to the factual account of life in Holloway Prison.

Or could the writer be mistaken? There is a little paragraph hidden away on page 173, which is so simple that perhaps the experts would quite fail to recognise it as being of any significance. "The happy part of the work is that one can sometimes give help where help is desperately needed and at a time when it makes a real difference. Often one is able to offer kindness and affection to women who have known little of either and whose outlook may be greatly changed by receiving them".

Perhaps it is only in this way that delinquent women can be helped. Mrs. Kelley, surely, would fully have agreed with the American who, as a result of his own experiences as a prisoner, could write: "In essence what is lacking in the prison system, as it is lacking in our culture generally, is love. Not the eros type of love, but *agape*—the love that expresses itself in reverence for the personality of the most depraved, that reacts to evil and cruelty with understanding and sympathy and sorrow, and that forgives because it understands and sympathises and sorrows. This has been borne in on me increasingly. Knowledge, the wisdom to understand all mysteries—these are a 'tinkling cymbal' if love is not present. Even those who give their bodies to be burned find that it profits them nothing unless they are able to leaven their offering with love".

We cannot read *When the Gates Shut* without becoming very conscious that the womenfolk of Holloway have experienced this quality of "*agape*" as a result of the ministrations of the governor and her staff.

Group Therapy in Prisons

SIR,

The Mountbatten Report is widely accepted as a fair and reasonable document. One topic to which it refers briefly is group therapy. Speaking of the new prison at Grendon it says: "Group therapy is a specific psychiatric technique, but a close involvement of prisoners and staff, whether by group counselling or by other experiments, provides opportunities for pressures and discontents to come spontaneously to the surface where, if they cannot be resolved they can at least be identified".

Group therapy is a new idea, relatively unfamiliar. I believe it can be used in prisons but only under certain conditions.

Therapy must in the first place be realistic. An American prison group therapist replied to my question how he handled breaches of law and plans to escape of which he might learn in the group, "I am only interested in their dreams, not in their behaviour". Not surprisingly, group therapy in that particular prison has since been discontinued.

If the therapist is too much on the side of the prison authorities he will be distrusted by the inmates, if too much on the side of the latter, therapy is not likely to be allowed to continue. There is here a similar problem of balance to that faced by the Probation Service: it has developed a tradition that enables the probation officer to be a "servant of the court" but at the same time befriend the probationer. For group therapy the same issue of attitude to authority is crucial.

A third prerequisite is a sense of community in the prison. Therapy is a practical possibility in British prisons only because some of them constitute genuine communities, more comparable to other modern communities than to prisons of the bad old days which merely imposed blind obedience.

Such a community sense must be protected: the "normal" prisoner and the prison officer alike need protection from vicious criminals, who form only a very small fraction of the inmates. This would ensure recruitment of superior officers, whose day to day contact with the prisoners largely determines the atmosphere of the institution. There is a preliminary theoretical issue, however. Will it be to the advantage of the prisoner, when he obtains his freedom, to have become integrated into a prison community? Fifty years ago it was felt desirable to adjust the prisoner to prison, by breaking him: in the changed atmosphere it is necessary to reconsider what adjustment is desirable for him.

Yours etc.,

MELITTA SCHMIDEBERG (M.D.)

Custody and/or Rehabilitation

Sir,

The Mountbatten Report seems to have led to certain resentments within the Prison Service that have not, as yet, found expression in your columns. A recent letter by one of my colleagues to the Journal of the Institution of Professional Civil Servants exemplifies this. Mr. De Berker writes: ("State Service", March 1967) "The Mountbatten report and the debate which has surrounded it, has made it clear that the Prison Department has the tasks of custody and rehabilitation of prisoners in that order of priority".

May I suggest that this interpretation of the report is a case of "the eye of the beholder"; for, while suggesting (section 18 of the summary) that each governor of a closed prison should have the services of a "qualified security officer", the report also urges (in the same section) that specialisation in "training" and "rehabilitation" should be encouraged. Similarly, Lord Mountbatten's recommendation for the extension of the principle of home leave (section 23) will surely make as great a contribution to our rehabilitative as to our custodial goals. It would be the blindest cynicism to suggest that the "rehabilitative" recommendations of the Mountbatten Report are not seriously intended.

If we expand a little on the theme of specialisation in the training of officers, the opportuneness of the report's recommendation will be clearer. In *The Prison Officers' Magazine* (February 1967) Mr. George Nicholson proposed a new series of grades for prison officers: "The proposal is that the grades should be roughly as follows: group officer, rehabilitation officer, welfare officer, after-care officer". And, in the same issue, the third interim report of the Joint Working Party on the Role of the Prison Officer stated: "Further progress has been made in the provision of extra-mural training courses for prison officers. It so far appears that arrangements for extra-mural courses in criminology, human development and other related subjects in co-operation with universities and colleges of further education could be made available for some 50 to 60 establishments".

Whether officers should be permanently differentiated by their training, or whether each officer should fill each role at different stages of his career is a more particular question. What is quite clear is that, when the

recommendations of the Mountbatten Report are seen as a whole, they offer a great opportunity for the realisation of the hopes of a great number of prison officers and, I would add, of those who work with them.

It would be most distressing if we lost this opportunity. Already "security officers" are being trained at Wakefield; it is up to us to urge on our Department that corresponding implementation should be given to the other side of the coin—to press for similar training in group work and rehabilitation.

The urgency of this matter cannot be over emphasised. For, already, it seems that a hasty decision has been taken: in agreeing to implement the report's suggestion (section 17) for a new grade of senior prison officer, has the Prison Department avoided consideration of the much more relevant type of reorganisation of grades proposed by Mr. Nicholson?

If 1967 is eventually seen as a year which marked only a fresh concern with the implementation of our custodial aims, the fault will be ours and not Lord Mountbatten's.

I am,

Yours etc.,

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