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Cover illustration courtesy The Gorham Co.
Just Naturally Bad

Howard E. Signor

"I can't see how a girl who has had all the advantages she has had could possibly have done such a thing!"
"So George Craig's boy was caught stealing? I always knew that kid was naturally bad."
"He's a skilled workman, but gets into more devilment than he is worth."

Many persons consider cases of delinquency in this way. They do not go beneath the surface of the cases, but dogmatically pass judgment. The maladjustment with the social group, the physical and mental handicaps are not considered. The boys and girls are bad. They will always be bad.

The Rotary Club of Toledo, Ohio, has taken a stand on the juvenile delinquency problem which is worthy of remark. Some typical cases that have come to their attention reveal what can be done to relieve delinquency.

Martha D., a fifteen-year-old girl, last year was living quietly with her parents. The family was in comfortable circumstances and, seemingly, Martha was being given all the advantages of a child of a good family. Her parents were very careful in the way in which they supervised their daughter.

She was attractive. Boys were continually asking her to parties and high school dances. Almost always her parents refused to let her go. She had gone to only two parties up until she was fifteen.

One morning scare headlines brought quiet little Martha to the attention of all Toledo. A police officer, on duty at the edge of town, had arrested her and she was awaiting trial in the Juvenile Court. Despite the fact that there were several feet of snow on the ground, she had been found, nude, in a sedan with a boy somewhat older than herself. The evidence was convicting—she was, according to some, "naturally bad, and headed for hell."

The Juvenile Court referred her to the Juvenile Adjustment Agency, which had been established by the Rotary Club to deal with just such cases. Herbert D. Williams, the psychologist in charge, and his staff interviewed the girl and her parents to learn the facts in the case.

Martha's parents had depended on external restraint and gave no consideration to building up, in the girl herself, an internal resistance against misconduct. In other words, they depended upon their own watchfulness and the fact that they did not let her go out with boys or girls except in high school during the daytime, to protect her.

The Adjustment Agency drew up a chart of their findings in this case. This is given along with the charts of two others. Referring to this chart, you will find that her mental, educational, personality, and vocational ages are about normal for a girl of her actual age. However, it was found that she had the
What the psychological examination showed. Each child is identified by the initials. The black line across each chart marks where the child should score to be normal. The black columns above and below show where they are above or below par.

Organic sex development of the average nineteen-year-old girl, that her moral standards were those of the average twelve-year-old, and that the age of her associates averaged almost eighteen years. This was especially true of the boys with whom she went. These are the findings that set Martha aside from normal girls of her age, and these are the ones to which the agency gave special attention.

Due to overactive sexual glands, Martha could not control herself at times. At first she did not know what was the matter with her, but at one of the only two parties she ever attended in her life, contact with a boy in dancing served to localize the desire within her.

From that time on she was immoral with many boys. She frequented an apartment near her home. Then she was caught by the police.

A comparatively simple treatment was decided upon for Martha. The nature of her difficulty was explained to her in her mother's presence, and arrangement was made for normal social contact. In other words, she was given an outlet for all of the repressions resulting from the strictness and misunderstandings of her
parents. She was given sedatives; and her thyroid condition was successfully treated. Now Martha is living a normal life, and Toledo has forgotten their much advertised "Snowbird."

Without the Rotary Club's agency, Martha would have been put in the Girl's Industrial School as a hopeless degenerate, in contact with older and more hardened sex offenders, which probably would have been disastrous to her.

When a Boy Steals

Frank L. was just one of the kids in the neighborhood, a good neighborhood. He was brought into court on the charge of stealing an expensive roadster. There was another boy with him at the time; they took the car to go for a quiet little ride. They had the car three days, but never drove it after 6 P.M. They meant that the cops should find it the first day they had it out, as they left it in an alley. However, it was still there the next day, so they took another ride. The next day they were put in the county jail.

Why should a boy do a thing like that? The agency's first step was to see what abilities he had in certain lines. On Frank's chart it will be seen that he is almost seventeen years old chronologically, and that he differs most from normal in the age of his moral standards, which were equal to those of a 12-year-old boy.

These low moral standards can be explained by looking into his family life. He came of a good family. His father was an engineer in one of the large buildings in the city. Both of his parents had very high moral standards, and were horrified at what he had done. Upon analyzing the situation, it was found that the mother had always made every decision for the boy. She had guarded him carefully, and had, through her love and interest in the boy, completely dominated him.

That was the crux of the situation. Frank had had no chance, through social contact, to build up a moral code, and while he knew in an abstract way what was right and what was wrong, he had not a chance to develop any feeling on the matter.

When parents see traces of resentment of their authority in their children's attitude it is time to consider whether or not they are doing too much supervising, according to Mr. Williams. Children have to develop resistance toward wrong; it can not be argued into them, nor paddled into them.

Frank and his companion were sentenced to two weeks in the county jail to think it over. This was done on the recommendation of the adjustment agency. Due to a death in the family of the other boy, they were released. Soon after that Frank came to Mr. Williams and confessed that on the impulse of the moment he had stolen another automobile. The owner of this car agreed to leave the matter in the hands of the agency.

The boy's restlessness and instability had resulted in school failure and at the agency's suggestion he was required to go to work. He had to pay $25 out of his wages for every day that he had had the car. This kept the result of his theft before him for some months and helped to stabilize him. Proper social contacts, showed him the social group attitude toward theft, and acted as a restraining influence upon him. He has been working for a year now, and has had no further trouble.

Angel-Faced Vincent Caught

Peck's Bad Boy was hopelessly outclassed by fifteen-year-old Vincent D. Despite his cherubic appearance, he had
been in court six or seven times before he came to attention of Mr. Williams. He had done all kinds of thieving, and the district truant officer had spent most of his time for a year trying to keep innocent looking Vincent in school. His depredations had cost the community approximately three thousand dollars when the agency took charge of him.

The tests showed interesting characteristics. Despite the belief that he was normal, it was found that his mental age was that of a ten-year-old boy. The other outstanding characteristic brought out was his mechanical aptitude, that of an average 18-year-old boy. Coupled with this was the fact that he was well developed physically.

He had been failing in school due to his mental handicap, and he was dissatisfied studying with smaller children in the fourth grade. As he could not do work in any higher grade, he had to remain there.

He was put to work in the machine shops of one of the Toledo high schools, despite the objection of the instructor. Following out the prediction, he became more efficient than any of the high school boys that did the same work. Along with this new outlet given him, the gang that he had been a member of was broken up, and more suitable social contacts were provided. He was happy at his new work and gave the authorities no more trouble. He has a good position in a Toledo factory at the present time.

A group of expert physicians, a psychologist, and a psychiatrist work with the agency. The Rotary Club of Toledo and the Board of Education provide the money needed for upkeep by a yearly appropriation. Last year they appropriated $8,000. This year it was increased to $11,000. This was necessary because of the increasing number of cases. The members of the Rotary Club also cooperate in providing homes and securing suitable jobs for the boys and girls in need of them.

Where Are the Delinquents?

By chance the three cases chosen as illustrations were all referred to the Juvenile Adjustment Agency by the Juvenile Court. Other Marthas, Freddys and Vinceents are referred from various organizations. These include the Board of Education, schools (truant officers, principals, teachers), social service agencies, parents of delinquents, and other agencies and individuals. However, more than half the cases in any representative period come from the court. The smallest number, of course, come from the parents, but this class of cases is growing larger and larger, which is a very good sign.

When a child is brought to the agency a complete physical examination is given at once. The child is interviewed, as is some member of his family, in order to get the child’s history, that of the family, and other facts which might help in judging the case. Then the child is given tests to determine his psychological ages. The ages as computed and set forth in the accompanying chart are somewhat tentative, but serve to give the agency’s general ideas which usually result in a correct diagnosis.

When all of the data have been collected and considered carefully, the agency makes a decision on the case. All of the delinquents are not disposed of by making recommendations, or by making changes in school or in employment. Many are sent to institutions, varying from the Boy’s Industrial School to the State Hospital for the Insane. There are about 15 available institutions in and around Toledo, and all of them receive children from the agency from time to time.
Mr. Williams made a study of 824 cases as to results. An improvement in adjustment was reported in 387 instances, adjustments were made in school for 47. Sixty were recommended to institutions, in nine cases no improvement was expected, due to the nature of the case, and 166 obtained non-standard permits. They assisted 210 delinquents in getting employment and the remaining cases, 145, were referred back to the social agencies from which they had come and required no following up.

When the children have been disposed of, each is carefully followed up. The members of the Toledo Rotary Club aid in this, working with the social workers who are connected with the agency.

The adjustment agency is enlarging its scope as fast as conditions will allow. More and more consideration is being given to preventative work, discovering the potential delinquent and helping him.

The field for such work is limitless, whether in schools or industry. There are specialists engaged in similar psychological work in many cities. As a rule, however, they are associated either with courts or schools. Industries are somewhat behind in this attack on behavior problems, although there are a few outstanding installations of such adjustment departments.

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Suggested Tests for General Machinist

Tests of working materials, tools, processes, appliances, reading technical literature, accuracy of observation, and mechanical ability have been devised for the general machinist. The tests are reproduced in an appendix to the article.
—Oliver C. Short in Public Personnel Studies for July, 1926.

Suggested Tests for Automobile Mechanic

A series of six tests is suggested for use in selecting automobile mechanics. A complete set of the tests is reproduced in an appendix.—Public Personnel Studies for August, 1926.

Psychology of Compensation Neurosis

Fear and resentment are two emotions of victims of accidents. The sympathy of friends and physicians complicate these feelings and may precipitate apparent physical symptoms. The physical condition of the patient oftentimes does not improve as it should because of an unconscious cupiditv looking toward compensation claims.

Legal delays cause the patient to continue these pseudo-symptoms of injury. An optimistic attitude on the part of those dealing with the patient is advised.
—A. Sweeney in Minnesota Medicine for August, 1925.

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Dumb-bells around a plant may be a source of trouble. How they can be made very useful to industry and society will be shown by Charles Bernstein in one of our issues. Dr. Bernstein is a pioneer in this activity and presents some amazing facts.