

BOOK REVIEWS—cont.

do-gooders and all. From time to time we give each other cause for laughter and, sometimes for blushing. We are all so busy unfolding the secrets of delinquency that we ought not to mind too much when the process is reversed.

Tony Parker disclaims any qualification or ability to answer the question as to how the personal qualities of his friend could find expression in society instead of against it. I hope it will not astonish him to learn that what is written in this book is not unfamiliar to members of the prison service, who are concerned with just this question. There are, fortunately, comparatively few criminals as professional as 'Robert Allerton': the majority who come to prison justify themselves or otherwise state their needs. The courage which now supports 'Robert Allerton' may not always sustain him. Crime as a profession has the disadvantage that success tends to diminish with continuing practice whilst the penalties of failure increase. The possibility is that when he comes to express a need for help he will have reached a point where help is no longer possible.

ALAN BANTON.

ROBBERY IN LONDON

Cambridge Studies in Criminology Vol. XIV
carried out by F. H. McClintock and
Evelyn Gibson.

Macmillan & Co. 168 pp.

30s. 0d.

THE CRIMINOLOGIST of today, particularly the man concerned with the cause and treatment of delin-

quency, will find little in this concise and well-diagrammed study into Robbery in London, which will assist him toward diagnosis and care for those men who may be committed for this particular offence,

This volume, the result of painstaking research and teasing out from a wide variety of sources of some eighty-four separate factors, is a full examination of the offences of robbery committed in the Metropolitan area in the years 1950 and 1957, and during the first six months of 1960; this has been carried out in an attempt to view this offence in its fuller perspective as a social and criminological problem. Indeed the magnitude of this problem may shortly be seen in the figures published on 8th February, 1962, when the Metropolitan Police Commissioner stated that the number of robberies in London increased by twenty-six per cent over the previous year; that in 1961 robberies totalled 963, six times as many as in 1938: there is however consolation in that New York City had seven times this figure for the corresponding period.

The McClintock/Gibson study has been based on the cases known to the police; in 1950, 287, in 1957, 462, and 333 during the first half of 1960. The mounting graph has already been noticed. Professor Radzinowicz, in his preface, has pointed to the climbing volume of robbery with the disconcerting fact that today there are far more undetected robberies, with a commensurate financial reward for the skilled operators: more robberies.

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(seventy per cent of these crimes undetected) less convictions and more profit. In 1961, £618,000 were stolen in total and in nine per cent of these robberies more than £1,000 was involved; in 1950 only eight incidents concerned more than £1,000, and twenty-one in 1957. All these factors would suggest that the detection rate needs drastic re-examination; indeed this book should give much needed impetus to the new Police recruiting campaign announced by the Home Secretary. Crime, as Mr. Gordon Hawkins of the Staff College once proved so convincingly, obviously does pay.

This book, then, seems far more concerned with robberies than robbers, and for this reviewer, more interested in the problems of diagnosis and cure of the criminal, it would appear that factors were not clearly examined which might give more knowledge to those concerned with the study and treatment of delinquents.

What is learnt of the robbers as individuals, rather than as numbers in a statistical survey? In the factors teased out from the wide sources available to Mr. McClintock and Miss Gibson, a very general picture only is painted; and indeed it must be made quite clear that of the sample examined, there were sufficiently few to make any conclusion very general indeed. Only a limited few are ever caught, the 'mugs' who may not be typical robbers.

The offenders examined seem to differ very little from the usual

run of any prison population; unsettled, inadequate labourers, with a lack of any social stability, they seem to be men who have no conscience about crime in general, and robbery is just another charge in the calender. They need not necessarily be men of a violent disposition; it would seem therefore that in many cases this is a situational crime, rather than an emotionally motivated one. Any Member of Parliament seeking support that even the Irish be banned under the proposed Immigration Bill has ample ammunition in that an increasing number of Irish immigrants are involved in this particular offence. It was a surprise to note that the authors saw no apparent significant number of coloured men involved in this crime, men who would seem more prone to this act on account of their particular social and emotional problems in a strange and usually hostile land. Perhaps the only suggestion toward any interest in the social and emotional makeup of these criminals is in the statement that those born between 1935 and 1942 were more prone to violence; even this factor however may well bear no positive correlation to the facts.

It is the legal profession who seem to have clearly appreciated the whole picture of the treatment of criminals; for they, unlike the workers in this study, are more concerned, and rightly so, with the treatment and/or punishment of the offender, rather than the offence. There was a decline between 1950 and 1957, in the severity of sentences, with few

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men being given the maximum: in 1950 seventy-six per cent were committed for penal treatment, and only sixty-nine per cent in 1957, with an increase being noted since. But in all cases the judicature seem to have been justly concerned with the criminal: Society at last, though still inadequately, is accepting its duty toward criminals; all that is needed now is a form of penal treatment based on equally logical and rational grounds.

This volume is eminently readable, and, as an introduction for the general public into crime and its makeup, is extremely valuable; neat tables, succinct summarization of statistical evidence at each chapter's end, with a broad summary of the picture. Yet to anyone who is concerned professionally in the more practical field of criminology, be he 'copper', 'screw', or 'beak', there is little which is new or even provocative, with a possible lead into a different line of action or of treatment. The police are told that they are achieving little success; prison staff are given a superficial picture, statistically proven, of the men they already handle, and the judicature is shown that it is fulfilling its prime requirement.

This book then, for the reviewer at least, has been a disappointment; the authors seem never to have gone far enough, nor deep enough, into the crucial and socially important considerations aroused by this increasing use of violence in crime, at a time when the mass media are being strongly criticised

for their dramatisation of such phenomena.

J. R. C. LEE

CRIME AND JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

A Rational approach to Penal Problems.
Sol Rubin.

The Library of Criminology, published under the auspices of the Institute for the Study and Treatment of Delinquency.
Stevens & Sons. 35s. 0d:

HE HAD BEEN in prison twice before and had previously broken his parole. He had now served his minimum sentence of three years for his latest offence and the possibility was there of seven more years to serve before his maximum was completed. His work record was good; he had been in "L" block on two occasions for breaches of prison discipline; he had given six pints of blood during his prison stay. A pleading letter from his wife, confirmed that she would have him back — "his two children needed him" — but he had no specific plans for employment. He had reached only seventh grade level in school, but had not volunteered for schooling in the prison. He was not an alcoholic. The detailed report was studied and scored; the ten minute interview with the prisoner was over and he had stated his case and answered questions.

"I suggest two years;" "I had thought three." The two members of an American State Parole Board agreed that the case should be reconsidered in two years' time, and within the next week the prisoner would be informed that his chances of parole were in sus-