

Another cause of much of our crime (and remember we are viewing this only as a psychological problem), is the wide distribution of intoxicants. A motor car, several young men, and a flask of liquor, make a most dangerous triple alliance. The car may have been stolen for the occasion. This is the first "thriller." The liquor may have been obtained illegally from a bootlegger. This is a second "thriller". And the party may be going to a distant point to have "a good time". This is a third "thriller". Here we have amply psychology to explain much crime. Under such conditions, the young mind is almost certain to degenerate, and lose its grip on self-control and respect for law and order.

But there is another factor in the production of our recent wave of crime. The war has had its evil effects in more places than the battlefield. Many young persons growing up during the years of the war had their sense of the sacredness of life destroyed, and their appreciation of property rights undermined. These boys read daily the lists of the killed and wounded, containing often the names of persons well known to them; and their "blood was fired." They conceived the idea that they would like to kill some enemy in retaliation. In many cases the fathers and elder brothers of these boys were at the front, and they grew up lacking the restraining influence of the older and more stable minds.

But as a problem in psychology a good deal of harm has been done by the extreme socialist writer and speaker. His views have unhinged the minds of many regarding property rights, and relations that should exist between the several classes in the state. It has become all too common to entertain the opinion that if one person has not and needs, he has the right to go and take from him who has. This sort of "help-yourself" theory has arisen to a very considerable extent from the teachings of the social iconoclast. This is all wrong, but it is with us, and, as a mind problem, must be studied.

There is another cause for crime that has attracted too little attention. There is a vast amount of inflaming "literature." Running all through our papers and magazines one finds the most exciting stories, relating gruesome tales of murder, robbery, and the fine work of the detective in these cases. The effect on masses of people of such is very deplorable. One may say that it is not the duty of government to interfere in such matters, and that people must take their chance and pull through as best they can. We know there is such a condition as individual mental distortion, but there is also such a thing as community mental distortion, and this is much more serious than the individual type. "The psychology of the Crowd," was the title of a book written by an eminent French Savant many years ago.