

ment, in order to get at the cause of the delinquency. This may be found to be a bad home, or a neglectful or indifferent home; the parents may be found to be over indulgent or over severe; or it may be the "movies" or bad companions or bad literature; or it may be a combination of these and other things. But whatever the cause, unless we can arrive at a correct diagnosis, we cannot expect or even hope to succeed.

Even an apparently good home may not be a good home in its relation to the child in question. An American probation officer, some time ago, gave a classification of homes which though not apparently bad in the ordinary sense, were not good homes for the children concerned. It was as follows:

1. The Puritanical, I'd-rather-see-my-boy-dead-than-with-a-card-in-his-hand family, that drives even a good child, who is human, to desperation and calls intolerance religion.

2. The unduly trustful kind that "knows there is nothing the matter with their child" and refuses to acknowledge the facts.

3. The callous, *laissez faire* family, that just leaves the door open at night for their boy to come in as he pleases and seems to think that it can wash its hands of all responsibility.

4. The unduly grown up family which has forgotten it was ever young and considers a boy when he improvises a sleeping tent of quilts in the back yard and digs for buried treasure under the hen house as a subject for either the insane asylum or the lock-up; and which regards the trivial immoralities of children as evidence of a dark, degenerate viciousness.

5. The fond and foolish family that "babies" a boy until he flies to the opposite extreme and plays the "dead game sport" at every chance in, as he thinks, the necessary assertion to his fellows of his virility.

6. The (not so rare) hysterical kind, always in an uproar, exaggerat-

ing every petty fault a child has and living in perpetual excitement that wrecks self-control.

7. Last, but certainly not least, the belligerent "hands-off-my-kid" family whose child is a terror to the neighbourhood because supported at home.

A most important thing to determine is, what are the child's moral standards? This is a branch of investigation that is most frequently overlooked. The attitude of the average official, even a Juvenile Court official, towards a delinquent boy is to assume that he knew perfectly well what was right and that he simply did not do what he knew he ought to do. But this is an assumption which is in many cases quite unwarranted. It is quite wrong to attribute the psychology of an adult official to the boy. No doubt in most cases the answers to formal questions would disclose a knowledge of conventional moral standards, but it by no means follows that his answers represent what the boy really thinks. We can never discover the true thoughts of a boy by asking him a few set questions. It is only by getting him to talk freely and without restraint, that one can learn the defects of his moral character, a thorough knowledge of which is a prerequisite to remedying those defects. To give one example, if a boy has the idea, gathered perhaps from the dime novel or the "movies" that burglary is manly and heroic, and that breaking into a shop is a thrilling adventure, obviously no progress can be made with him until that moral standard has been entirely changed.

Having ascertained the cause of the delinquency, equally important is the treatment prescribed and carried out. This may be commitment to an industrial school or other institution, but in the great majority of cases it will be release on probation, in charge of a probation officer. The probation officer, after careful study of the case, should decide on a definite plan of action for the elimination of the evil.