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Girls on Parole

by

Katharine Sullivan



HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY BOSTON

The Riverside Press Cambridge

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Foreword

AS A MEMBER of the Massachusetts Parole Board charged with the releasing and supervising of female offenders, I have optimistically attended local, state, regional, and national conferences where many able individuals presented papers on the various aspects of social work and its relation to crime.

Each time I have come away with a feeling of futility. Medical science and psychiatry have made valuable contributions to certain aspects of the work after the failure has taken place—but no one individual has shed the smallest light on the causes of crime.

I certainly cannot either, but I have a firm conviction that many crimes, probably as many as seventy-five per cent of all those committed by women, could be avoided if precautionary steps were taken in time.

I have written this book in an effort to point out to the public the general background which festers into criminal behavior. I have tried to give a factual picture as I have seen it of the Girls on Parole. Who are they? Where do they come from? What is done for them and what is not done?

I have tried to portray with accuracy a true picture of social failures as they exist today. I have written from memory. The situations, circumstances, and episodes are either my own personal experiences or have been told to me by our agents through the years. The names are all fictitious and some of the cases are composite for obvious reasons.

K. S.

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Girls on Parole

A DECLARATION OF THE PRINCIPLES OF PAROLE

We, THE DELEGATES TO THE NATIONAL PAROLE CONFERENCE, ASSEMBLED AT THE REQUEST OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND REPRESENTING THE GOVERNORS OF THE SEVERAL STATES, THE JUDICIARY, FEDERAL, STATE, AND MUNICIPAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS, THE CHURCH, THE COMMUNITY, AND THE VARIOUS PENAL AND CORRECTIONAL SYSTEMS IN THE UNITED STATES,

Recognizing that

Practically all imprisoned offenders are by operation of law ultimately released, and that

Parole, when properly administered and carefully distinguished from clemency, protects the public by maintaining control over offenders after they leave prison, do declare and affirm that

For Parole Fully To Achieve Its Purpose

I The paroling authority should be impartial, nonpolitical, professionally competent, and able to give the time necessary for full consideration of each case;

II The sentencing and parole laws should endow the paroling authority with broad discretion in determining the time and conditions of release;

III The paroling authority should have complete and reliable information concerning the prisoner, his background, and the situation which will confront him on his release;

IV The parole program of treatment and training should be an integral part of a system of criminal justice;

V The period of imprisonment should be used to prepare the individual vocationally, physically, mentally, and spiritually for return to society;

VI The community through its social agencies, public and private, and in cooperation with the parole service should accept the responsibility for

improving home and neighborhood conditions in preparation for the prisoner's release;

VII The paroled offender should be carefully supervised and promptly reimprisoned or otherwise disciplined if he does not demonstrate capacity and willingness to fulfill the obligations of a law-abiding citizen;

VIII The supervision of the paroled offender should be exercised by qualified persons trained and experienced in the task of guiding, social readjustment;

IX The State should provide adequate financial support for a parole system, including sufficient personnel selected and retained in office upon the basis of merit;

X The public should recognize the necessity of giving the paroled offender a fair opportunity to earn an honest living and maintain self-respect to the end that he may be truly rehabilitated and the public adequately protected.

Revised April 14, 1935.



Frank Murphy
Attorney General of the United States
Chairman, The National Parole Conference.

BELOW ARE the conditions which a person who is released on parole in Massachusetts must faithfully observe.

1. (S)He shall live and remain at liberty without violating the law.
2. (S)He shall be honorable in all respects, work diligently at a lawful occupation and support his (her) dependents, if any, to the best of his (her) ability.
3. (S)He shall abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors and narcotics of all kinds and shall not frequent places where they are dispensed. (S)He shall receive permission from his (her) Parole Officer before working in a place where liquor is sold.
4. (S)He shall not associate with persons of questionable character, nor with anyone on parole nor with any person having a criminal record.
5. (S)He shall not leave the State of Massachusetts without permission of the Parole Board.
6. (S)He shall not leave his (her) employment nor change his (her) place of residence without the permission of the Parole Board.
7. (S)He shall make a full and truthful report to the Parole Board, 134 State House, Boston, Mass., once each week for the first month, and thereafter once each month until the expiration of his (her) sentence.
8. (S)He shall submit to medical treatment if ordered to do so by the Parole Board.
9. (S)He shall not marry without the permission of the Parole Board nor without informing his (her) intended partner of his (her) Parole Status.
10. (S)He shall not live with any person of the opposite sex to whom he (she) is not lawfully married.
11. (S)He shall not make application for a license to hunt or to drive a motor vehicle without the permission of the Parole Board.
12. (S)He shall not correspond with inmates of the State Prison, State Prison Colony, Reformatory For Women, Massachusetts Reformatory or the Defective Delinquent Department without the permission of the Parole Board.

Other conditions may be added to the above and the parolee's own permit should be carefully read to find this out.

Men and women on parole when making their reports must be sure to give the full address of their place of residence and the name and address of their place of employment and must answer all questions on their report forms. These addresses and answers must appear in every report.

I

"I Got the Board!"

I ARRIVED a few minutes ahead of time at the Framingham Reformatory for Women on the morning of our regular monthly Board day, and since neither of my colleagues had appeared, I was in the empty locked Parole Board Room alone. As I waited in the warm sun by the window, I looked out at the little dome-shaped conservatory topped by its bronze-quail weather vane. I could see the small scarlet blooms beginning to appear on the Crown of Thorns, now that the spring sun was becoming stronger, and my mind was preoccupied by the appropriateness of this plant's growing here at the prison. I was distracted by the sound of a heavy key being inserted into the lock of the inside door. The tumblers in the lock fell in rhythmic sequence, and the door opened. The Deputy-Superintendent entered and with a pleasant "Good morning," shut the door, reinserted her key, and locked the door again.

The big bare room was ready for the Board meeting. The huge walnut executive table, with its black imitation-leather top, typical of all New England county public buildings of the post-Civil War era, was in the center of the room. On it was an ink bottle, blotter, paper pad and a Woolworth ash tray neatly set for each Board member. Three golden-oak, brutally hard chairs were on one side of the table for the Board. On the other side was a chair for the inmate about to be interviewed, and another for the representative of the institution. A shiny silver water pitcher and four crystal glasses were on a tray on the beige marble mantelpiece that framed the iron Franklin stove. Looking down from the wall was a

large portrait of Abraham Lincoln, the Great Emancipator, to complete the setting.

The Deputy explained to me that of the twenty-nine girls we had intended to see that day only twenty-six would be present. After the list of girls to be considered at this meeting had been submitted to the Board, two girls had been transferred to mental health hospitals for observation and one, Myra, was in a nearby hospital. She was the little eighteen-year-old girl, who had jumped out of the courthouse window six months before, breaking her spine. Myra was transferred only last night to the Union Hospital, where, in spite of her crippling injuries, she had given birth normally to a fine little baby girl.

Just then a key was inserted in the hall door, again the tumblers in the lock fell, and the door opened. In came the other Board members. The Chairman plumped the two heavy bags, holding the official case records of the girls we were to see, onto a chair by the table. In less than five minutes greetings had been exchanged, cases placed in proper sequence before the Chairman at the table, and each Board member had received a huge worksheet. The meeting was in order after the usual question from the Chairman, "Are we ready?"

Receiving affirmative nods, he continued. "Helene S—— is the first girl we are to see today. Has any one a question about her?"

As neither the institution nor a Board member put forth any question, the Chairman continued to address his remarks to the Deputy. "Please show Helene in."

The Deputy rose and put her key into the huge heavy door. She opened it and asked Helene, who was waiting in the long bare institution corridor to come in. Helene stepped in and the Deputy relocked the door.

"Are you Helene S——?" asked the Chairman.

"Yes," replied the dark-eyed buxom girl of twenty-one.

"This is the Parole Board, Mrs. McHugh on my left, Miss

Sullivan on my right — my name is Bradlee. Won't you sit down, please."

Breathless with excitement, flushed with nervousness, her hair sparkling clean, Helene walked over to the chair which the Chairman had indicated. She sat down trembling noticeably — and as rigid as a ramrod.

"Sit back and relax, Helene — you are among friends. Is there anything you would like to tell us today?" asked the Chairman.

Helene remained just as rigid as she had for the past minute, sitting on the edge of the chair, her forearms on the Board table and her hands clasped tightly, one over the other. Then she replied, between gasps, "Yes, I — know — I — have learned — my lesson!" Having delivered that brief condensation of her life's history, she proceeded to sit back, relax, and breathe normally.

To Helene, as to all other inmates, the Board spelled freedom. Every inmate counts and recounts time — "doing time" — time, the very commonest yet most important topic in prison life. Every inmate knows the year, the month, the week, the day, the hour, even the minute when she will be free — when the sentence "will be lifted" and she will be once more "on her own."

The end of her sentence, however, was a long, long way off, and the privilege of doing time "on the street" was the most important thing in the world to her that day. Probably neither she, nor any of the other "girls" to be seen at this meeting, had slept well for the last few nights. We understand their excitement and have learned to expect it as part of the interview. But Helene's is a fairly typical case and illustrates how the parole system operates.

She had been arrested only twice before and was serving her first commitment. The court had sentenced her for two years for "idle and disorderly conduct." Only a misdemeanor to be sure, and a lay person might think that she was not

really guilty of anything. But the members of the Board had read her court record, knew the stories of the various officers involved at each of her three arrests, and had considered the detailed account of the probation officer's futile efforts to guide Helene. After her husband went overseas in the service, Helene hung around cafés and the streets outside them nearly every night, drinking up her allotment money while her baby lay at home in the care of a nine-year-old sitter. In spite of repeated warnings given her by the court and the attempts of the probation officers to help her, Helene had failed to keep a job, simply because she was too weary from her night life to get up in the morning. The Board not only reads the official record, but a complete summary of each girl's history which the institution's casework department provides for us to study in detail before the interviews. From this we learned that even though Helene had been going to have an illegitimate child and had had active syphilis when the judge finally committed her, the disease was now controlled and her new baby was well and healthy.

When Helene's husband returned from overseas he had gone to the institution to see her. At first he was highly resentful and bitter about the situation, but a few days later, when he came before the Board at the State House to plead for her release, it was quite another story. With a jaunty wave of his left hand, he indicated he wished to resume family responsibility and would accept Helene and her new baby. "After all, I haven't been an angel myself always," he observed.

At Helene's regular hearing that day, after she had served eleven months, the Board frankly discussed the factors which led to her moral collapse, and agreed that she was strong enough to *try* not to repeat the same mistakes. We voted to permit Helene to "go outside" and finish her sentence under supervision. The Chairman told her our decision, and we recorded our individual votes on the worksheets as the

Deputy put her key once more into the big door.

Helene rose, thanked us with dignity, and walked back through the open door. But before it had swung closed, we could hear her high gay voice ring out to the four corners of the institution, "I got the Board!"

The number of cases to come before the regular monthly hearings of the Board varies just as the tides of arrests vary. Weather, war conditions, or civil cleanup campaigns brought about by local, state, or even national scandals cause a great difference in the number of women in custody. The Board's case load is about a year late in reflecting these conditions. A Board day generally includes between twenty-five and forty interviews.

Among those we see are some inmates for whom it is their regular hearing; some are seen at the request of the superintendent as an aid in the management of the institution; some are given early consideration for special reasons; some are those who received an Action Pending vote at a previous Board meeting; all who have been seen previously and given a definite postponement are seen again; and all those who are being seen on revocation of parole. The length of time varies with the particular need of the individual, and many of the cases have received so much previous attention that the interview is merely a brief formality.

With trained, patient, compassionate Board members, release day is an interesting and absorbing experience. Time never drags. It is an endless kaleidoscope of human emotion. Each individual inmate is trying to be at her best. She's selling herself to us, and the price she asks is her freedom. The Board in turn (as a symbol of the State) is trying to sell confidence and trust to individuals who have never known its meaning before. The importance of a properly conducted parole hearing cannot be overstressed. To the inmate Board day is all important because it means freedom, and to the

Board it is one of the important steps designed to help prisoners make an acceptable adjustment in society.

One of the most vivid Board days I remember occurred the first year of my service. It was another case at the Framingham Reformatory for Women. The door of the Board Room swung open and in stepped a middle-aged inmate, short, plump and visibly moved by the experience of facing the Board. She was immaculate in her neatly ironed but very faded house dress (most women wear their own clothes, and indeed we get diversified style shows) as she nervously took her seat across the long table from my two colleagues and me.

Jane had been in prison for many years for assaulting and attempting to kill a neighbor with a dangerous weapon. Fortunately for Jane (and for the neighbor too!) the police arrived in time to keep her from facing a murder charge. However, she received a long sentence.

Jane had been dreaming of this moment in her room many times during the intervening years as her family grew up without her. Now her children were all married, with homes of their own, and her husband was dead. Jane had been an excellent prisoner, always ready and willing to co-operate with reformatory officials. She told the Board about her work in prison, of her assurance of a home and job on the outside. Yes, she had learned her lesson. She was anxious to be a good citizen.

The Board members were impressed with her attitude and the favorable evidence in her records. Certainly she appeared to be a good parole risk. As she was rising to leave the meeting and we were about to give Jane a date — that is, a definite time for her release — I asked her one last question: "I am sure you are sorry for what you did to your old neighbor, Jane?"

The answer came without hesitation. "No, I'm not; and what's more I'd gladly do it all over again."

It goes without saying that the Board couldn't possibly

grant parole to a prisoner who, after many years, was still ready to repeat her offense. We told Jane why we could not release her, and we asked the superintendent to have Jane see the psychiatrist. We decided to delay our final decision on her case until after we saw his recommendation.

Since in proper parole-release procedure the safety of society supersedes the interests of the individual, a situation of this type is one of the most puzzling that confronts a board. Any number of reasons could have caused Jane's violent remark — everything from nervousness and stage fright to downright viciousness. However, a month later, when we saw her again at the next meeting, the psychiatrist reported that he did not believe that Jane was ready for release, and he suggested that she would benefit by further study and treatment; so the Board voted to postpone its decision until the psychiatrist decided that she could face the responsibilities of parole.

That time came eight months later when we saw Jane again, a much improved woman. Without hesitation we voted to parole her, and she went to live with a married daughter who understood her mother's problems. Today Jane is living quietly in the city, where she has many good friends and new neighbors who enjoy her companionship and help make her a happy and responsible citizen.

I have outlined Jane's case because it points up problems that an efficient and successful parole system must surmount. We are learning that the prisoner's behavior and institutional record may not be a true indication of her readiness for parole. Despite all we can discover from a prisoner's records and the all-important interview with the Board, the parolee's sincerity and her respect for moral and ethical standards are the factors that will determine her success. These intangibles are difficult to recognize. [A prisoner must be paroled at the right psychological moment and to keep her too long in prison is just as serious as releasing her too soon.]

As the typical parole interview progresses, one member

(we take turns) starts the conversation by bringing out whatever phase of the case may not be clear to the Board. Perhaps while she is in prison an inmate decides that she wishes to be separated permanently from her husband. Perhaps she sees that her delinquency all dates from the time she went to live with him, though on any marital situation we urge parolees to make their own decisions. We allow her to "talk out" any such matters in as much detail as she wishes, and we encourage her to discuss her plans for her parole. We help her set up safeguards to preserve her new and better way of life. Once a girl has made a plan, her parole agent will give her useful advice, will often help her carry out any necessary legal steps, and even go with her to the Legal Aid Society, Public Welfare offices, or to any court appearances.

A girl presented for release who may have three babies under five years of age and may be contemplating having to make two or three trips to the city for filing papers or going to court probably would not be able to plan and complete such complex missions herself. The Board reassures her that her agent will help her by making appointments and arrangements for some relative to take the older children, and then by driving the girl herself and her youngest baby to the city. The agent will pilot her through procedures that might otherwise overpower such a girl. Eventually the parolee will realize that the agent is her friend, in many cases the only one she has.

At a parole hearing, in appropriate cases, the Board may discuss with a girl whether she should join Alcoholics Anonymous or go to a psychiatric clinic, and the girl's attitude toward authority and reasonable helpful influences like these is very often the key to what her adjustment will be on the outside.

All the girls appear nervous at first, but after a few minutes we can usually establish an informal and cordial relationship with them. This is a terribly important step in helping us

plan for the girl's future. If we have to find employment for a girl, as we do for the over fifty per cent who have no family or home to return to, her attitude toward us will be a sign of how she will treat her agent and future employer.

An interesting fact about Board days is that the climate of the interviews is dictated by atmospheric conditions. When there is intense heat, humidity, and threatening thunderstorms, we get many tears and breakdowns, although even on those days far more prisoners shed tears of joy than of sorrow. On a clear cold day the parole interviews usually go along without incident on a much calmer emotional level.

At times we meet tragic girls who want to tell us things they have kept hidden within them for years. Natalie, a nineteen-year old girl serving a sentence for idle and disorderly conduct, was one of these. She wished more than anything in life to be able to come out and find her baby. She told us how she had come from a broken home and how she had lived sometimes with a grandparent, sometimes with her mother, or sometimes with an aunt.

When she was fourteen years old she had had a baby girl. Her confinement had been taken care of by the baby's paternal grandmother and, she told us, there had been no doctor in attendance. The baby's birth had not been registered, and she had allowed the boy's mother to give the baby away. She claimed, between sobs, that she had never told anyone else of her tragedy, and that she could bear it no longer. Strange that the secret should come out years later at a Parole Board hearing!

After the birth of her baby girl Natalie had returned to live with her own grandmother. Soon after that the baby's father and his entire family had moved to another city and she lost track of them. Search as she might, she told us, she had never been able to locate them or to find a clue as to her baby's whereabouts.

At this hearing we decided not to vote a release for Natalie until we could check her story. I doubt if anyone will ever know whether that story is true or not, for our investigation proved nothing. The institution doctor who examined her said the story could be true, but his findings were not conclusive. A search in the town where she claimed to have lived for one eventful week of her life revealed that a family of that name had lived there for a few months but had moved, leaving no address. Although one of our field agents contacted every reliable source, the police, town clerk, doctors, school officials, and neighbors, she could find no clues leading to them. The question is still much mooted by our Board. Is it true? If so, where is the baby? Did she or someone else kill it? If it is not true, Natalie is a pathological liar and she should be faced with the truth in an effort to help in her future adjustment.

The story certainly could be true, for even though the laws are explicit and authorities are diligent about recording births, we frequently meet a girl whose history is a blank. It is one of the most tragic fates that can come to any person. How often we hear it: "I'm nobody. I'm just a nobody." Or, "Nobody really cares, I've been in institutions all my life — never even had a sister." Whoever abandoned these girls when they were babies was sowing the seeds for a ripe harvest of delinquents in years to come, and unfortunately it still happens.

But there is humor too at Board hearings. I remember the day when we all got such a surprise that we were left sitting there with our mouths open in amazement. On this particular day, when the officer unlocked the door and asked Mehitable to come in, instead of approaching with quiet dignity like all the other inmates, she made a whirlwind entrance, bounding into the room like a deer in the forest. She came to a sudden stop about three feet inside of the door, which the officer was still holding open, and stood there just long enough for

us to see that she had her hair tied up in a kerchief and that she held a big Bible in her hands with one finger marking the place where she was reading. She did not give the Chairman even a chance to greet her or ask her name, but took complete command of the entire situation by giving us all a hearty wave of her arm and stating with gay *esprit*, "I'll finish my sentence out." With that, she turned on her heel and popped out of the Board room as fast as she had entered, giving herself one full year more of life in prison.

No one of the Board members will ever forget the dumfounded expression on the face of the superintendent who had recommended Mehitable as ready for release. We all had a hearty laugh, but we concluded seriously that she would have been a very poor risk on parole. We learned that she spent every waking minute reading her Bible and we were quite sure we would not have been able to find an employer who would have been willing to pay Mehitable while she continued her religious study.

From these few cases it is easy to see that the hearing at which we interview inmates who are eligible for parole is one of the most important steps in parole procedure. The relationship established at the initial interview is really the basic step toward success or failure on parole.

Offenders in the Community

J. EDGAR HOOVER tells us that ninety-five per cent of all persons sentenced to prison return to the community sooner or later. Only five per cent remain there to die or are permanently lost after they escape. This fact stays clearly before us always during our pre-parole deliberations, especially when we are working with a serious offender. The theory of parole is that it is far better to bring out such an offender under supervision than it is to allow the girl to go her full time in prison and then slip out absolutely unnoticed, embittered by her experiences, corrupted by her fellow prisoners, and a far worse criminal than when she went in. If she comes out on parole, however, the local law enforcement officials will know where she is and where she will have to remain. She will be working at an approved job and living in approved lodgings.

Of the well over 3500 women criminals I have known and worked with, only a very few have committed a felony while on parole and actually under supervision. Some commit new crimes but generally only after they have violated the conditions of their parole, and the Board has issued a warrant for their return. When a girl absconds for a protracted period, or seriously violates her parole, the Board issues a warrant for her arrest. She is then in the same classification as any other "Wanted Criminal." The police will pick her up and she will be returned by an agent to the institution from which she was released.

At the next meeting of the Board, after investigating the police report, we will let the girl tell her story and will then

determine how long she must serve. No set rule is possible, and each case requires individual treatment and an individual solution.

Analysis shows that the most common violation is "absconding," and that it invariably happens in the first three months after release, usually after about six weeks. There are many reasons for a girl to leave her job and her home and to disappear, but they can all be traced to instability. Drunkenness, pregnancy, return to drugs, indiscreet conduct (often the return to a homosexual partner), prostitution, failure to pay a child's board, and petty larceny are a few of these reasons.

But even though the agent can find no clues leading to a girl who has disappeared, the Board members, who know both the girl and her family, often feel that the girl may turn up and so suggest waiting a week before issuing the warrant. Repeatedly, after a warrant has been issued, a girl will come to the office and tell a truthful story, substantiated by investigation. The Board recognizes the girl's desire to co-operate and gives her another chance—accompanied by a serious warning. Many of our most surprising successes have come after a girl has gone on a drinking spree and then realized her folly. She either telephones or comes in and, during a long interview, we explain, change, or adjust many facets of her plan. That way, she may set off again on an even keel for a sound, sensible life, whereas revoking her parole would have only made her bitter and resulted in her ultimate failure.

But we do not coddle the parolees. We insist that they become independent and self-sufficient. By keeping a close watch on their jobs and on their home life, we make sure that they hold to a plan. At the first sign of weakness, we call them in for a frank talk, and many times this is enough to set them straight. The Board and its agents can help, but it is usually friends and relatives who keep a parolee on the road to success.

(Educating the public to the importance of parole is a slow process.) The next time you read a newspaper headline about a parolee's being arrested for a new crime, please remember that that man or woman is an exception. Our success stories are living quietly in your community. Perhaps that nice-looking man or woman on the trolley is a former parolee. Our successes want it that way. They want to be accepted as good citizens in the community. It has been a long road back to respectability for some, but they are proud of their achievement.

(Parole is not an exact science. It never will be, for when the human mind, heart, and personality are involved there always will be as many situations as there are individuals. Furthermore, parole procedures are so new that little or no material on them has been accumulated or evaluated.) In the face of this lack of information, we have tried to set up our own records as guideposts for ourselves and source material for future researchers. From them we have produced a few facts that seem reliable enough to use in trying to predict a girl's chances for a successful parole. An inmate who has had five previous arrests in recent years is a poor risk, and one who has served three previous commitments is even poorer. Yet, as the Board sits discussing a case — after each member has read all the material available on that particular girl and talked with any relatives, friends, or persons who have made their interest known by letter, phone, or personal visit to our office — certain hopeful factors may appear which the impersonal factual record did not show. Unfortunately, we know too that there are some criminals who are so slick, so smooth, and so convincing that, though their records may look encouraging, ten parole officers and two Board members working three shifts couldn't keep a sharp enough watch on them to make sure they weren't breaking the law. Balancing the probabilities and the special elements in each case challenges all parole personnel to stay on their toes. There is no time to get rusty in our world.

The basic concept of parole is that the institutional program has reformed the individual and prepared her well enough for the community so that she will not want to live a life similar to the one that caused her arrest. The statute is most explicit in describing the Board's duties and purposes. Section 130 of Chapter 124 of the General Laws spells out in detail the reasons for and the limits on granting parole permits. "No prisoner shall be granted a parole permit merely as a reward for good conduct or satisfactory and diligent performance of the duties assigned in prison, but only if the Board having jurisdiction is of the opinion that there is *reasonable probability*, that if such a prisoner is released, he will live and remain at liberty without violating the law, and that his release is not incompatible with the welfare of society."

Therefore the Board's prime responsibility is deciding when there is "reasonable probability" that society will be protected. It is a serious responsibility, and a reliable board will use every safeguard at its command before coming to a decision.

Since parole is an agreement worked out between the inmate and the releasing authority as the agent for the State, the inmate signs and carries with her on her release permit a copy of the parole rules that govern her conduct and serve as a useful device in guarding the safety of the community. A technical violation of those rules is sufficient reason for us to revoke a parole and return an offender to prison, though, of course, we often do not do so.

Thus the powers of the Board are administrative as well as quasi-judicial in nature, and the responsibility is heavy. A timorous or sentimental person should never enter the parole field, for the work requires long hours of rugged contacts as well as endless deliberation and study. An emotional person should not enter this work, either, because he cannot be objective in approach and therefore cannot do justice to the inmate, to society, or to the job itself.

One of the most important safeguards set up by the statute

(Section 134) is that the Board may not release any prisoner, even in a grave emergency, without interviewing her first. Usually, as we have seen, that interview takes place at our regular hearings, and *always*, every Board member is familiar with all the material on each girl before the interview. We never prejudge a case, because the facts on paper, no matter how complete, are only a background for the personal contact, which is the decisive factor in our judgments. The Legislature must have had this in mind when it framed the statute, and, as this brief review shows, the law governs all the major aspects of our procedure and the basic standards for our decisions.

During the years I have been a public servant, I have always been surprised at how relatively few people realize that all public services are controlled completely by laws — laws made by their own representatives. How sad, and sometimes infuriating, it is to see a clipping announcing that some supposedly public-spirited group has passed a resolution condemning us for some act or omission which the group doesn't like, when the solution which it suggests would be against the law. Clippings like this keep coming into the office, but the members of those groups never do. Too many people, like them, find it much easier to criticize from a distance without learning the facts than to try to understand the problem of parole as a whole and thus help both themselves and the entire community.

Probably the greatest confusion that besets the lay person comes from the similarity of the words "probation," and "parole," and "pardon," and the fact that they are all parts of the penal system. A girl becomes a probationer after a court has found her guilty of a crime and a judge has pronounced her sentence and then suspended it. Before he does so, he considers the criminal's age, health, home environment, previous school and court record, the degree of her guilt, and all the other factors that indicate how dangerous to society

the criminal may be and how much of a possibility there is of integrating her into the community. He discusses these factors with his probation staff before making his final decision, and, if the case has hopeful elements, he puts the girl on probation. That means that she may live in the community under clearly outlined conditions. For as long as her suspended sentence lasts, she must report regularly to her probation officer. If she violates the conditions of her probation, the court may at any time send her to prison to serve her entire suspended sentence. 'Probation is administered by county governments.)

While the word "parole" suggests a word-of-honor agreement,) it has in practice taken on a much broader meaning. It is the release of an individual from a penal or correctional institution after she has served part of her sentence. It is not an act of leniency or clemency; it in no way involves forgiveness of the crime; it is not a reward for good conduct in an institution. It is an administrative expedient to assist a prisoner who has been closely confined in an institution in making her adjustment to normal life in the community, to which she will eventually return anyway. (Parole is administered by the State.)

One thing about these words is that though the general public may confuse them, the average lawbreaker, for whom parole and probation are two of the most common words in the language, never does.

(Pardon is the extending of executive clemency by the Governor, with the consent of the Council.) It is a power given him under the constitution and he may either entirely wipe away a sentence or reduce it, or grant a temporary reprieve, as in the case of a person condemned to death. The Governor, with the consent of the Council, may also release a prisoner on parole conditions. (The Massachusetts Parole Board also serves as the Advisory Board of Pardons.)

In this book we will be chiefly interested in parole and the

problems it presents, but one cannot deal with parole as an isolated branch of social work any more than one can speak authoritatively on any other isolated phase of social service. The forces of heredity and environment so influence a person's behavior that, even in the case of one individual, the starting point and the stopping point of these forces are never clearly defined. In dealing with parole, we do know we have one factor common to almost all prisoners who are presented for release. That is a history of an extended period of instability, during which forces in the community may have touched their lives and tried to help them without sufficient success.

(But parole differs from the work of private social agencies and from police preventive work in that all of our parolees in the community are there as a privilege granted under the law. The court sentence is "still running," and the Parole Board has the power to issue a warrant to return an offender to prison at any time before her sentence expires, if it deems such action necessary for the protection of society or the good of the individual herself.)

In attempting to carry out the duties and obligations of the total parole law, our contacts are as varied and numerous as are the strata of society. No race, religion, or economic group is without its failures, and in attempting to return them to the community, the Board, or its agents, must find a niche for each individual somewhere. We operate on the principle that somewhere there is a way of living in which each person can function successfully, and finding it is the first objective of every plan we try to help a girl develop.

There is no norm in our ambitions for a girl. Some exceed our anticipations, others fall far below. Our objective is to establish each girl on a plan of living that she can maintain on her own. Beatrice shows how far we may have to search to find that niche and, even more, shows the importance of

our personal contacts with the girls. She was born on a farm in Maine forty-two years before she came to us, and the outstanding feature of her history was her IQ of 141. We have had quite a few women of high intelligence, but rarely any who scored that high. Her criminal history was very short, developing directly from alcoholism. She had been arrested twice for drunkenness and was serving a five-year sentence for adultery (which now carries a two-year sentence in Massachusetts). There were very few pertinent facts in her case history and long spaces of time which Beatrice could not or would not account for. The Social Service Index reported that she gave birth to a female child when she was nineteen and that when she was twenty-five she married a man whom no one had ever seen or heard from.

Her mother, in a bleak fishing village in Maine, was most co-operative about taking our letter to the minister to answer when we first got in touch with her. Apparently there would be no work for her there, and the minister enclosed an understanding letter telling us that liquor had long been and still was a problem in that family; and that the mother had nothing constructive to offer Beatrice.

Married relatives in the vicinity of Boston who understood "Bea" would give her bail, clothes, or Christmas dinner, but had tired of having her under their roofs twenty-five years ago. As far as we could make out she was on her own to plan as she willed. She denied that she had ever worked since her high school days and claimed that she was too much of a lady to do any of the routine chores at the institution. Instead she made stuffed toys — an interesting hobby but no way to earn a living, especially for someone who has no home.

As I go over a case history to prepare for an interview I never fail to build up a picture of an individual, and I admit that I was agreeably surprised the day Beatrice walked in to the Board. I had imagined her as much harder, more sophisticated than the nice Bea we met!

She was a tall, dignified, good-looking person with absolutely no guile or unusual resistance. I liked her at once. She quite took over the meeting and put the Board at ease. In the three and a half or four years we worked with Bea, she was always delightful, but, for the record, we never put in more work hours and more thinking time than we did with her. At the end we had the same pleasant relationship with her and we scored her parole a success.

After talking generally to her that day at the Board meeting, we began suggesting jobs. She brushed aside any offers of the type of employment we can offer unskilled workers starting in the community. Would she take a job in a rest home? No! She "didn't like sick people." "Probably then, Beatrice, domestic placement for the first three months until you get established enough to earn some money for clothes and can look for your own employment?" No, she had "never liked housework and certainly wasn't going to do it now for someone else." We frequently get that comment from individuals with superior mentality, and a year and a half in prison (with all living cared for by the State) doesn't serve to make people face life in a realistic way.

That day we finally concluded our very pleasant interview with Bea by telling her we voted her a technical release, which meant that until she found a workable plan for herself she could remain inside and stuff toys! We knew it wouldn't take her very long to think up something, and within a week we received a visit from her minister. Between them they had developed an elaborate plan for her. A certain philanthropic institution of her religion would accept her on a two-week trial for her room and board while she filled in for the various staff members on their days off. Since this institution was in Boston she could use her spare time to find herself a job. These plans were checked and Bea was released.

The first week her agent offered to take her to several places where day work was available, but no, she would find her own. Before the second week was over we got a call from the

institution asking us to come and get her. "No. She was not drunk. Just didn't get up and hadn't done a single day's work." The officers at the philanthropic institute felt they had been misguided in their offer. We persuaded them to keep her over the week end because there was no place where we could lodge a woman without paying for her. If she did not improve over the week end, we suggested they send her to the State House on Monday.

By eleven, Monday, after storing all her worldly possessions in a locked subway box, Bea arrived, looking fine but full of complaints about being rundown and needing a rest. Of course we are well used to this story. All malingerers start right in on their song of woe when faced with new situations. Just to be on the safe side, and to know better how to cope with Bea in the long years ahead, we suggested a medical checkup, which she gladly agreed to, as it took up one more day for her. When the report showed her to be in fine condition, she broke down and accepted a job at a beach resort caring for three children for the month of August. Labor Day she returned to Boston, as usual, "full of ill health" but looking fitter than ever in a complete outfit of clothes her employer had given her. By now she had convinced her relatives, with her winning personality, that she was a changed woman. They invited her back to stay a few days here and a week there, doing housework and cleaning for them. This sounded excellent, and until about the fifteenth of January, Beatrice shuttled back and forth between her married sisters. We knew it was not going well because of the complaints heaped on the agent's head and the phone calls to the office. They all told the same story: she never did any work. She was not drinking, associating with men, or keeping unreasonable hours, and there was not one single technical parole violation. She just didn't seem to be wanted. Why? Because she wouldn't even get out of bed. We knew now that we were not making any progress and that we had come to the end of our resources. Before Bea started to slip radically we

had to develop a new plan. We decided to hold a staff conference with her agent, the supervisor of the Women's Division, and the women Board members. In re-evaluating Bea with the knowledge we had gained about her in the community, exposed to normal living conditions for several months, we decided we would have to retrace our steps and start right back at the beginning.

With her natural charm, her physique, and her mental capabilities, this girl had a tremendous potential, and should be able to succeed in almost any field of endeavor which she undertook. Yet she stopped short in front of every situation or opportunity and just could not or would not try. We were sure that some deep-seated emotional problem must have been blocking her, so we set out to try to find it and solve it. In her history there was mention of the birth of a child some twenty-two years before, yet at the Reformatory Bea had been entirely unco-operative in answering any questions about the child or its present whereabouts, if in fact she really knew. I believed the child to be dead, other members of the staff did not agree with me, but we all felt that Bea's mental blocking was connected with the fate of that child, and until she faced the situation no efforts of ours could bring her to a permanent satisfactory adjustment. At our conference we concluded that since I seemed to have the best relationship with her I should try to persuade Bea to talk out her problem.

At first it was a long slow uphill pull, but it was always pleasant. Bea came for the interviews and seemed to be co-operating. I told her frankly that the purpose of the interviews was to see if we couldn't help her understand herself, so that in spite of what appeared to be an inadequate personality she could come to the place where she could plan a life for herself where she would be comfortable.

Slowly, as she gained confidence in herself and in me, she unraveled her life story and, when she came to the birth of the child, she seemed extremely glad to tell someone about the little daughter she had given to friends without ever having

seen her. The baby had never been legally adopted, and Bea had kept track of her through second- and third-hand reports. By this time the girl was married and living in western Pennsylvania with her husband and two children. After this revelation, we were really friends and all seemed clear sailing. She was able to settle down and live with one of her sisters. She worked in stores, planning to save enough to go to see her daughter and grandchildren on a summer vacation. A series of letters sent through friend-to-friend channels, proved it would be a most welcome idea. The daughter was about to be confined and "the new grandmother" could care for the son-in-law and other two babies while her daughter was in the hospital. Beatrice was overjoyed the day we gave her permission to leave the state. So were we all! If this only worked out, it really might be the solution for her.

The letters the first two weeks were most encouraging. The new baby arrived and was a girl to be called Beatrice. Her own daughter was a "great beauty" she said, which we could well imagine.

The next week the Chief of Police of the Pennsylvania town called. "Her son-in-law could stand her no longer. She was dead drunk and wouldn't get up. He wouldn't support her any longer." Now she was at police headquarters, where she had sobered up and told them she was on parole. Following the usual routine, they got in touch with us. Since this was her first real drunk, the Board after much discussion decided to give her another chance and arranged through the Travelers' Aid to pay her fare back to Boston. In two days an unruffled Beatrice arrived bag and baggage at our office. The Board seemed to be back where we had started, but we did feel we had made some constructive gains because we had a real relationship with Bea. She admitted she needed help and came back voluntarily for it. And the big mental block had been removed.

Bea's physical condition had deteriorated so much that we concluded she undoubtedly had been secretly drinking for

a long time before her one glorious spree. We arranged for a physical checkup, which more or less substantiated our suspicions, although she constantly denied the drinking. She was put on a multiple vitamin therapy by public clinic doctors. After she was on this a while she saw the wisdom of joining Alcoholics Anonymous and attending regularly.

Once more Bea co-operated. She went back to live with another sister this time. She felt she could earn more money by getting a job doing stitching in a raincoat factory, and she surprised us by staying at it. But at home her behavior followed the same pattern, until her sister refused to keep her any longer. When Bea walked into the office late one Friday afternoon in some smart, though worn, fall clothes her sister had given her, she was absolutely sober!

This time she really had a surprise for us. She said that although she had never admitted it to anyone, her husband was alive. He lived in a room in a nearby city and she had been seeing him off and on during her parole. Now she wanted to go and live with him. In all our talks she had always claimed the marriage had never been compatible, since he was much older and they had nothing in common intellectually. She now wished to join him and commute to her factory job.

A quick check with the Welfare Department brought out that her husband was living on Old Age Assistance, and needed care. This endless succession of shifts and plans surely made for a rough parole, but no supervisory department is going to tell husband and wife whether they will live together or not. That is for them to decide. Bea soon decided living with her husband didn't work, and, risky as it seemed, we determined that Bea's last and only course was to get herself a room with cooking facilities somewhere near her job.

She was called before the full Board, and the supervisor and agent summarized her case. After the discouraging recital, the Chairman gave her a final warning and told her that this was her last shift. She either adjusted here or she would have to

return to the institution. Bea was as agreeable as ever, told us she didn't blame us at all. She would do the same thing in our position.

A long, hard winter followed. The room was in the poorest part of Boston's South End, but Beatrice kept going pretty well. Once in a while she would take a whole day off from work just to drop in to talk to each of us. Sometimes she wrote us long letters, or telephoned. Her agent visited her every week and always found her sober — or appearing so. Bea spent her birthday and the anniversary of her brother's death with us and sometime during every holiday she came to see us. Suddenly came what we all felt would probably be the major calamity! She really did get sick and had to have an operation. Her agent was able to arrange a two-week convalescence for her at a Red Feather home, and, to our amazement, she returned to her stitching job, her modest room, and her life with the A.A.'s at once! She now had been dry so long that she moved up to the "twelfth-step club" and became so absorbed in helping others along the different steps that she quite forgot about herself.

At last came the big day of Beatrice's Good Conduct Release. She took the day off from work to come into the office so that we could hand the release directly and personally to her. We were all immensely relieved and gratified. By actual count the department had planned and executed twenty-eight different situations for her. In the end we seemed to have found her a worthwhile world that she could function in. Bea was effusive in her thanks and left us feeling she truly liked us and that we had really helped fulfill a great need in her life. I guess we had, because from that day to this we have never heard a word from her — not even a Christmas card. As to her record, she has never been arrested again. I personally feel she will walk in the office late some Friday afternoon before a holiday to wish us well. After all her troubles, we certainly wish the same to her.

The Eyes and Ears of the Board

IN THE COURSE of the Parole Board's deliberation of a perplexing case, it is not unusual for the Chairman to observe: "If it please the Board, I would like to postpone further action on this case until the next time this girl's agent is in. Even though her running record is very graphic, we might gain a slightly different perspective by talking with the agent." After all, our agents are the eyes and ears of the Board.

Although the duties of parole agents differ in detail from state to state, their responsibilities and scope of supervision have evolved into a distinct standard for most of the progressive states. Policy making, release, and reimprisonment remain the function of the Board itself, while the supervision and field investigations, including recommendations for revocation of parole, are appropriately the duties of the agents.

The relationship between the Board and agents is of tremendous importance. Mutual trust, understanding and confidence must be established as a continuing process or the system will disintegrate and fall apart. While "the welfare of society" is our first concern, as the statute on parole directs, we realize that in the nature of things some of the released prisoners will fail. The agent must therefore have the rare sense of immediately recognizing the parolee who has begun to slip — the one who is becoming restless, irresponsible and unstable, and who seems headed toward her previous pattern of criminal behavior. The agent who can avert this reversion is doing both society and the parole system an obvious but nonetheless great service.

In the cold light of statistics, one more revocation of parole

may to the lay person appear to be a failure, but to the agent, and to the parolee herself, the return to custody may prove a constructive step gladly accepted. Many times, indeed, a parolee realizes that she isn't ready or isn't strong enough to remain "outside" and she will plead with her agent to go back to prison. This is not as unusual as one might expect and usually occurs within the first three months after release.

It is an agent's responsibility to devote as much time as necessary to a girl who is not adjusting. If the agent cannot solve the problem, she should bring it directly to the parole supervisor who is in charge of all the female agents. She in turn, if unable to resolve the problem, will bring the matter to the Board for immediate discussion.

One of the older officers told me of an experience she had many years ago which I hope will never be duplicated again. She had a very young girl, ironically named Felicia, on parole in her district in the northern part of the state. This girl was not adjusting as well as we had hoped in the domestic placement where the officer had left her. She belonged to a most tragic group of misfits. She was an illegitimate child who, because of her mother's diseased condition, was not considered adoptable; because of her own personality, Felicia had been kicked around from one foster home to another all her life. At the age of twelve, she had been committed to a school for juvenile girls. Handicapped by low mentality, she began to show marked resistance to all well-intentioned efforts to help her, and as the years went on she exhibited continued combativeness and hostility to all authority. The unwanted, unloved seventeen- or eighteen-year-old child became a parolee of the most challenging type. Previous experience tells us only too clearly that the chances of successful adjustment here are less than with almost any other type of female offender. Yet, after all, are not their whole lives before them? We regard parole as the golden opportunity, and in each case

we work with a person, not a theory. It is our responsibility to leave no stone unturned in our efforts to help these girls find a niche in life.

Felicia's case, while typical, was extremely difficult. She had no one at all. There were no brothers, sisters, parents, and no husband or children. She had never known affection, faith, or confidence of any sort from any individual. In the various institutions she could never make friends with the other girls and was constantly ridiculed by them, which only intensified her aggression and hate.

We released her on parole when the institution recommended. The psychiatrist said he felt longer institutionalization would be detrimental and that she had matured enough so that trial in the community was indicated.

Her agent found her a suitable placement with an understanding employer where there were two sweet little girls, aged four and six. Even with them, Felicia remained a solitary being. At the same time her agent felt she was making some progress with her; and on her biweekly visits Felicia now and again began to talk and confide in her. She even greeted the agent cordially on her third visit, as contrasted with her customary sullen hostility. They talked on many topics and finally Felicia summed it all up in that tragic statement social workers hear so often: "I'm nobody. Why can't someone tell me who I am? No one ever wanted me, no one ever will!"

Felicia went on to tell the agent of her hatred for all institutions and all the members of their staffs. Of course, as long as the girl remained on her job and did not "run," she would sit down and talk with her agent. This was marked progress. Felicia even went as far as to tell the parole agent she wished she could write poetry to express herself. Her face lighted up when she recounted how she had had a little mouse who came to her window at the institution at dawn each morning and how she took food scraps from the refectory each night so she might feed her mouse the next day.

Finally, Felicia told the agent she had never got a letter, a

package, or a Christmas card in all her life. She wondered if the agent could find someone who would write her just one letter someday. Of course, the agent agreed that she would try to find a correspondent. How little most of us properly value the assets of normal family and community life!

On the next office visit, the agent and the parole supervisor talked over the progress Felicia was making. They agreed that they needed to supply her with someone to whom she could give or from whom she could receive affection. They fully appreciated that her solitary life in domestic placement was designed only as a steppingstone along the path of adjustment. In a few short months, when Felicia's sentence was over, the agent would have to withdraw, and the girl would then be on her own without the moral support of the agent, who frankly feared that under these circumstances Felicia would in short order revert to her previous pattern of behavior.

With long-range planning in mind, the agent restudied Felicia's whole file. She ran across a brief reference to a maternal aunt and an address where she had lived some years previously. The record indicated that the aunt had taken no interest whatever in the girl in the early years when welfare officers had explored the situation. But the agent decided to try to locate the aunt and see if there could be any possibility here of finding someone who could help Felicia feel that "she belonged."

It took several weeks for the agent to locate the aunt. She had moved several times, and each location where some old neighbor "thought she might be found" turned out to be in a lower and more dilapidated part of the city. That particular winter had been extremely severe, one snowstorm falling on top of the other in an endless succession. The narrow streets were almost impassable in the slum area where the agent finally believed she had located Felicia's aunt. Parking her car on the plowed main street, the agent set off on foot between the sordid taverns, up a slippery unsanded footpath, past the public alley behind the row of stores where the reek of

garbage, refuse, sweepings of hair from the barber shop, and the vomit and filth from the tavern were being explored by the usual handful of ragged little waifs who either were not old enough for school or whose parents didn't bother to send them. Up the hill she cautiously made her way, turning a sharp corner into the street she was looking for without passing or directly meeting a single human being.

An agent always realizes she is conspicuous as a stranger in such an area and that every household somehow becomes immediately aware of her presence. Many people in these neighborhoods live outside the law, and they always keep absolutely quiet and out of sight until they size up a stranger and find out whose house she is going to and why. The fact that the agent was dressed in civilian clothes made her more of an enigma, so she had to spend many difficult minutes looking for the actual house. In this very old rundown part of the city, dating back to early colonial seafaring days, the houses were originally built for single dwellings and some were set in back of the others, making the sequence of the numbers almost hopeless to follow.

Finally she located the right house by almost bumping her nose on it as she slipped on the unshoveled high mound of snow that had slid off the roof onto the sidewalk. After all, in this area, no one ever owns a shovel, and since the houses are flush with the sidewalk, where would you put the snow anyhow? In slum areas, snow removal is not a topic to be considered or even discussed. Here life is concerned with only the simple, elementary necessities of existence.

Most people who have retreated to the slums do so slowly, because of one failure after another. They are certainly not here through choice, but only because either financially, morally, mentally, or physically their senses are numbed and they no longer have power to fight back. Normal children born here fight instinctively to get out into the fresh world outside.

The parole agent had a nostalgic feeling for the builders of this beautiful old house as she slowly groped her way in through the battered front door set between colonial pilasters which were now tilted and sagging and ready to crumple under the next big snow slide. Once inside, she proceeded cautiously along the dark hall. The entire house had an odd, ominous quiet, broken by the distant thin tinkle of music, which indicated someone at home somewhere with a radio playing. Unable to find her way around in the dark, she turned back to open the street door and let in what little light was still available on that late wintry afternoon. As her eyes became accustomed to the gloom, she discovered there were no names on the mailboxes and the bells had long since been demolished. The hall was obviously the main hall in a fine old city mansion with a Greek cornice; one or two of the original banisters, exquisitely carved, remained on the sweep of the staircase. All of the others, as well as the traditional mahogany handrail, had undoubtedly long since been used for firewood by the tenants, and a crude golden-oak newel post shored up with angle irons bore witness to the many drunken lodgers who had hung on it in recent years.

A peculiar acrid odor tormented the agent's nostrils as she fumbled her way around the lower hall. She stopped and took stock for a minute. Was it nonsense to go on? After all, she was here to find a contact which would be a constructive help for Felicia and she sensed now, without going farther, the evident hopelessness of her mission. This environment surely would have nothing to offer, she thought, as her right foot slipped hazardously in some dog dung in the middle of the hall floor. She retreated to the street door to scrape her shoe clean on the step. She thought briefly of walking away. But since she had spent so much time and since it was the last call of the afternoon, she decided to find the aunt, if only to satisfy her curiosity.

To her left and toward the rear she saw a crack of light

coming under the door. Proceeding with caution and still bothered by the smell of something burning, she reached the door safely and knocked. There was no response. Louder knocks still brought no answer. She called out the aunt's name and was sure she felt the presence of a person on the other side of the door. She called the aunt by name again, and a soft, gentle voice inquired as to who was there.

The agent explained she was a friend of her niece, Felicia. (An agent is trained never to embarrass an individual in public or in earshot of neighbors by indicating her mission or the fact that she is a special policewoman.) The door was opened cautiously by a small woman, appearing to be in her middle fifties, who waved the agent in and then rebolted the door.

One small old-fashioned eight-watt light bulb — one of those real old-timers, egg-shaped with a sharp point of glass at the end — lighted the room. Inadequate as it was, after the gloom of the hall it appeared dazzling. The room itself was evidently a kitchen; at least it contained a high gas range and a rusty iron sink (with one leg broken off) propped on a wooden box. There was a chair directly in front of the gas oven door and another chair with no back. The other furnishings consisted of a calendar (four years old) and a plain table — nothing more.

The aunt was one of those amazing little sparrows who seem to wear so well. They appear never to gain weight or lose it. They change very little with time, their figures remaining compact and attractive under all kinds of stress and strain. Her hair, pure white and naturally curly, was cut short. She wore a rather rumpled navy blue taffeta dress, with a man's gray sweater thrown over her shoulders to protect herself against the bitter cold.

The agent was puzzled to find a woman of this physical appearance living in the area at all. Generally the women in a dilapidated waterfront area are a sorry lot: there are the very young girls who are always pregnant, dirty, and tired;

the old women, who haven't changed their clothes or washed their hair in a quarter of a century, and have reached the stage of exhaustion or laziness where they just sit; the transient crop of prostitutes, drunks, misfits and feeble-minded who hide there; and lastly the few respectable families, who have lived there always or have taken refuge there because of some recent disaster, and will not stay long.

Auntie was an enigma (and still is), for she did not fall in any of these categories. The most logical explanation was that she had recently spent some months in an institution, where she had been rested and cleaned up and provided with the blue taffeta dress on her departure. If our guess is accurate, she had just returned to her old haunts and her life of prostitution, but had not yet started to drink again.

Auntie offered the agent a seat, even graciously giving her a choice. She accepted the backless chair. With typical social-worker wisdom and experience, she moved it slightly away from the wall, hoping nothing would crawl aboard her person in the few minutes she intended to be there, but, putting her hand up to loosen the collar of her coat, she accidentally hit the calendar with her fingertips and down rained a shower of vigorous, healthy cockroaches. Neither Auntie nor the agent took notice of this little incident.

Auntie seemed pleased to have a visitor. She jauntily arranged herself on the other chair and with one motion swung her pretty legs and feet into the oven, where she apparently kept them for the winter. She then turned and picked up a Sandwich glass compote, two-thirds filled with skags (butts retrieved from around church doors or subway stations), and passed it toward the agent, asking at the same time if she smoked. Her visitor declined on the grounds that she did not, and after Auntie lit up, the agent briefly touched on the reason for her visit.

Auntie was quite debonair about her niece, but because of the housing shortage she was afraid she could do nothing for

her relative. She told the agent that she and her "son," who was now thirty, lived in these two rooms and were really rather crowded as it was.

As she talked on, the agent scanned the surroundings in order to write a fair appraisal for her report. She counted eleven huge heaps of scrap metal lying helter-skelter on the kitchen and living-room floors. There were the wheel and head of a sewing machine. Bolts, nuts, bars, pins, rollers, engine blocks, fly wheels, and chains were everywhere. Some heaps were partially covered, one with an old coat, another with a torn red curtain. Over, around, and under was mixed in more dirt, filth, debris and rubbish than the agent had ever seen before — and she had spent her life with the derelicts of society. This indeed was the bottom.

Auntie chattered on about the overcrowding and, as the agent was by now somewhat fascinated by the little bird, she drew her out a bit. The scrap about the room was just a kind service her son was doing "for a friend." No, he wasn't in the junk business — "No, no indeed!"

When the visitor commented on the apparent lack of dishes and provisions, Auntie said, "We found it easier and less expensive to eat out."

"What about sleeping accommodations in case your niece should think of visiting?" asked the agent.

Auntie indicated with a grand gesture the astonishing facilities in the closet or cubicle off the room in which they were sitting. There was a single bed, without sheets, pillow, or pillowcases, with only a foul, sloppy mattress, with wads of excelsior protruding here and there, partially covered with a grim gray dingy comforter. Nothing more.

At this point in the tête-à-tête, the agent gained ground. Auntie sensed for once she was losing out. Recoiling for a moment under her guest's questioning gaze, Auntie swiftly rebounded to explain that, because of the housing shortage, things weren't just as she and "her son" would like them,

but since he worked nights they were able to get along nicely. Our agent noted that the front room contained only one piece of furniture, a sorry-looking davenport badly buttoned and without cushions. More and larger heaps of metal scrap, wrenches, tools, batteries, and jacks occupied every available foot of floor space.

Experienced interviewer that she was, the parole agent found herself at a loss as to just how to conclude the discussion and get out quickly before she exploded at such disgusting living conditions. She was looking for a way out when to her amazement she sighted four books piled neatly on the gas stove and a fifth laid face-down open across one of the burners on the stove. Buttoning her coat, she rose, casually thanked Auntie for her co-operation and said she was sorry to have interrupted her reading, to which Auntie replied that she was almost through *The Keys of the Kingdom* and that when she finished she would have to go out. She'd have to return the books to the library herself, for "her son" never seemed able to pick out the type of literature she enjoyed. With that graceful conclusion, the agent shook hands with Auntie, unbolted the door, cautiously and slowly groped her way down the hall, and stepped out into the crystal clear of a cold winter twilight.

Later she gave her supervisor the details of her visit. They concluded that Felicia was indeed lucky to have been abandoned in early childhood and that, lonely as she was in her domestic placement in a respectable country town, there are far worse tragedies in life than to have to start at seventeen and work up the ladder of life.

The agent decided no good would come of her mentioning the visit to Felicia, particularly since she was successful in finding a friendly visitor in a nearby town who volunteered to take Felicia to the movies once every two weeks, to write her an occasional letter and show interest during the holiday season.

About six weeks later, headlines appeared in the metropolitan papers, "Aged Woman Found Murdered." The press went on to tell the sordid details of the death of an elderly woman whom neighbors had missed. Upon investigation, they found she had been beaten and robbed. Her clothing had been saturated with kerosene and set afire before she was dead. Blood from her wounds had put out the fire after part of the floor had burned away. Because of the extreme cold weather, her body was frozen stiff and the vicious crime went undetected. About all that was generally known about her was that she was very old, partially blind, owned her own house, and kept a large sum of money on her person. This was money she received as rent from the rooms and apartments in her rambling old house.

The police investigation quickly uncovered the fact that "Slimey" Tilton, a former inmate of the State Prison, had been released after serving his full time in the late fall and had hired one of the old lady's apartments. Tilton lived there for several weeks in the middle of winter. Nothing had been seen of him in recent weeks. It was known that several women lived with him during his stay at this address.

The police took Slimey into custody within three days and charged him with murder. A male confederate was also rounded up and charged with being an accessory.

While they were awaiting trial, spring came and the layers and ridges of snow and ice slowly melted and receded. To the horror of neighbors along that narrow little street, the arm of a woman protruded through the snow in the back yard. The police dug up the bruised and battered body of a brown-haired, heavily built woman, wedged partway through a hole in the old wooden fence in the back yard of the same house where the elderly landlady had been robbed, murdered, and partly burned.

The police were never able to identify the second body and neither was our agent, who had realized with a shudder of

horror that the murders had taken place in that same house where she had gone to visit Felicia's aunt. At least one of the murders must have taken place before her visit, for she now recalled that haunting acrid odor of burning flesh that had permeated the entire dark hallway that day. She took a trip to the morgue, just to make sure that one of the victims was not Auntie, feeling all the time that it was only by the grace of God that she too was not lying on one of the cold slabs. The agent did not know the victim, and Auntie was never located, but my guess would be that she is still pursuing her profession and her literary habits in some skid row somewhere, be it Boston's South End, Sands Street in Brooklyn, or in San Francisco's Barbary Coast.

Whereas this was an extreme situation — for we all agree that going into a house that contains the frozen bodies of two murdered women is unusual — dealing either with the organized underworld or the bottom rung of the ladder is a constant hazard. In numberless cases the families of parolees are more disturbed personalities than the individuals who have served time, and they must all be handled with boundless patience, tact, and great kindness.

There are other groups with whom an agent must constantly be firm or she will be both deceived and imposed upon, but to all the former inmates and their immediate families the agent is the symbol of the State — the State that took their freedom from them once. What it has done once, the State could do again, so usually the "State Lady," because she has the State behind her, leads a charmed life, protected by her friends, her clients, and the underworld wherever she goes.

Despite the fact that they have to be firm, strong-minded women, most agents are amazingly charitable and are always doing small deeds of kindness behind the scenes. How many times I have known an agent to send a carton of cigarettes or a box of candy to a lonely hospitalized parolee at Christmas

or Eastertime; and they all maintain a steady stream of get-well and congratulations-on-the-birth-of-the-baby cards, which they pay for with their own money.

One incident that epitomizes their finest traditions was the unfailing devotion an agent gave to Delia before she died. Delia was Irish-born and raised and for all the world resembled nothing so much as a wooden rake, about six feet one inch tall and as gaunt as gaunt can be. She had hair the color of dried wood which hung lank and drab to her shoulders and arms so transparently thin that even though they hung straight down by her sides you never noticed them at all.

During the twenty years Delia had been in this country she had hung up a record of forty-seven arrests for drunkenness. She had spent many, many months in the county jails on sentences for some of these arrests but was serving a five-year sentence for adultery at the time of her parole. She did not have a friend or a relative in this country and had only been out a very short time when she was hospitalized for a serious sickness, which proved to be inoperable cancer.

Since Delia was dying and had certainly not violated the conditions of her release, the procedure of issuing and serving a warrant to return her to the Reformatory for medical care seemed unusually cruel to us all. When, therefore, her agent told us that the Rose Hawthorne Hospital, which accepts only penniless incurable cancer patients, would take Delia, we were more than happy to approve the plan. Delia's ride from the municipal hospital where she had been to the Rose Hawthorne was to be her last, and she knew it. She asked her agent, who was driving her, to stop at the State House so she could make a personal visit to thank the members of the Board for allowing her to go to a private hospital to die. I'll frankly admit that every Board member was seen wiping his or her glasses just after Delia and her agent left the Board room that day.

In a few weeks poor Delia took to her bed for the last time, but she lived more than two years, and every time the agent was in the city, at least once and often two or three times a

month, she stopped in for a visit and brought her some small present. The visits of an agent under such circumstances would be just friendly visits. No one in the hospital other than the Mother Superior knew of Delia's parole status and she certainly would never have disclosed the secret.

At last the end came peacefully and mercifully and in the agent's running record of Delia's case under the date of the severest blizzard of that winter she made her final entry.

February 13. Attended funeral mass at 7.30 A.M. No relatives or friends present at Hospital Chapel. Burial in private cemetery on Hospital grounds. CASE CLOSED.

Another case that shows the wonderful charity and humanity of our agents was Lillian's. She was a girl with a background much like Delia's, but she had T.B. and was confined to a county sanatorium where she had undergone one lung operation but had failed to recover the way we had hoped she would. She was an intelligent woman, so when the doctors told her she would have to have radical surgery, she knew how sick she was. Her letter telling us this was one of the most moving I have ever read. In it she told us that before the doctors would even try the operation she needed five blood transfusions to build up her strength. She said that the blood bank could provide for the transfusions, but she knew their reserve was low, and she was afraid the amount of blood she needed would deprive someone else, when their future meant more than hers; therefore she was not going to accept the treatment or allow the operation.

The agent read the letter and pinned it up on the office bulletin board with a note saying that she herself was going to be a donor for Lillian on the following Monday and that any other volunteers would be most welcome to join her. Five members of the Women's Division gave blood that next Monday, and the Red Cross notified the sanatorium that the required blood had been anonymously donated.

Lillian had the necessary surgery, and when she was well

enough her agent told her who the donors had been. I am glad we do not have to help our clients that way too often, for an interesting sidelight on the episode was that two of our staff, who are trained to deal with the toughest criminals without a sign of fear or nervousness, fainted dead away on the laboratory floor the morning we were giving blood.

Not only did Lillian recover physically, she completed a most satisfactory parole and not long after that appeared at the office with a nice-looking man she introduced to us as her new husband. In cases like this and innumerable others, the agent is the unsung heroine of happy success stories. She is also, through her daily running accounts to the Board of the actual living conditions, our contact with the pulse of the community into which we must decide whether or not to release our girls.

4

A Good Job Well Done

AN AGENT'S DUTIES start soon after the Board votes to parole an inmate. The parole supervisor returns the next day to the institution to interview all the women who have been voted release. She arranges the most minute details and sees that they are explained personally to each individual. We believe this to be one of the most important steps in the entire release procedure, one of the vital pegs on which success or failure hangs.

All workers in the rehabilitation field know that sympathy and humane treatment are the most effective tools with which to guide their clients. There is, however, always the exceptional soul who presents a tremendous challenge. Alone in this private interview with the parole supervisor, twenty-four hours after being told she is to be released, the inmate frequently reveals many new problems.

The supervisor goes over the plan in detail, making sure she has the correct names and street addresses of the town or city. She gives the inmate an opportunity to bring up any phase of her plans that may be troubling her. Like the four-year-old boy who wants the largest ice cream cone in the world and can't eat a third of it when he gets it, the inmate, during her months of incarceration, may have built a dream plan. When it is about to become a reality, she may realize that it just won't work, and this is her chance to bring it in touch with practicality.

This extra pre-release heart-to-heart talk provides the inmate an opportunity to feel she really knows her supervisor and can trust her as a friend. Conversely, the supervisor gets

a chance to size up her charges and estimate their personalities. Every month there are two or three inmates who wish to make radical changes, after sleeping a night on their proposed plan. The supervisor is well skilled in judging whether these changes are wise and valid, or whether they are just part of the general instability that social derelicts are subject to. If the plan falls within general parole rules and previously established procedures, it is the responsibility of the supervisor and her agents. If not, she must confer with the Board.

The parole supervisor returns to the central office after interviewing all those voted release. She then assigns these cases to the agents. At this point the parole staff starts a running record for each individual parolee. It is headed with a summary compiled from all the data supplied by the State Department of Correction, the police, probation, and the full court summary, as well as the findings of the Board's own investigation. To this the supervisor adds the Board's vote, any individual restrictions it may have added to the usual terms of parole, her own observations, and detailed instructions on home and work. The agents' territory is set up so that the case load is kept relatively uniform with from fifty to sixty cases per worker. The parolees are assigned to the agent in whose territory the court that committed them is located.

After studying her newly assigned cases, the field agent makes a home investigation. If the agent finds it suitable, she fills out a form called a home blank, which is signed by the mother, sister, or husband — whoever is the responsible head of the household — stating a willingness on the part of the signer to accept the parolee back home. The signer also agrees to communicate with the Board if the parolee does not observe the rules the agent has carefully explained. If there is suitable work available, the agent visits the proposed place of employment to arrange the type of work, wages, and hours, to explain in a general way the parolee's status, and to ask the intended employer to sign a work blank. This simply requires the

employer to notify the Board if the parolee leaves her employment, but doesn't force him to keep any unsatisfactory worker.

If the parolee has no feasible plan, it is the agent's responsibility to help her make one and arrange all the necessary details for it. Should the girl have no home to return to, the agent finds her a job with a living-in arrangement, usually as a domestic, hospital, or nursing-home worker.

In the protected environment of the Reformatory, inmates have little opportunity to do things for themselves. Food, clothing, shelter, the schedule for rising, working, eating, and resting is all provided for them. Thus the transition to a self-sustaining program alone outside may be too much of a strain on the average parolee starting her test in the community. And I want to re-emphasize that parole is only a test. These women are still under court sentences, and it is not by right but as a privilege that they "go out" to finish their sentences in normal living conditions, but still under supervision.

To return to our routine procedure, as soon as the agent has submitted the approved home and work blanks on an individual, the Board issues the Parole Permit with the date and terms of the parole attached.

In most cases the parolee travels alone to her destination, but when she is going to a domestic placement, or to live in an isolated rural area, or if she has children with her at the Reformatory, the agent arranges to drive her to her destination. The agent also provides the parolee with report blanks, which are forms that, regardless of developments, the parolee must mail to her agent weekly. The parolee must notify us if there is any change in her home address or place of employment. Each parolee is told that she may phone our office collect any time she wishes advice. The agent visits her once a week in the beginning and every two weeks thereafter, usually arriving unannounced so she can construct a true, rather than a rehearsed, picture of the girl's progress.

One day a week each field agent comes to the office. That day she arranges all office interviews and dictates the summary of all weekly visits to parolees. This "running record" enables the Board to have an up-to-the-minute word picture of all its parolees at all times. These records are more important for failing cases than for successful ones, since as we have seen, failures happen quickly and suddenly, while success is generally a long, slow, systematic process. In the period between institution hearing dates, the Board studies these running records in overseeing the field work. After the discussion with the agent, we may decide to make a complete review of any cases that are seriously slipping and make any revisions of the parole plan that may be necessary. This may involve many persons but it also may eventually solve many problems. I remember one case in particular which clearly illustrates what a staff conference can do if called in time.

Mary Ellen had been on parole about two months when it became increasingly obvious all was not going well. She was serving a five-year sentence for lewd and lascivious cohabitation, finally charged after about two years of erratic, disorderly living. During this time Mary Ellen had been drunk many times. She had left her five children alone, for which she had been put on probation for neglect, and, while her husband was overseas in the Army, she had gone off for a six-week trip to Chicago with a married Italian from the next town. Mary Ellen was picked up on complaint of the man's wife. Although she was on probation, the court could not surrender Mary Ellen for neglect because she had left the children with her sister before leaving for Illinois. She had also given her sister the Army allotment checks to cover their support. When Mary Ellen was picked up, her husband had been overseas for two years. But a medical examination revealed that she was pregnant. The court recognized that the situation had passed the critical stage and that the children

could not be exposed to continued disturbances and moral neglect. Mary Ellen was found guilty of lewd and lascivious cohabitation.

While she was in prison, her husband returned from Europe. He came to see the Parole Board the day he was discharged from the Service: he wanted his wife and he wanted his kids. He wanted them that day. He was well braced and on top of the world for the interview, but we overlooked that under the circumstances.

We explained to him that under the law we had to see his wife in person before we could release her, and we suggested that he see her first and that they work out a plan together as to where they would live. We were anxious to co-operate and offered to send an agent to make a special pre-parole home visit. If all was well we agreed to ask the superintendent for a report on Mary Ellen's health and adjustment and for a recommendation on her case. We would be able to release his wife right after our next visit to the Reformatory. A man returning from war certainly deserves any special consideration he can get in re-establishing his home, and we always try to help him, usually with gratifying results. Alas, it was not so in this case!

When the husband arrived at the Reformatory to see Mary Ellen for the first time, their true natures were all too soon in control of the situation. After an enthusiastically warm greeting, there was a riproaring brawl that convinced the institution officer that in spite of Mary Ellen's claim to have been happily married before her husband went overseas, hers must have been a rather rugged, primitive sort of happiness. The officer was sure of this from the ancient history they flung at each other at their interview. Climaxing the meeting, he told her he had changed his mind. He would have taken her back and his kids and the new baby too — that wasn't so bad, he'd "had a little fun in Paris" himself — but when he was shown the new baby and discovered, to use his own words, it was a

"Guinea bastard," he would have "nothing doing with any of them!" Off he went and there was no further word of him.

Weeks and months passed. There was no reason now to give Mary Ellen a special release. There was no place for her to go. She had the new baby with her, and the other children were being well cared for in a special home. When we saw her at her regular hearing, we voted to release her to live with a woman friend in Dorchester. The friend would care for the baby during the day while Mary Ellen worked. All went well for about two months when suddenly Mary Ellen and her husband located each other and all hell broke loose. The landlord phoned. The woman Mary Ellen lived with phoned six times, pleading that she could stand it no longer. Mary Ellen's sister from out of town called to say she was sure a murder would be committed. The police called and wanted to know the story. In their book, the husband wasn't a bad egg at all. "He could and always did earn a good living driving heavy construction equipment. He had worked for one employer for eleven years. Oh, sure he drank, but he wasn't a bad guy!" Next the probation officer called to give us the same general story that the police had told.

We held a hasty conference in the Board Room at the State House and decided that the only possible hopeful conclusion to this case was to arbitrate it in some way. None of us had the slightest idea how, but our only objective was to reunite this family. Strange as it may seem, there were many constructive elements to work with.

Our first step was to ask the police if they would co-operate by picking up the husband from his spot under Mary Ellen's window where he was berating her. The police were happy to do so because they were pretty sure he would start beating the door down if they didn't quiet him. They even suggested they would get in touch with his employer, to see if he could go to the police station in the morning to fetch him for work; they even felt sure his boss would be glad to drive him to meet

us at the State House. Meanwhile, we got in touch with Mary Ellen's out-of-town sister, a substantial, sound, understanding woman, and asked her to come before the Board with the parolee the next morning. Neither husband nor wife knew we had sent for the other, and we managed to keep them apart when they arrived.

The full Board spent the entire day on the case. First we interviewed Mary Ellen alone, and then her husband. Since the employer, the supervisor, the field agent, and the probation officer all knew the temperament of the pair, they were helpful advisers. It was plain that our rambunctious pair both wanted the right things, but getting behind the bluster and showing off they put on for us and for each other was a real problem. Suddenly, in the midst of the turmoil, one of them revealed that they had \$1684 which was being held for them by the Home for Destitute Catholic Children, where the children had been placed. The money was from allotment checks saved while the husband was overseas, as the home did not take board for its children, and it was waiting for the parents whenever they decided to reunite their family. Under the experienced guiding hand of the Parole Board Chairman, they worked out their problems one by one. By four o'clock everyone left our office happy: the sister to find a big house in the country, the agent to help them get furniture to move in right away, and to gather all the children — even little Number Six.

About fifteen minutes after they had all gone, the big burly employer came back to the office of the Women's Division. He said rather sheepishly he thought we ought to know what he saw after he left the building. He had started to cross the street to get his parked car and had purposely dallied behind to let husband and wife go their own way. He thought we'd like to know that he'd then seen Mary Ellen and her husband holding hands as they turned into the little church on the corner. We sincerely thanked him for his thoughtful report

of this sign of a cheerful ending to a difficult case and a hopeful beginning of a new life.

In our scrapbook at the office, we have a picture of the nine children that Mary Ellen now has. She brought them in to us one day this spring when she was in town on one of her rare trips; and she keeps us posted on every major event in the family, even though she finished parole three years ago.

While the agents are in the field supervising parolees, developing new plans in anticipation of new releases, and saying farewell to former inmates who have completed their time on the outside, the Board is at the office preparing the cases of the inmates to be seen the next month, as well as keeping a constant eye on the progress of all of the parolees already in the community. The women members of the Board go to the Reformatory for Women every month and interview each inmate at a pre-parole interview, which takes place after the prisoner has served six months, regardless of the length of her sentence or when she becomes eligible for parole.

We have found that the pre-parole interview is of great benefit in easing the nervous tension that marked release hearings in the early years of parole, when inmates had built up the fallacy that members of the Board were ogres. Parolees who are returned for violations naturally try to make a good case for themselves and put the Board in as bad a light as possible. Their influence fosters that old fallacy, but the pre-parole interview gives the inmates a chance to see for themselves and make up their own minds. Since the establishment of the pre-parole interview, we have noticed an enormous change for the better in our relationship with the families of the inmates, and it has proved to be a big help in making parole plans and programs in advance.

We have many cases in the metropolitan area where parolees find it a source of encouragement to drop into the Board's office to talk over problems. A day never passes with-

out a few unexpected visitors. There is Anna, who is thinking of moving out of the crowded suburb where she owns her own house. She would like to buy a motel in the country and believes her husband could run it with her. What is most important, her little son would then have fields and woods to play in. Anna is a woman of capabilities. She certainly could swing such an undertaking, so we suggest that she get advice from reliable financial sources and look at all angles before jumping into such a radical change. Anna's delinquency was serious. But it grew out of alcoholism and lasted for only a short time. We are convinced this new interest, away from taverns, is worth exploring.

The Board saw Anna as often as she wished to discuss her plans and advised her where to go for further information. After about four months of planning, Anna came in one day and said the project had been postponed until early spring. She had enrolled for the winter in a special course in motel management, which seemed to all of us like a fine solution.

Another function of the Board is to interview all exceptional cases that in the opinion of the agents are not adjusting to parole. At times one interview with the parolee and agent will iron out the difficulty, while at other times many interviews may be necessary. Perhaps we have received only half the story, so we ask the parolee to come back and bring her husband. Sometimes a mother-in-law will cause the trouble. We have even had both mother and mother-in-law trouble, and many times after a long day of interviewing relatives the Board members conclude that the poor person sent to prison was more sinned against than sinning.

There are other times when a girl will have a relative who will rise to the challenge of parole and will be a powerful factor in helping a girl on the road to success. When there are other favorable elements in her record and when our actual interview with her follows the same hopeful pattern, we are likely to get the feeling that the case is off to a good

start and that this particular girl will never be back inside again.

Our first contact with Hazel gave us this impression, and as time went on we knew all was going to be well. Cases like hers are a sheer joy. No one who has not experienced the tug and struggle we all put in on a case we feel is slipping can imagine the lift we get out of one that is sailing along smoothly. It is one of life's highest satisfactions to see a girl headed for a future in which she can work out her own problems rather than trying to escape from them.

Hazel was twenty-one years old and of average intelligence. Her rural New Hampshire parents separated when she was a year old and left her and her brother and sister to be brought up by foster parents in Massachusetts. Hazel was never interested in school, and after her second year in high school left to go to work. She didn't seem to be interested in work either. At times she was a soda jerker, at others a waitress, but she left every job to "take a vacation." These vacations became more frequent as the years wore on, until she finally disappeared from home completely and was not heard from for six months. That trip ended when she was arrested after a lady complained to the police that her husband, Mark, and Hazel were living together. Hazel was seven months pregnant and claimed to be entirely unaware that Mark was already married. They were both found guilty of lewd and lascivious cohabitation, but since they were first offenders their cases were filed, and they were put on probation. Hazel's foster parents accepted her back and took in her child, too, when it was born. As part of the probation plan, Hazel brought paternity adjudication proceedings against Mark, who was found guilty and ordered to support the child. Hazel, essentially a dependent person, did well on probation under the supervision of her probation officer. She found a position in a shoe factory and worked steadily until her two-year sentence and her supervision were completed.

The very next week she disappeared again. Her foster mother discovered that Mark had found her while she was at work and that at noon the next day she had gone off with him in a car. A state-wide police search brought no clue to their whereabouts, and when there was still no word from them a month later, the foster mother swore out a complaint against Hazel for abandoning her baby.

After a while rumors began trickling in to the relatives that Hazel and Mark had been seen together in New Hampshire, and later that they were living in Vermont. From these reports the police were able to pick up a clear-cut trail that showed they were moving from town to town and small city to larger city, working a few days in a poor apartment house or some second-rate hotel, where they would get food and lodgings in exchange for odd jobs before moving on again. Each time they left behind them a few forged checks made out for very small sums of money. Mark did the forging, but Hazel passed the checks on his instructions. Their trail led to northern New York state, where they spent the winter victimizing small merchants. Neither one made any attempt to find steady employment, for they realized by then that their Social Security registration would reveal their identity and lead to arrest.

Early in the spring they moved back into Massachusetts. With time they had grown bolder and when they passed two substantial checks they were caught and convicted. Hazel received two five-year sentences to be served concurrently; while Mark, who proved to be the organizer and brains of the plan, was given two eight-to-ten-year sentences.

On a sentence like Hazel's, we normally consider the inmate for parole after she has served twenty months. At that time, the institution's favorable recommendation revealed that inside, free from Mark's influence, Hazel had done very well and had soon begun to show her good qualities. She sincerely repented the treatment she had given her child, an extremely

rare attitude for offenders to take, since most of them completely disregard the plight of their families or their victims. Hazel spent all her spare time knitting sweaters and making clothes for her daughter, who was almost two years old, and showed great pleasure when her foster parents and other relatives visited her. An aunt and uncle who knew the foster parents well indicated that Hazel might not be entirely to blame for wishing to run away. They offered to take her into their home, to find work for her nearby, and to locate a boarding home for the baby. At her parole-release hearing Hazel convinced the Board that that plan was sound and that she was a good risk for release, especially as Mark was to be in prison many months before he would even be eligible for parole.

Checking Hazel's parole plan, the agent visited the aunt and found that she lived in a comfortable home in a good neighborhood, where Hazel would be welcomed with affection and understanding. A hospital nearby offered her an attendant's job from which she could earn enough money to pay her aunt a reasonable amount for her own and her baby's board. The agent explained all the parole procedures to the aunt, who didn't want the neighbors to know about Hazel's record. To clear up that worry, the agent assured her that she herself would always arrive in a plain car with regulation number plates and would wear quiet business clothing, not a police officer's uniform as the aunt had visualized. No one in the area need know that Hazel was on parole unless either Hazel or the family told about it themselves, and this relieved the aunt's mind tremendously.

It is left to the Board's discretion, exercised with common sense and tact, to determine how much of a parolee's record should be revealed. The law only requires that the chief of police be notified when a felon is to be released to live in his territory. If a prisoner has been guilty of crimes of great violence against other people, it would, of course, be wise to warn both the employer and the boarding home too. Again,

it would be rather poor judgment to allow a person who had been involved in money troubles to work where she would handle funds without warning her employer. In this connection, we are always amazed at how often an employer will hire someone for a position of financial responsibility without even checking to see if she has a criminal record.

Since Hazel's aunt knew all about her history, and since Hazel was to have nothing to do with money at the hospital, there was no need of exposing her record at all when she was released. Her parole story was a huge success. The only special point the agent had made to her was that she should make occasional visits to her foster parents to keep on friendly terms with them, which Hazel was glad to do. At the hospital, after a six-month trial as a nursing attendant, she was accepted into training as a student nurse. Her aunt and uncle were so gratified by her progress that when she left them to live in the hospital during the training period they kept her little daughter at home with them and agreed to support her while Hazel was in training and receiving no wages. A serious situation might have developed when Hazel had to leave her training to have a major operation but, instead of succumbing to the weakness that had led her to take the easy way before, she returned to her nursing training just as soon as she was physically able. Two months before her graduation, she married the engineer from the hospital with the Parole Board's permission (and blessing). The day the agent gave Hazel her Honorable Discharge Certificate, she, her husband, and her daughter were living in an attractively furnished apartment on the street next to her aunt's house.

There were undoubtedly many reasons for Hazel's remarkable success. Certainly one of the most important was that she learned that the right way was both satisfying and worthwhile. Another, I have always felt, was that the love her aunt and uncle gave her and the confidence they placed in her gave her the self-respect to work hard and achieve her personal victory.

Suggested Development of the Release Program

WHEN WE COMPARE the over-all treatment of women offenders in Massachusetts with the rest of the nation, we find that the former pioneer spirit of reform here has gradually given way to stereotyped thinking and inflexibility. Some people have wanted to begin all over again with a wholesale revamping of our laws. They are only too happy to change merely for the sake of change; and the publicity given the California plan in the 1954 riots at the Charlestown Prison has made them more vocal than ever.

From my own experience, I can only say that such action would be quite injudicious. We need some revisions and moderations to gear our penal system to present-day problems. That is true of any business too, but no executive in his right mind would ever think of scrapping his entire business and starting in again from scratch. He would regear or retool his machines to produce better products. Yet, for Massachusetts to adopt the California plan would be tantamount to throwing the business away.

Under that system, which took effect ten years ago, there is an Adult Authority which determines how much of her sentence a prisoner should serve. The courts still decide the guilt of an offender, but the Authority sets her sentence and her final discharge. People forget that depriving the courts of their customary sentencing powers is a drastic and possibly dangerous step, to be undertaken only after the most careful consideration.

Conditions in Massachusetts are different from those in California, and the remedies that fit our problems are not

necessarily the ones that fit theirs. New Jersey, Pennsylvania, New York, Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin are experimenting with new procedures too, and each of them is approaching problems of correction from a slightly different point of view. It is too early to decide which is best, and, when we do, we must tailor the solution to Massachusetts conditions. For now, within our existing legislation, some radical revamping of the Massachusetts correctional system is possible and very much in order. A modernized classification system could take advantage of the immense reservoir of knowledge regularly accumulated by the field workers who actually steer and guide the inmate from the prison door to respected citizenship. We are failing to cull and assimilate their experiences for their successors. We could do it, at least in part, by setting up a program for institution personnel and field workers to rotate their duties. The entire correctional program would benefit greatly, because in no field of social work is the necessity of sensing the public "pulse" more important than in dealing with these human failures.

The staff members in women's institutions, by the very nature of their work, lead restricted lives entirely removed from the stresses and strains of the community. Thus, they stagnate and lose the ability to appraise properly or understand the problems and forces that sent their charges behind prison bars.

Students newly from college and bursting with book knowledge and theories are needed in all phases of correctional work. Yet they should spend several years of internship to gain practical experience at a community level. They should actually wallow in the common life and know what the slums sound and smell like on a zero winter's night or on a July afternoon when tempers mount to the breaking point. That's what every young doctor has to do before he can go into private practice. In the same way, social workers should deal with normal individuals in the community before being ac-

cepted by institutions which deal only with the abnormal and emotionally distraught; and parole officers should be required to have institutional experience with prisoners before working with them outside.

Beardsley Ruml, that amazing American who almost succeeded in making tax-paying painless when he thought up the withholding tax, feels that academic social science has gone badly off course and won't be put back easily.* He feels it is exceptionally difficult to study because it cannot be brought into the laboratory for observation and because none of the important forces that social science deals with can be controlled or isolated, or experimented with. They must be observed when and as they operate in everyday America, and academic programs have no facilities for that kind of field work.

Ruml also believes the current malaise is due to the preponderance of introverts on the faculties of our colleges and universities who think and teach in terms of theories that sound fine in classrooms but often have little or nothing to do with practical applications to society. The best social scientists alive are not in our universities, but in business and government actually working on existing problems. He believes it is a deplorable economic waste that their private wisdom cannot be made available as a public possession.

I agree with him entirely. In any Parole Board, for instance, there is a vast reservoir of knowledge and information, and if some of our great universities would set up permanent seminars where penological staffs could be kept abreast of constantly changing conditions, they, in turn, would gladly impart their specialized knowledge to the social science students who will succeed them in doing the actual work. This forum or seminar could attract the best minds in allied fields for I am sure probation officers, judges, police chiefs, businessmen (who are an essential reservoir of employment for re-

* C. H. Grattan, "Beardsley Ruml and His Ideas," *Harpers Magazine* (May, 1952).

leased prisoners), social workers, doctors, scientists, teachers, clergymen, newspapermen, legislators, and lawyers would gladly participate in a healthy, stimulating program that pooled their experiences to promote better understanding of our criminal problems.

Here is one concrete step which would, I think, improve conditions in all aspects of correction programs more than any sweeping change in the law. After all, though good laws help, even the best will be effective only if they are administered well by officers backed up by the knowledge and ability and co-operation of the whole community.

I devote a good deal of space in this book, I'm afraid, to writing about the changes that ought to be made in various laws and procedures. Now, for a change, I am happy to report progress that has been instituted and has been a great help in our work.

A few years ago, Congress passed a law allowing the several states to "enter into a compact or agreement for the co-operative and mutual effort in the prevention of crime, and other assistance." With the adoption of Section 151A of Chapter 127 of the General Laws Massachusetts entered that compact. Recently, with the signing of Texas, all forty-eight states became members, which gave the Interstate Compact the force of law throughout the entire country.

I can best explain what the compact accomplishes and how it works by giving an imaginary example. Suppose Jane Smith was born and brought up in Illinois. She ran away and came to Boston, where she committed a crime for which she was imprisoned. If the Board decides that she is ready for parole, she will obviously have a much better chance of fitting into the community in Illinois, where her family and friends are, than in Massachusetts, where she is a virtual stranger. The compact makes this possible and turns the responsibility of supervising her parole over to her home state.

Before the compact went into effect, the state that sentenced a criminal had to take care of her parole, even though she may have come into the state only to commit the crime and have no other connection with it.

The compact serves a twofold purpose. First, it allows a state to reject from its confines an undesirable criminal who may have been operating within its borders, which is the plight of all states such as New York, Florida, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and California which have large cities. Big-time criminals seek out the densely populated cities where all the props and assists they need in their business are readily available and where they can get lost in the crowds.

The other benefit is that the law enforcement agencies of the accepting state know in advance when a criminal is about to be released and instead of getting a bitter surprise, know where she is to be living and what work plans have been arranged for her.

Continuing with the example of Jane Smith, when we in Massachusetts vote her parole, we notify the home state, in this example Illinois, and send the parole authorities there copies of all our records on the case. The Illinois parole board investigates the home situation, opportunities for work, and all the other factors bearing on the possibility of her serving a successful parole there. Under the compact, Illinois must accept her unless there is a valid reason for rejecting our application. The Illinois parole board makes the decision, and if it accepts, Jane's reservations are made by a Massachusetts agent, who also takes her to the train or airport and starts her on her way. On arrival she reports at once to the Illinois parole office and it takes over the administration of her parole, giving us monthly reports on her progress.

Jane becomes the responsibility of the Illinois parole department. She would remain under its supervision to the expiration of her sentence. Should Jane become a serious parole

violator, the facts would be communicated back to Massachusetts. It would then be our responsibility to issue a warrant and to send transportation officers to bring the parolee back in custody to the institution from which she was released.

The procedures under the interstate compact work out very well with the states that have modern parole systems. There are of course still many states where parole supervision is only just beginning to be developed — and with these the procedures are slow and the supervision only nominal.

Many times, with all these precautions, we have tragic and conspicuous failures, but in the great majority of cases the compact procedures are working out very well. We rarely refuse another state's request that we take over the parole of a Massachusetts girl, but we did have to deny one recently.

The Compact Administrator, who in this state has always been the Chairman of our Board, although the Governor can appoint anyone, received a letter from one of the western states where the population is so small that there are few female offenders. The letter announced that State X had just granted a parole to Lena and asked if Massachusetts would accept her. A sketchy summary of the case was enclosed. Lena was apparently on a cross-country tour when she stopped in a small city and picked up and lived with a sailor whom she met in a tavern. All went well for a couple of days while their money for liquor lasted, but then they were separated somehow. Probably Lena just overslept. When she finally woke up and went out looking for her man, she found him in an amusement park dancing with another woman. Lena did her best to win him back. She made quite a scene, but her sailor declined to be distracted from his dancing partner.

Lena finally withdrew to a dime store, where she bought a pointed paring knife. Back she went to the dance hall, and

as the music played on, she waited until her man and his partner swung by her. When they still ignored her, she lunged onto the dance floor and with the strength of a woman scorned drove the blade of her new knife into the sailor's back, between two ribs in such a way that he slumped to the floor dead before she even let go of the knife.

She was arrested on the spot and indicted for first-degree murder. The prosecution had little trouble in preparing its case, for at least a dozen patrons recognized her and the clerk in the dime store was able to identify her and clearly remembered selling her the knife not a half hour before. Lena was found guilty of first-degree murder and given a ninety-three-year sentence. She was paroled almost at once, for just eleven months later we received the request for Massachusetts to make the investigation and assume supervision for the next ninety-two years and one month that Lena's sentence had to run. The summary was so brief that we could not discover the reasons for this most unusually early release. There certainly must either have been some amazing factors in the case or our sister state has astonishing confidence in the ability of the Massachusetts parole department to work miracles.

Be that as it may, after the Compact Administrator and the rest of the Board had recovered from our surprise we began to investigate Lena's case.

State X had referred the case to us for a valid reason. Lena, according to their verified court record, had been born and reared in one of Massachusetts' large industrial cities. She was now only twenty-two years old and had not been in touch with any of her family in the last seven years. She had never worked for more than two or three weeks at a time and had never settled anywhere long enough to establish residence in any other state.

When our agent finished reading this discouraging report and began to appreciate what supervising Lena's parole would add to her case load for the rest of her life, she made her own routine investigation. The record gave the addresses of Lena's

two sisters and of her mother in her native city. But the agent discovered that the family was unknown at one address. Neighbors who had lived in the vicinity for ten years failed even to recall a family of that name ever having lived there. At the address given as the home of a married sister, our agent found a city block of semi-demolished wooden buildings: windows broken, clapboards torn off for firewood and the roof half caved in by the weight of the snows of several winters. A check of the city directory failed to disclose any of the names listed in the report as living in the city.

The Board sent the inquiring state a copy of our agent's home investigation and declined to accept supervision on the grounds that there was no constructive plan available.

I frequently think of that girl and wonder how she is getting along; but I wonder more about her family. Who were they? Why did they separate? What was her story during the seven years she wandered around the country seeking the approval and affection she never found?

Besides showing the disastrous effects of a split home — or perhaps a home where there never was a father — and the lengths that a girl starved for affection will go to find the love she needs, this case illustrates some of the steps in the process of administering the Interstate Compact. I do not wish to imply that all the cases which come under the compact are this serious. I don't know what I should have done had I been sitting in judgment on this case, for I never saw sufficient data on the case on which to base a valid judgment. As a matter of theory, though, I will say that if we are ever going to return such an unfortunate and still young woman to society and give her a chance to have a useful life, it is far better to do it at a reasonably early date, before she is seriously contaminated by hardened recidivists, and while she will have a long period of trial and supervision to help her adjust. However, I do feel that ninety-two years and one month is a little too long a job to give any parole board or agent.

6

There's Nothing like a Good Employer

TO A GIRL just out of prison, a job can be either a foundation around which to build her new life or a misery that can undo all the good her agent or helpful family interest may be doing her. Thus suitable jobs and good employers for the girls are of constant interest to the Board.

About thirty years ago a new set of immigration restrictions were established by Congress which sharply reduced the number of girls available for domestic work. That opened new employment possibilities for released female prisoners, and we now have many more offers of jobs each month than we have girls to fill them, but the matching up of parolee and employer is an art in itself. Of course we do receive some requests from persons who are quite unsuitable as prospective employers, but these are few, and the agent is usually able to estimate the sincerity of the employer when she makes her routine call on her before the girl is released. We know that if an employer ever tries to impose too much work on a girl, she lets her plight be known in short order. Even the feeble-minded girls are extremely vocal about "their rights." Most of the arbitration that the agent is involved in concerns girls who refuse to do a fair day's work for their employers in return for their wages.

An employer assumes less risk when she takes a parolee into her house than she does when she hires a girl from an advertisement in the newspaper or from an employment agency which really knows nothing about the background of a girl. A woman employing a parolee has the privilege of inquiring into the record of a girl's past, and she has the constant help

of the agent in ironing out problems and helping the girl fit into her new environment. Then too, the released prisoner, trying to start a new life, is usually so grateful to be accepted in the home that she will be a dependable and loyal worker. The more fully the public realizes that these girls need a fair opportunity to earn an honest living, the more successful our parole program will be.

Girls who successfully complete their paroles working in a home usually stay on that job until they leave to get married or leave for some other equally good reason. This record is the best advertisement our girls could have, and employers who have once had one of our girls usually beseech us to send them another and another. Many of them deserve a great deal of credit and the sincere thanks of the community for the humane and charitable interest they show in these homeless girls and the way some of them even virtually make them members of their own families.

We have one employer, Mrs. Bense, who operates a rest home in an isolated rural area and always has two or three of our girls as employees. In her case, and in a few others, we make an exception to our rule of not allowing one parolee to associate with another. There are some individuals who cannot work alone, and others who are better in pairs, supplementing each other and giving each other courage, when they might fail on their own, removed from that companionship.

Mrs. Bense's rest home accommodates about thirty patients, and she and Mr. Bense and their daughter live and eat with the staff members in a large old colonial farmhouse. In the past decade Mrs. Bense has employed between eighteen and twenty different parolees, and since she has a peculiar knack of being able to work best with dull people, we naturally turned to her when we wanted to place Pauline, a lonely, frightened eighteen-year-old who needed a protected environment.

Pauline had charged her father with incest about four years before we first saw her. At that time the Chief Justice himself happened to be sitting when her case came to trial before the Superior Court. When she testified she completely changed her story so the case was dismissed. Naturally, the family situation continued to concern the neighborhood where she lived, and, as Pauline was not doing well at school, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children began trying to work with her. For a while she seemed to improve in school, but it was obvious her limited mentality was going to prevent her from keeping up with her class or with others in her age group. Interested relatives and school authorities decided to enroll her in a trade school and to give her special group work at a social agency, but Pauline's progress was spotty, to say the least. She left the living quarters that had been arranged for her, usually to return home, and since she was not under any court control and was beyond legal school age, she really was at liberty to do about as she saw fit. Sometimes she would work a few days, and others she would visit relatives and do a little baby-sitting in exchange for her meals.

After about six months of this aimless drifting Pauline once more arrived at the police station and again charged her father with incest, this time with most lurid details. Her father was held over once more for the Superior Court, and by coincidence the Chief Justice happened to be sitting again. Pauline took the stand and for the second time changed her story, just as she had two years before. The Judge called for a recess, and with a matron and the court physician present held a conference with Pauline in his chambers. He talked to her long and earnestly about the gravity of the charge she was making against her father, warning her of the severe penalty of the wrong she was doing him if the accusations were untrue.

Back in court Pauline once more accused her father and then, for the third time, suddenly withdrew the accusations.

Since the court doctor had previously declared that she was sane, the judge found her guilty of perjury and sentenced her to five years in the Reformatory for Women.

Pauline had served about eighteen months when we voted to release her and sent her agent to make the necessary arrangements to take her to Mrs. Bense's rest home, where she was to live as a family member and be included in enough social activities so that she would not need outside contacts for the first part of her parole. From the way Pauline seemed to need this shelter and sought protection like an abused puppy, I have always believed that she really feared and hated her father and that her original story was true. It was probably fear of him when he actually confronted her in court which made her change that story, even though it meant she had to go to prison.

Pauline would never be a whirlwind success, but Mrs. Bense knew that and only assigned her to routine work under the immediate direction of a brighter, more experienced girl. She settled in very comfortably in her new home and appeared to be happy enough so that she never made the slightest attempt to leave the locality nor complain to her agent about her restrictions. Then suddenly came the news of her father's death in an automobile accident. This left poor Pauline entirely alone in the world and plunged her into a severe emotional upset. Another parolee, Anna, who was a forty-year-old woman with grown children of her own, and Mrs. Bense were most helpful in their understanding of Pauline's grief, and before long she was beginning to look better and do better work. It was quite obvious that her mind was at last at ease, so when Anna helped her to make some dresses for herself it improved her morale tremendously.

At Thanksgiving time Mrs. Bense asked permission to take Pauline to Vermont with her family to spend the holiday with Mr. Bense's relatives. Of course we were delighted to have Pauline get this vacation even if it was only for a few days.

Shortly after Christmas the agent came into the office with the news that there had been an enormous change in Pauline. She now had a new hair-do and a permanent wave, no more of that drab stringy hair and sad appearance. But even more important, Pauline had a boy friend. She had met a young man, a cripple who lived with Mr. Bense's brother and his wife in Vermont, and they had been corresponding ever since Thanksgiving. Early in the spring Pauline told her agent that she and Ralph were planning to be married in the fall if the Board would give them permission. It wasn't hard to arrange that on his next trip down from Vermont Ralph would spend the night at the rest home, and Mrs. Bense would drive him and Pauline to the office to discuss their plans with the Board.

That visit was a very happy occasion for us all, because the Board members had not seen Pauline for the many months since her original release hearing, and indeed she now was a changed girl from the timid child we paroled that day. She had gained some weight, was attractively dressed, and appeared calm, poised, and happy.

Ralph was a nice young man, rather seriously crippled by an attack of polio he had suffered as a child, but not too crippled to have been able to work as a porter at the state capitol in Vermont. We were impressed by his earnestness about his plans to marry Pauline, when the Chairman asked him if he knew her court history and asked if there were any questions he would like to ask either about Pauline or about parole procedures. He replied that she had hold him and that he thought he understood all about them.

He assured us that while working at the capitol he had gone to the local parole office to learn all the details of procedure under the Interstate Compact. He had progressed so far with his marriage plans that he had located a used trailer which they were going to be able to rent for their future home. He even produced a bank book with funds sufficient

to buy the food and necessities for them to set up housekeeping. So the green light from us was all they needed. The Board gladly gave its permission for them to marry and wrote the formal request to the Vermont authorities to investigate Ralph's home situation. If they approved, we asked them to assume co-operative supervision of Pauline after their wedding had taken place here. In due time we received their reply accepting Pauline, and the agent notified her that she and Ralph could proceed with their plans just as any other young couple would.

Labor Day week end Mrs. Bense gave Pauline a small wedding at the rest home, with all the patients attending as guests. Pauline was a white bride in a dress that Mrs. Bense and Anna had made for her as a present. Mr. Bense's brother and sister-in-law drove the groom down for the wedding, and after the ceremony Mrs. Bense and Anna served one of those meals that only New England housewives know how to prepare. With many tears and heartfelt thanks, Pauline left her employer, and she and her husband were driven to their new home in their trailer that night.

Our news of Pauline was fragmentary now, for under the Compact we only receive a monthly summary of the parolee's progress, and Pauline did not write us a personal letter very often. In one of them, she told us she had fallen on the ice during the winter and had injured her head so seriously that although she had come home from the hospital she still was not well. In another she told us she was pregnant and that she and Ralph were very, very happy over the prospects of having a child. During the next months we heard nothing directly from Pauline, but her agent picked up bits of news every time she went to see Anna and the new girl who had taken Pauline's place at the Bense rest home. She learned that Pauline had been hospitalized several times during her pregnancy because of complications that had arisen from her head injury. Then one Monday morning a succinct telegram told

US: PAULINE FENNO DIED THIS MORNING. HER BOY LIVED. FUNERAL WEDNESDAY. RALPH.

This would seem to be the logical place to end the story of our contact with Pauline, but not so. Ralph was, of course, quite dazed, and in his grief he allowed a friend to place his baby back in Massachusetts to board. Some months later a hotly contested court action developed, when the foster parents wished to adopt the baby and Ralph refused to relinquish him. Ralph had always supported the child but had not been able to visit him often because of the distance and the difficulties of travel. The foster parents tried to establish that because Ralph had no home or relatives and was crippled he was an unsuitable person to have the legal custody of the little boy, while they, as husband and wife living in very comfortable circumstances, could give the child many advantages he could not otherwise have.

Ralph wrote to the parole department and asked if it was possible for one of us to appear to explain how dependable and reliable he had been with his wife. Pauline's agent was only too glad to go and with the Board's permission took our actual records, which she interpreted for the court where the adoption petition was heard.

The next week the agent received the following letter:

Dear Miss Gabriel,

I am writing this letter to let you know that I have not forgotten you and I am sorry that I have not written sooner.

I want to thank you for all you did for my dear wife and myself and for the part you played in my court battle. I went back to court and the petition that Mrs. Kenny put in was denied and I got my little son back. We are now living with Mr. and Mrs. Bense where I was before I got married. Mrs. Bense is real good to little Paul and he is doing fine.

My only hope is, that someday I can make a home for him and see that he gets as good a step-mother as the kind of mother Pauline would have been to him.

Miss Gabriel, I could give a girl a good break, no matter what she had done, if she was really sorry, and wanted a guy who would be good to her. And I hope it will be a girl who has been in the same boat my wife was in, because I believe that they make the best wives; if they are truly sorry and want a good guy.

I know I have no regrets in marrying Pauline and I believe I gave her a good chance in life and made a good husband for her. So Miss Gabriel if you know of a girl that you think would like to meet a fellow who will try and be good to her and help her in life, you send me her address and I will try and do everything in my power to make her a good citizen.

Thank you again for everything you did. I shall always regard you as a very good friend of my son and myself.

As ever,

RALPH

For the time being we have lost track of Ralph and his son Paul, but I feel very sure he will either come into the office someday or write us again to let us know how they are getting along. We shall be most interested to hear.

Most readers will certainly agree with me, after reading Pauline's tragic story, that one of the most important factors in the success of our work is the knowledge, wisdom, and understanding of the supervisor and the agent in selecting understanding employers for our girls. God give the Commonwealth of Massachusetts more women of the caliber of our old friend Mrs. Bense.

Whenever a girl who has had a good employer reaches the end of her sentence, the Board is delighted to reward her with a Good Conduct Release, but I always feel, on such an occasion, that we should give the employer a gilt-edged certificate expressing our appreciation and that of the parolee. As it is, her only recompense is a job well done. There are all too few employers willing to try this type of achievement, but those who do accomplish more than an institution ever can.

“Just Drunk?”

Drink, puppy, drink
And let every puppy drink
Who is old enough to lap and to swallow,
For he'll grow into a hound
And we'll pass the bottle around
And merrily we'll whoop and we'll holloa.

OLD ENGLISH HUNTING SONG

THERE ARE many people who, if they think at all of alcoholism, conjure up a convivial and happy scene with many individuals involved, all having a hilarious time. Perhaps there is a casualty here or there on the fringe. Then, someone will say, “Oh, well, it's too bad, she had a little too much.”

But the true alcoholics, who run afoul of the law, are a sorry picture indeed and usually very lonely solitary beings. They have been going their futile way slowly and surely from one failure to another, each a step lower than the last, until they themselves don't know or remember how low they actually have gone.

The few studies which have been made of prison inmates show that a clear majority are alcoholics. For example, a Massachusetts Legislative Commission which investigated the problem of drunkenness in 1945 learned that fifty per cent of the felonies committed in the state were related to alcoholism and about eighty-five per cent of the commitments to the county jails and houses of correction were due to alcoholism or crimes related to drinking.

The pattern of the alcoholic criminal is rather clear. She

has been drinking for many years. She may have taken to liquor as an escape from reality, to "drown her sorrows," or to relax herself and ease her loneliness. Whatever her reason, she may have been a "home drinker," and as a result a confirmed alcoholic before her family or friends realized it. Then followed several arrests. At first the police locked her up for a few hours and then let her go. Eventually she landed in court, received probation, failed to meet its requirements, and went to jail. But alcoholism is a disease. What treatment did she receive for it from the courts or in jail?

The answer is both short and shocking: none. Time rests heavily on a jailed prisoner. Few jails or houses of correction have any work for the women to do. A few may work in the laundry, do some sewing, or a bit of kitchen work, but for most of them boredom is their boon companion.

After she's been in jail for a while, the alcoholic may be released when a County Commissioner signs her parole permit. In many instances, he signs it without even talking with the inmate, and the supervision given the parolee is almost nil. The probation officers of the local court are technically given this parole supervisory power, but they are already overburdened with other duties.

A typical case was Jennie, who was sentenced after thirty-four previous court appearances for various offenses, all of which had their basis in alcohol. A rundown of the charges against her included: idle and disorderly conduct, drunkenness, fornication, disturbing the peace, vagrancy, willful destruction of property, lewd and lascivious speech and behavior. She finally was sent away on an adultery charge.

Jennie was thirty-eight years old, robust, smiling and likable when she appeared before us for a pre-parole interview. My first reaction when she entered the room was one of amazement. From her record I most certainly expected to find a far different type of woman. First, of course, I expected to find her wasted, tense, nervous, and, as is usual with such cases,

ready to blame everyone else for her situation. It was not so with Jennie! She had none of the typical alcoholic loneliness either. She was just an uncomplicated realist who frankly admitted she remembered little about her life because she had been drunk constantly for the last twenty years.

Our interview progressed nicely. We had verified all the facts regarding a marriage and a son (from the official record) before the interview. It was startling actually to confront her and try to reconcile our picture with this very likable woman who with no emotion or reserve retold the story point by point. Yes, she vaguely remembered a husband, but he was of no account at all.

"He went somewhere," she said. "I never did really know where, just on a boat."

When questioned about her boy, she perked up quite brightly and said that she heard he was in the Navy. No, he had never been legally adopted. She just gave him away, she did not remember just when — oh, yes, when he was a very little boy. Years and years ago. He wouldn't know her anyhow — and for that matter, she wasn't so sure she would know him — and why should she bother, now? A friend had always had him across the river, and she guessed he thought he was her child. She had heard that the friend and her husband were kind to him — so why should she bother?

When the talk turned to her mother and father, Jennie's memory was clearer. Liquor had trimmed her father, but now, in his old age, he'd gone off it entirely. He lived in a small seafaring village on Cape Cod with her mother, for whom Jennie expressed devotion. Her mother was young for her years and went out to do domestic work in "the big houses" of the town during the summer months.

Jennie had kept in touch with her mother in her own way. She paid a visit or sent a letter every two or three years — "If I was sober," she added with a sheepish grin.

While Jennie was in the Reformatory, a case worker had

been in touch with the mother. The result was an active exchange of letters between Jennie and her mother. One of the most surprising revelations of Jennie's career was that she made no pretense whatever of ever having worked. She admitted never attempting to find gainful employment, or even having thought it particularly necessary. We explained to her, of course, that parole was only a trial in the community, and that she would be under sentence for her full two years. If she wanted a parole trial, she would have to be willing to work at some suitable employment and to live in a respectable area.

Jennie also clearly understood she could not return to her old haunts and friends on the waterfront. There must be no more stevedores for Jennie if she wished to remain "outside." We even went so far as to make Boston and waterfront ports out of bounds for her. She was not to come to the city or its surrounding suburbs during her entire parole period. Jennie understood and was eager to co-operate.

About six weeks later when the entire Board went to the institution for a formal parole hearing, Jennie had worked out a detailed plan for the future. Since it seemed quite workable to the Board, we voted Jennie her parole, with two added special parole rules as safeguards. The first was that Jennie did not have to go on a spree, or be found really intoxicated to provide cause for revocation. It meant that her agent, upon hearing a reliable report that Jennie was drinking, would ask the Board to issue a warrant and return her at once to the institution for Jennie's own protection. The second stipulation listed specific cities and areas where she could not go.

After the formal release vote, Jennie remained in the institution about one week. During this time her case was assigned to a field agent, who made a home visit to her mother, where, Jennie had said, she was welcome and wished to go. The agent found a tired, pleasing woman who understood her one child — only too well.

"A chip off the old block," said the mother, nodding in the direction of the old man who sat in a backless chair in the sun by the door. Their gray clapboard house looked as weather-beaten as Jennie's father. He sat in his chair paying no attention and only moved a little now and then as the sun went behind the scrawny locust trees that lined the fence dividing his property from the sand road.

The mother told our agent that she would welcome Jennie if her daughter had some way to support herself. This was a respectable neighborhood, and the mother had her own employers to think about. The agent assured her that work was one of the requirements of supervised release, and that if she did no work Jennie would be returned to prison.

Everything was finally arranged. Jennie would be released to her mother for a visit of no more than three or four days so she would not become a financial burden. The agent would then come and drive her to a nursing home where the agent had found her a living-in job.

This plan has worked out very satisfactorily. Jennie is far removed from any environment of easy living. She is under the constant supervision of her employer six days a week, and on the seventh she takes a bus directly to Cape Cod to spend the night with her parents.

So far, all is well. At times, Jennie is restless and complains of petty problems: she doesn't like her shoes, her feet hurt, the second girl chews gum, the older patients snore (and she can't stand snoring). Jennie was an extremely poor parole risk. She still is. How one could ever predict her as a complete success story I do not know! Any day, if she gets too restless, she may stop a northbound bus rather than one headed for Cape Cod. That day will be the end of Jennie. One never knows. But she may get sufficient satisfaction by caring for these helpless old people in the nursing home to want to keep on being a lady when she goes to see her mother each week. Even if she does, it will always be on a day-to-day basis, since

there has never been any long-range planning in Jennie's life, and there probably never will be. But the *desire* is there, and so we have hope.

Chronic alcoholics differ very widely in the pattern of their behavior. One girl when drinking heavily may live quietly as a secret drinker and barely come to the attention of her next-door neighbor, while another girl who may not actually drink for as long a period of time or consume half as much liquor may become a vicious, dangerous personality after being off on a spree for only a few hours. Here is a story about an alcoholic woman of the second type.

Charlotte had an excellent background and a good mind and so was a rather unusual offender. Her environment and family history gave no clue to the reasons for her long life of delinquency.

She was born in a Boston suburb, one of three children, went to high school, and had two years of training in a business school, where, with an IQ of 125, she made a fine record. She started to drink socially while working in an insurance office, and soon became an alcoholic. Later, she married and had three children, now ranging from twelve to twenty-one years of age. The man Charlotte married was far below her in intellect and cultural background. He too was an alcoholic throughout their life together. He left her seven years ago and has never been traced since.

Charlotte is a fast, smooth talker, and talked herself out of one situation after another. Her family had "good connections," so she had never been sent away before, except for five short jail sentences, ranging from ten to thirty days. Charlotte only got these when her physical condition was so bad that she couldn't care for herself and probation was out of the question.

During her first reformatory sentence Charlotte's children had been separated and their home split up. An aunt took the oldest daughter, who has turned out to be a splendid

young woman. The younger boy and girl were placed with private child-care agencies, which in turn placed them in foster homes.

Charlotte continued her life of dissipation — drinking, working a day or a week, slowly sliding down the scale to degradation. On birthdays or holidays she would try to sober up and ask permission to visit her children. When one daughter grew up she and her mother quarreled and stopped seeing or hearing from one another. By this time Charlotte was living in complete squalor, usually in a dingy rooming house as a “housekeeper” for some vagrant.

Once there were three men and another woman in Charlotte’s room. The night was cold and stormy, and their liquor was running out. To replenish their supply, Charlotte taxied to a large hotel nearby to look up a likely stranger to “invite” to her party, hoping he would have money enough to finance a few more drinks for the entire group. She returned with a prospect in a little while, but the shabby lodging house aroused his suspicions and he tried to leave. The group set upon him and a battle followed. Charlotte seized a carving knife and hit him on the head. The knife glanced off and embedded itself deeply in his neck near the shoulder. Frightened but too drunk to think rationally, Charlotte and her friends threw the stranger out of the window, below which he was found soon afterwards, bleeding profusely.

At the hospital where he was taken the stranger lingered between life and death for seventeen days, but finally recovered. Charlotte and friends were all arrested and found guilty of “idle, disorderly and vagrancy charges.” The court filed additional charges against Charlotte for keeping a house of ill fame and found her guilty of “murderous assault.” She was given a five-to-eight-year sentence and sent to the Reformatory for Women.

The gates of the institution had hardly closed on Charlotte when she began to exert pressure to get an early release. Clergymen, lawyers, volunteer “do-gooders” all appealed to

the Parole Board on "this unusual case." The month never passed when we did not get a letter or a visit from some new person. They always stated that Charlotte had learned her lesson, and was needed in the community to mother her children. These dabblers were sure, after listening to her, that the judge was wrong in committing her. Even the warden got sentimental and wrote a letter asking for a "special early release," adding that she was convinced further incarceration "would not be helpful in this type case." However, the Parole Board did not see any reason for "special consideration" and did not release Charlotte until "regular time." Three years in prison and five years of supervision would be, we felt, the minimum time needed to teach her a new way of life.

At the parole interview, Charlotte put on a sales talk that would have convinced a layman. She would never touch liquor again. It was the basis of all her troubles. She just wanted to work and get a home together for her children. We voted to release her, because this was her first commitment to the Reformatory, and her case was the kind that benefits from trial under supervision.

We were able to get Charlotte an excellent domestic placement in a fashionable community where there was no liquor license. She was to receive her room and board and thirty dollars a week, with one afternoon and evening off. If she proved emotionally stable, her privileges would be increased. In a year the agent and Charlotte could map out a plan for her to live on her own, though still, of course, checked by the agent. Then Charlotte would do office work, which she was well suited to do by experience and superior intellect.

Her parole agent asked the private agency (responsible for her children) for permission for Charlotte to visit them on her day off. The parole agent decided to drive her on this first trip because the journey by bus would take Charlotte through the city and, perchance, tempt her to look up some of her old friends and haunts. Charlotte told her agent that, by luck, this first day off was also her daughter Nancy's birthday. She

would so like to take her a cake. Since it was impossible for Charlotte to purchase one in the town where she worked, the agent promised to stop by a bakery and get one for her.

The great day arrived. The agent with birthday cake in hand waited for three busses, but no Charlotte! A telephone call to her employer proved she had left at the appointed time, but ten days passed with no word. Charlotte never did return to her employer's house.

One day not long after a disheveled, hysterical vision dashed into the parole office with a taxi driver in hot pursuit. Charlotte had evaded the fare. One heel was off her black satin high-heeled shoes; her black satin dress, with the keyhole neckline, was filthy; her ruddy brown hair was bleached straw — and Charlotte was very drunk. She was so incoherently drunk that she didn't even recognize us in the parole division, the very people to whom she had made so many promises. We had no alternative but to revoke her parole.

Gradually the background of Charlotte's story emerged. Apparently she had invaded her sister's house to see her daughter Nancy, who was living there. The sister had had to call the police, and the chief had still not recovered from the effects of Charlotte's rampage. He reported that she had made the previous night hideous with her determined efforts to enter the sister's house. He believed she should never be released again — and he believed it with emphasis.

In her routine search of Charlotte before taking her back to the Reformatory, the agent found a pawn ticket in her pocket. She made the rounds of the pawn shops and finally found that the ticket was for a brand-new ring, still in its box, with the twelve-dollar price tag still on it. The agent paid the three-dollar pawn charge, and when the pawnbroker heard the story he wouldn't take the interest to which he was entitled.

On her next trip through the area, our agent stopped at little Nancy's foster home to give her the ring her mother so wanted her to have. It was too big so she took Nancy to the

local jeweler, and paid fifty cents to have the ring fitted. The child didn't ask where or how her mother was. Undoubtedly, with the wisdom of children, she knew.

After ten years' experience with releasing and supervising female prisoners into the community, I have come to know many of these girls quite thoroughly. We try to build a sound relationship with all the parolees, especially with the more serious cases, and we hope each girl will come to us for counsel and aid when she is in the community. This system has a twofold purpose: first, we are there when she needs us most; and second, she learns, when problems come to her (as they do to us all) to seek help from a reliable source. As long as she doesn't wait until her troubles bring her to disaster, the parolee will always find help from either state or private agencies. But, if she delays too long, the law necessarily steps in with drastic action. Through the years, it is amazing to see the number of individuals who keep coming to see us or who write us long after they are off parole. They really regard the Board or their agents as their first friends. We often open the mail in the morning to find a picture of a new baby or a snapshot of a child all dressed up for First Communion. Another letter may tell us that Mary and Tom have the house roofed over even though they can't buy windows yet. They may have a new refrigerator, besides a goat and seven geese, and they are all getting on nicely.

Such good news gives us a spiritual pat on the back!

But, because of the cases I have cited and many others I could cite, we on the Board have profound respect for the role that liquor plays in many women's criminal careers. If we are to find a single key that is important to both the parole agent and to the parolee in their combined efforts to rebuild a good citizen, it will be found in the successful control of the use of liquor by the prisoner. You will see in the following chapters how often alcoholism is at the bottom of all kinds of tragedies.

There's Always Hope

No words of mine can be of direct aid to a serious alcoholic, but I firmly believe that Alcoholics Anonymous can be, not only to those who wish to stop drinking but also to those who have reached the stage where their will is destroyed, so that it is no longer possible for them to give it up without help. Each of our prisons has a branch of Alcoholics Anonymous, visited each week by members from the outside who explain their program to any interested inmates and encourage them to attend regular meetings as soon as they are released. I cannot stress too enthusiastically my feelings for the work the A.A.'s do, and my only regret is that so few prisoners embrace the program. We have seen them bring about some remarkable adjustments in cases that without their help we would have regarded as extremely poor risks.

Joining an A.A. group is an entirely voluntary procedure. The individual must first show that she needs and really wants help. Once the A.A.'s have the patient's desire to start from, they work night and day, with an indefatigable zeal which is simply amazing, to help the new member become a useful and happy member of society. Perhaps the most important aspect of their tireless efforts to a parolee is the readily available social program that every A.A. group provides. All released prisoners have been sorely dislocated from any established niche in society by their recent imprisonment as well as by the period of disorderly living that probably led up to it. Since every A.A. has also been through a similar dislocation, he can give a newly released parolee with a history of alcoholism a place where she can, if she only will, always find an under-

standing and congenial social group in the framework of the A.A. clubs. Everyone there has been lonely; they all have failed in one way or another; and the regular members have all found a way to overcome their failure. They know first-hand what the new member is going through, so they ask no questions and have no inordinate curiosity about the other person's life. Self-pity ends the moment one crosses the threshold of an A.A. meeting. There is so much work to be done helping others who are much worse off that there is no time for anyone to think about himself at all. The enthusiasm of the members for their work seems to be contagious. I have often seen docile and mild-mannered girls become enthusiastic crusaders, "once they got the program."

At a release hearing, the Board always urges a girl with a history of alcoholism to attend A.A. meetings after her release. It would be futile to make it a condition of parole, because there would be no merit or value in attendance at meetings if the girl did not do it voluntarily; but we do try to arrange the individual girl's placement and program so she can attend the regular meetings if she has indicated she feels that doing so will help her.

We had a young woman some years ago who joined the program while she was still in the institution, and whose case perfectly illustrates the value of the A.A. work in prisons. Had she waited until she was outside, even with the best intentions in the world, she would never have come close to a meeting.

Martha was serving a first commitment for neglect of her minor children when she was presented to us in regular order for release. Her record showed a long history of marital trouble during which she and her husband had been hurling charges and countercharges back and forth at each other for years. Both had been definitely alcoholic for a long time and were a serious trial to the probation officers who had tried to work with them in an effort to keep the family together.

When Martha and her husband Harry were sober they were wonderfully congenial and kept a good home for their happy children. Harry was a master steamfitter and was capable of earning an extremely good week's pay. He had often worked unbelievably long hours, seven days a week, to fix up some vital piece of equipment in the war plant where he worked. In order to keep going without sleep he drank more and more, and the drunker he got the more he wanted to drink. His immediate boss tolerated Harry because he never had another man who, drunk or sober, could turn out the volume of work Harry could do in a crisis.

During the pressure of the war years, as Harry was working and drinking himself almost into oblivion, Martha was at home caring for the children as they came along. She was one of those childlike personalities who constantly crave excitement. When Harry had been courting her they had been a pair of expert dancers and had traveled far and wide, dancing in every sort of amateur entertainment that was popular at the time. Then, as he began to stay away from home, working nights, Martha started feeling jealous and began nagging him whenever he *did* come home. Soon he found it much easier to stay downtown at one of the taverns where everybody appreciated him than to face a tired, scolding wife and a house full of untidy crying children.

Martha, equally dissatisfied with her lot, spent much of her time "cabin hunting" with her neighbors. First she would drop in on one, then another, and soon she was secretly taking a drink here and a nip there. As time went on, although she did not appear in public as a drunkard, she developed into a steady secret drinker.

After the war, when the extra money for overtime vanished, Harry would spend most of his pay being a big shot at the tavern and come home broke. Other times he would come home cold sober and find his children in such terrible condition that he would work himself into a rage and start a

serious quarrel with Martha. Soon they were behind with the rent and when the landlord evicted them, they could not find a decent place to live. The housing situation was still acute and no one wanted to accept a family with three children which was being evicted.

This crisis brought Harry to his senses. He gave up liquor for three months and finally found an apartment on the lower floor of a large old single dwelling where he could install his family. The two elderly men who owned the house moved upstairs and arranged to have Martha do housework for them in part payment of the rent.

For a while all went well, until Harry began to hear stories from Martha's female friends, who would drop hints about Martha's activities. When Hazel implied that Martha's interest in the old men who lived upstairs was much more than that of a neighbor or housekeeper, Harry disregarded the stories. But as time went on and he found Martha away from home and the children alone every time he came home, he accused her of misbehaving and threatened to kill the old men. Martha screamed back at him that he spent all his pay at the tavern, so she had to go out to work to earn the rent and feed the children. Soon the bickering became brawling, and the brawling became fighting, and a neighbor finally called the police. After the judge had listened to both sides of the story he found Martha guilty of neglect and put her on probation with a serious warning to go home, clean up the house, give up drinking, and report to the probation officer. The judge dismissed Harry's case, after a long private conversation with him at the bench.

Once more calm reigned for a few months, until Harry started to drink again. He and Martha went into the same merry-go-round of drunkenness and neglect, charges and countercharges, abuse and recriminations, climaxed this time when Martha gave birth to a little girl baby, Claire, and Harry claimed that one of the old men had been the father. Martha

denied the accusation with vehemence and charged, in turn, that he was carrying on with Hazel, her erstwhile friend.

Once Harry stopped drinking for six months, came home regularly, and would have settled down into a normal family life, except for the fact that Martha never seemed to be able to keep the children as clean or the house as tidy as Harry's standards required. The bickering broke out again, and this time Harry got out entirely and went downtown to live at a men's hotel.

Finally, after another little boy had been born, Martha sued for and won separate support. Harry couldn't quite believe that such a thing could happen to him. Although he met the court order to support his family regularly, he lived in a nightmare and devoted his entire time to drinking, with a bottle beside him when he slept at night and at work during the day. While he was slowly killing himself in his misery, the dismal boredom of Martha's life was beating her down and driving her back to her secret drinking. Although she had been canny enough in the beginning to sober up before she went to report to the probation officer, she soon slumped completely and was brought into court for violating her probation by neglecting her children.

She was immediately sent to the Reformatory to start serving the full two-year sentence which the judge had originally suspended when he put her on probation. Harry was brought into court and found guilty of neglect too, but his case was placed on file on condition that he stop drinking and pay the state for the support of his five children, who were placed under the temporary custody of the Division of Child Guardianship of the State Department of Public Welfare.

Martha made an excellent adjustment at the Reformatory, where she gave birth to another boy. The Parole Board saw her at her regular hearing and found her to be a reasonable and sensible woman, who told us her commitment had given her time to take stock of herself and face reality. She accepted

full blame for her part in the disaster she had brought on their children by not being able or willing to keep a good home and take care of them. She really loved her children and was heartbroken to be separated from them for almost a year.

With her new perspective, she was beginning to appreciate Harry too. When she compared him to the abusive or even vicious and criminal husbands she heard about from the other women in the Reformatory, Martha began to remember all his fine characteristics and the happiness of their early years together. She had joined A.A. and had attended its meetings faithfully for several months before her hearing. Remembering her own experiences, she could and did enthusiastically accept the program completely and was determined never to touch that first drink. Spurred on by the new hope A.A. had given her, she was looking forward to her release as a time when she could start to re-establish a home that would really be a happy one.

Harry had come to see her often during her commitment, and every time he came she tried to persuade him to go to the A.A.'s, but he wouldn't tolerate the idea and told her that he didn't need help from anyone, much less them. He was always sober when he came to see her, but she was sure that he was still drinking, especially when he would indignantly tell her that he could stop drinking any time he wanted to by himself. Despite Martha's good intentions, the same old boastful Harry could always rile her, and their meetings inevitably ended in an argument.

Martha made up her mind not to live with Harry until he stopped drinking entirely, so the probation officer, the local welfare worker, and her agent worked together to establish Martha in a tenement with her own furniture, which had been in storage, and with all of her children. Since one of her chief requests was that she be allowed to attend A.A. meetings one night a week, her agent arranged for a younger, unmarried sister to come in those evenings and spend the night.

Martha did well right from the very beginning, but much to our surprise Harry did not come back to live with her. He continued to supply support for the children and under the agreement was allowed to have his two oldest boys spend week ends with him, as they had been doing all the time Martha had been away. We had expected that seeing her progress so beautifully would make him weaken and come home, at least for the sake of the children. But no. He continued to live at the men's hotel, although he worked steadily. Martha told her agent that he flatly refused to join her because he was not a hypocrite and was not going to say he would give up drinking when he knew he never would. He continued to ridicule the A.A. program and now that Martha was taking such good care of the children that he could no longer complain, he used that as an excuse to squabble about.

One day, after Martha had been in the community about five months, she and Harry came into the Parole Office to talk to Martha's agent, who was happily astonished when Martha asked blanket permission to leave the state. She had finally won her point, and Harry had suddenly stopped drinking, come home to live, and joined the Alcoholics Anonymous group with her. He found it so rewarding that he wanted her to be able to go to other meetings in the neighboring state with him.

While the agent and Martha were in the next room filling out the papers for the out-of-state permission, Harry stayed in my office. Although I knew from my routine study of the agent's running record of Martha's case that she and Harry had been reconciled, I was surprised at how completely reunited they seemed to be and at how suddenly they had reached such thorough understanding. To find out more about it I asked Harry a couple of leading questions, and in no time he started off on his story.

"It all happened very quickly in the end," he said as he leaned way forward in his chair and spoke in a low strong

voice, glancing over his shoulder all the time as if he were afraid his wife might hear what he was saying. "I had only worked one day that week and I had really been drinking. I was a big shot . . . I earned big money . . . had my own business . . . taught half the lads in the city the steamfitting trade . . . but, what of that? I'm a bum . . . just a bum . . . and I know it. Lady, you couldn't be interested . . . you . . . you've got the whole story there . . . no one's kidding you, you know how low I went . . . low is a nice word for it. Ma'am, don't let me interrupt you . . . you go on with your work. You couldn't be interested . . . but once I used to be someone and by God I'm going to be again.

"Now that week I was telling you about, sure I'd been drunk, really drunk . . . orry-eyed. And I knew she'd nag the life out of me if I tried to go home to sleep." He started off, feeling more confidence as he graphically described the events of that week and then slowly started the long sordid story of the fatigue of the war work and the troubles of his first ten years of married life, which of course I already knew. He frankly admitted that when anything came up that seemed like too much for him, he would try to escape from it in drink. If the work was too hard, he drank more. If the house was dirty he drank so he could kid himself that he could not stand to go home and see his children neglected. When Martha started to drink, he drank all the harder so as not to have time to think about where his marriage was heading. Then that awful day when they were both brought into court. He sobered up before he went in and heard the probation officer describe the sordid conditions of his own home and family, which he realized that morning for the first time were true. He walked out of the court admitting to himself that he was a failure and that he was a potential suicide. He could not accept the truth. He was still a big shot. He, the best steam-fitter in the country, the best dancer in the area, the best this and the best that. And now he had been before the judge,

just as a bum. He certainly could not face that, so he decided to take the easy way out. For a couple of hours he walked around the city dazed, thinking out ways to commit suicide, but he couldn't do that either, so he headed once more for a barroom and decided to take the cowardly way and drink himself into oblivion.

Harry quickly sketched the next few years as he continued on his positive course to an easy death, only the death never arrived that way. Morning always came and he had to get up and go to work. He claimed, with a shy grin, that he believed himself to hold all the records in his city for drinking, and I presume that this is true. He went on to tell how his love for Martha turned to hate when he believed the story Hazel had told him, that his only daughter, little Claire, was not his child. Then how the hate was intensified when Martha was in the Reformatory and was so reasonable about all their problems. Things were even worse when she came out and could have turned again to drink so he could have felt justified in the scorn he wanted to feel for her. But no. Now all she did was nag him about the A.A. On and on he went with his soliloquy, just as if I were not there at all and he were talking to himself. He told of the week end about three months before when on Saturday noon he had met his two oldest boys, Jack and Fred, who were to spend the week end with him as usual. He told of previously hiding a quart of gin in the closet of his dingy room in the men's hotel, for he never dared to go to a tavern or be seen drinking on a day the probation officer was giving him a permit to have the boys with him. He described his torture as the hours of the afternoon dragged out while he sat parched in a movie waiting with the boys until it was time to give them a meal at the automat and then take them to his room to sleep.

Even then there was no peace for him. He went on to tell of his sufferings as he lay writhing on a cot waiting for the boys to settle down and go to sleep so he could safely creep

over to the closet to his cache of gin. Vividly he pictured those two little boys turning and twisting in their sleep as they were bitten by the usual crop of bedbugs that tenanted his bed where they were sleeping. He told of finishing the entire quart that night . . . of the unbelievable hangover that tormented him in the morning . . . of his waking and hearing the boys talking to each other . . . and his pretending to still be asleep.

The younger boy Jackie had said in a whisper, "Freddy, do you think Daddy has bugs in that cot he is sleeping in?"

"Sure, this whole joint has them."

"Then why doesn't Daddy come home to live?"

"I don't know, maybe he doesn't want to," said Freddy.

"I don't see why he doesn't, Freddy. He's a good daddy. He's not like Stuart's daddy, who always hits him every time he meets him on the street, or Charles's, who knocked him down when he asked him for a quarter to go to the movies. I say he's a good daddy and I don't see why he won't come home. We wouldn't have to come and try to sleep in this lousy joint if he would come home. Why won't he? Have you anything against him, Freddy?" continued little Jackie.

"No," replied Freddy, half asleep. "Only why does he have to get drunk every time he takes us out?" Then both boys were quiet.

Harry sat back in the chair as he reached this part of his story and he told me that for once in life he was faced with a situation he could not and did not wish to escape. The scorn of his own children was something he had never thought about, and that day, at that minute, he admitted to himself that if ever a man needed help he needed it, and that after all Martha might be right. He'd give it a try anyhow. One thing was certain, he had taken his last drink.

Just then Martha and her agent came back into the office to get my signature on the out-of-state permission blank which, of course, I was delighted to sign. That finished the business,

but before Martha and Harry left for home they showed us snapshots of the family, all together at a picnic they had gone to the previous Sunday. As a closing remark, made in sort of a whimsical way as if to clear his conscience completely, Harry said, "Even if I say so myself, they're as fine a looking bunch of kids as you ever saw, and little Claire looks just like my mother."

Before the public officials had finally stepped in, Harry and Martha had been quite typical of the neglect cases that come to their attention. They were actually found guilty of neglect, yet they had neglected their children because they had both been drinking for years. The primary cause was much more deep-seated than that, however, and even they will probably never be able to diagnose it, but through the medium of the A.A. program they found a solution to it and a way to live useful lives. Even though alcoholism is still shrouded with darkness as far as scientific knowledge is concerned, we know from its many conspicuous successes that the A.A. program is lighting a path in the right direction.

The great hope in helping criminals comes in the steps that can be taken to remove the factors that lead them to crime. Since alcoholism is one of the most important of those factors, I cannot stress too strongly how important I believe the work of the A.A. program to be. The organization's official open letter speaks for itself, and I am reprinting it here so that more people can learn of its good work.

OPEN LETTER TO ONE SEEKING HELP
FROM ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Are you, by chance, a person whose relatives or friends are concerned and worried by your drinking? Do you suffer hang-overs of physical torture and mental anguish? Then know this; most likely you have a disease known to medical science and to Alcoholics Anonymous as ALCOHOLISM. You are not a wilful person, stubbornly bent on self-destruction; you are desperately

sick, with an enormously complex disease of body, of the brain, of the mind and of the soul. Punishment is not the answer. You need kindly help.

Alcoholics Anonymous can arrest your disease, restore you to peace of mind, can make your life a useful one, and can re-establish you in all happy relationships. It is the A.A. way to show you that you are allergic to alcohol, as the diabetic is allergic to sweets. It is the A.A. way to restore you to physical, mental and spiritual health. It is not a religion. It is based on medicine, psychiatry and on religion in general. In A.A. those who have recovered from this disease show the newcomers the how of their new happiness. There are more than one hundred thousand (100,000) recovered alcoholics in A.A. They are more than willing to help anyone who is sincerely looking for the answer. They guarantee that any person afflicted with alcoholism can be restored to a normal happy life, provided he does just what each one of them has done. A person who will not want to be free is beyond help . . . he will eventually die an alcoholic or insane death.

So, if you have ever wondered if the whole world seems against you, why you are so often "in the soup," why you have lost so many of the good things of life, look to your drinking. And if you have had all the punishment that you want, all the suffering that you can bear, please try the A.A. way. It's free; it's simple; and it is guaranteed to bring you health and happiness.

Consult your phone book for the nearest A.A. If there is not one listed ask Information.

Far From Glamorous

IF YOU SHOULD ASK the next ten women you meet what a prostitute is, you would probably get either of two definitions. If you ask a mature woman, she will describe a sluttish hag. If you ask a younger woman, she will sketch a voluptuous blonde, a success story — complete with mink coat, night clubs, and all the trimmings. Statistically speaking, the first would come nearer to giving the correct answer.

In this respect prostitutes are like all other women criminals. There are very few old or even elderly ones. Many, of course, "learn their lesson," actually understand their problem, and as they mature settle down to lead decent lives. Some shack up with one man; nothing more is heard from them. The others just don't live that long. They contract tuberculosis from their bad living habits, or die deaths of violence. How often a corpse pulled from the harbor or river is one of our girls, or the "132-pound female, blond hair, upper front teeth missing, found frozen in snowbank," is finally identified as Barbara — known to our department.

We often see women with white hair or no hair, wrinkled as a dried prune, toothless, deaf, lame, physically deformed and distorted, and mentally so far deteriorated they just don't care. Their condition is the result of disorderly living, and even though they look past seventy they are only in their middle forties. With the drink and venereal disease they invariably suffer from, and the abuse they receive, they don't last any longer than that.

I've come to know plenty of prostitutes, and they are a sorry lot. Almost every woman who comes before us has had

sex experience and most of them, extramarital activity. Out of well over 3000 women prisoners, I recall only one woman who was still a virgin. I don't mean to say that all women offenders are prostitutes, but it is safe to say that if they have been indulging in crime very long, they have resorted to prostitution as a livelihood at one time or another.

In her heyday, the professional prostitute rarely comes before the Board. She has protection and is never brought to court in the first place. But she ages, and by the time the Board sees her, she is a poor parole risk for two reasons: first, she has never developed regular working habits or trained skills to make her employable; second, she tells the Board that she's turned over a new leaf — and she may even mean it at that particular moment — but, since she is invariably an alcoholic, it's doubtful if she can keep her promise.

The record of a real prostitute often includes thirty-five arrests, twenty charges filed, six five-dollar fines, two ten-day jail sentences, and seven warnings to get out of town fast. Although a prostitute may be a poor risk, I as a Board member feel there is no hopeless case. Each woman is worthy of the benefit of the doubt and a chance to live in a new environment under new circumstances, under parole supervision and in a job and a home where she can work out a new future.

Mattie's case was the kind that makes us pessimistic. She was serving her first long sentence, five years for lewd and lascivious cohabitation. In the last ten years, she had been arrested eight times for drunkenness, vagrancy, and idle and disorderly conduct, but she had served only one jail term, and that for only thirty days.

Although Mattie's parents were dead, she still lived in the small coastal city where she was born. Her only sister had married and moved away, and she wrote us that after many disappointments she had given up trying to help willfully stubborn Mattie.

Mattie, thirty-seven at the time of her parole, had been married for four years to a seventy-one-year-old man. They had never established a home, but moved around in cheap lodgings from one city to the next and back again. Mattie's employment record was nil, and when she was arrested, her husband, George, had been caught pimping for her. He was sent to a house of correction for six months for this offense. When we saw Mattie for parole, he had already been released and was living alone in a top-floor room (without heat or cooking facilities) in seamen's quarters. His love for Mattie was unquestioned, and though he was too old and feeble to travel far, he wrote her constantly, and kindly neighbors wrote us of his pathetic situation.

I had not even tried to imagine what Mattie was like. She appeared in due course, reserved and sullenly evasive. She was dark-haired, blue-eyed, and had babylike skin without a wrinkle or blemish, a veritable "peaches and cream" complexion. She was rugged and of medium build and even in her flowered cotton institution dress, she reminded me of a cinnamon bear — solid and sullen — bearing down upon us.

Our records told us Mattie was almost normal mentally, with a below average IQ of 92 and six years of grammar school training. One could not help wondering how or where she had spent the past twenty years of her life. The penal authorities saw no benefit to anyone in holding her any longer and highly recommended her for release, since, though a solitary woman, she could do ordinary routine work.

During the few minutes of her Board interview, Mattie defied our best efforts to draw her out or to make friends. Her replies were monosyllabic and sullen, except when we discussed her husband. Then she verged on being co-operative and insisted that he needed her to care for him. Finally, we asked her to step out of the room. We had learned so little from the interview that we delved deeply into every phase of her case with the institution's officials. It was her first Reformatory sentence, and her husband's need of her did

appear urgent. We hoped that perhaps with community assistance some solution could be found for the salvation of this apparently devoted couple, but we still hesitated a long time and stifled many doubts before we voted unanimously for her parole. When we called Mattie back into the room to tell her the news, she merely grunted assent and waddled off like a bear to wait, while the agent made a home and work investigation, for her actual release.

The agent returned disheartened after a visit to George in his room in the most disreputable building of a destitute locality. In normal times, she could and would not have approved it as suitable for any woman parolee, but we knew that the housing shortage (especially near the big industrial cities) was still acute, and that one was lucky to find quarters of any sort. George was living on Old Age Assistance and our agent went over his case with the Welfare Department, who felt with us that since they were man and wife we should not keep them apart. All agreed Mattie should be released to live with George in his room for the first few days while she tried to find factory or day work. At the end of the first week, when she proved her earning capacity, the welfare official and her parole agent would find a satisfactory living arrangement for them.

Mattie was released in time for Christmas. The parole agent felt a solitary trip through town, with all the commuting changes, might be too complicated for Mattie or too tempting for one of her temperament, so she drove her right to George's door. January that year was one of the stormiest we ever had. During the month the agent stopped every week to visit Mattie and George and never found anyone at home. This was to be expected, however, as one could not hope to find two adults staying all day in an unheated third floor room. We received neatly written reports from Mattie each week saying she had looked for work every day but as yet hadn't found any. After three weeks of such reports, the agent talked with the welfare agent, who was

equally disturbed because she couldn't reach George. They heard that George went to the movies every day to keep warm, which seemed like a harmless and amusing pastime for him. The fallacy in this was that the couple had no additional income beyond George's Old Age Assistance, and that could certainly not be stretched very much. It barely was enough to keep him alive — much less provide for the robustly vigorous Mattie.

The next time the agent was at our office we talked it over with her and decided that since the weather had been so bad there was some excuse for the couple. We agreed to leave the case in her hands a while longer, and she wrote Mattie to inform her of the time of her next visit and to tell her to be in their room waiting for her if she was still unemployed. If Mattie had a job, she was to have George there, to tell our agent about themselves. If neither George nor Mattie could be there, she was to leave full written information with the landlady.

The agent returned to us next week with little to report. She had learned from the uncommunicative landlady that they left the house regularly at breakfast time and returned about ten o'clock at night. The next week, after more consideration by the Board, we wrote Mattie to come, for two reasons, to the Parole Board office on the following Thursday, the day her agent would be in town. (First, the parole field agent must be present at such interviews to give us the benefit of her judgment, based on her close knowledge of the case. She is familiar with the tricks of the individual offender, and she has all the facts at her fingertips in any particular case. Second, the Board must never by-pass an agent or undermine her client's esteem of her.)

Another week went by and our letter was completely ignored. But news always begins to leak out after a time, usually through another welfare recipient. We learned that the couple traveled to and from their quarters in a taxi. At this level of society neighbors give little co-operation to anyone

seeking information, and when the agent tried to check these reports the landlady and the taxi driver feigned complete ignorance. There were several possible courses of action for us to follow. First, of course, might have been for the Board to issue a warrant on the grounds of "whereabouts unknown" or "failure to co-operate" and ask the police to pick up Mattie and we would return her to the Reformatory on revocation of her parole. Second, we could delay a little longer, hoping that since the agent's letters had not been returned maybe Mattie had delayed answering for some valid reason and would report in due time of her own volition. Lastly, since we had some reliable information to start from, we could ask the police to investigate. That is what we finally decided to do. The agent suspected that Mattie had returned to prostitution, but we all hoped this was not true.

A parole offender should be carefully supervised and promptly reimprisoned or otherwise disciplined if she does not demonstrate the capacity or willingness to fulfill the obligations of the release agreement. However, the actual mental capacity of many of our charges is so low that what would appear to be actual resistance may only be a form of inertia and basic incompetence that the particular girl is unable to overcome. That is why the agent's detailed summary of her contacts with each girl, which are always available on the running record at the office, are so important. Equally important is the agent's acquaintance with and assistance from the local police department at all times. The parole agent's task is rightfully restricted to the supervision of persons who are law-abiding citizens. Detection and suppression of crime are functions of the police department. We have found that most police departments are more than willing to help an agent; for that matter, now that there is a better understanding of the purpose of parole, most police departments are enthusiastic over having the released ex-prisoner under supervision.

To get back to Mattie: it was only a few days before the

agent received a quite complete report from the police department of the couple's activities. Every day George and Mattie taxied to one of several construction projects outside the city. There, in some almost completed modern building, with husband George as procurer and business agent, wife Mattie conducted a thriving prostitution business all day long with various laborers.

At seven o'clock the next morning our agent was on the doorstep of their lodging house, where she intercepted them on their way to the taxi. She invited them to step, instead, into the state car. When they protested that they had yet to have breakfast, she obligingly drove them to a restaurant far from their usual haunts and waited for them to eat before she brought them to Boston.

At the Board's office, the local police, the welfare agent, the parole agent and the Board held a telephone conference and decided to return Mattie for parole violation so that a new court trial would not be needed; George, in his feeble old age (never in trouble except when involved by Mattie), should return to the welfare office of his city. By going voluntarily, he would qualify for treatment at the city infirmary where he would be under some constant supervision. When these objectives had been decided, Mattie and George were escorted into the Board Room by their patiently kind little woman parole officer.

Never had I seen such a filthy couple. Mattie still wore the low-necked dress in which she had left the institution seven weeks before, but it looked as though she hadn't been out of it night or day. Her face was clean and soft (pink and white as ever), but the deep-black embedded creases of her grimy neck ran down into even deeper gullies of gray filth on her exposed bosom. Her hair, caught in a few hair-pins, was drawn tightly to one side of the nape of her neck in an old-fashioned bun. There was another excrescence, about three inches around, a bit to the side and above the bun

which turned out to be a seething nest of lice. Her forearms and hands were dirtier than I can describe, tipped with quarter-inch, jet-black fingernails. George was even worse in his dirty dejection.

The Board, as is its custom, asked Mattie to tell her story. She started glibly enough until George started to heckle and contradict her. After they dilly-dallied about with the truth for a while, the Board gave them the facts which the police had discovered. Mattie returned to her mutely sullen manner, but George, inspired by heaven knows what, suddenly admitted everything and even produced names, dates, and vulgar details. He bragged pompously of the accomplishments of his loved one and terminated his monologue with the smug revelation that Mattie got three dollars and usually five dollars for each "incident." George had been able to live well, to eat regularly and heartily and even go to the movies. He had saved up \$181 from her work and that money was now in their room.

All the Board members sat in silence. After what seemed like an eternity, the Chairman turned to the agent and Mattie and said with firm finality, "We'll have to believe this to be true, because both the story by the police and husband are the same. Mattie, your parole is over." At the same time, he must have pressed his foot buzzer. The armed male supervisor who always sits just outside the Board Room was just opening the door when Mattie lunged her bulky body at the Board. In spite of her powerful arms, they weren't quite long enough to reach across the massive table between us. It took three male agents five full minutes to subdue her sufficiently for her to be led handcuffed (still under her own power) to the waiting car. As soon as the revocation warrant was prepared and actually served on her, Mattie was returned to the Reformatory, by both a male and female officer.

That is the only time we have ever had to call in male help to subdue a woman in an office interview. During the scuffle,

everyone had to move so fast trying to keep clear of Mattie as she lunged first at one and then the other of the Board members that George's maneuvering retreat was overlooked. He was found crouched behind a chair in a far corner of the room. The furniture was set back in its customary position, and though not completely calm or unruffled, we returned to work in quiet relief. The Chairman told George quite simply that his local Board of Public Welfare wished to see and help him. George reflected a moment, then, with his usual adaptability to situations, gave Mattie's parole officer a knowing wink and said, "How about driving me down?" Needless to say, George was delivered to the welfare officer. He was accompanied by a typed report of our stormy interview as well as by a male transportation officer.

The following month we went to the Reformatory to see Mattie, as we do all girls whose paroles have been revoked, to tell her how much more of her sentence she had to serve before being considered for another parole trial in the community. The Chairman read Mattie's name and asked the Board's opinion. The vote was unanimous. Without a single word of discussion, Mattie was voted "maximum." It is most unusual to find a married couple who work together in this sort of a racket. The Board has long since forgotten the history of Mattie's parole failure, but no one of us will ever forget how we felt as Mattie charged at us as if she were a primitive animal.

Parole had nothing beneficial to offer this type of woman. We seek never to lose sight of the fact that the safety of the community is our first regard. Another trial for Mattie would probably end with even more dismal results and would harm the system and ruin the chances for the overwhelming majority of the women who do succeed — at least in their own way. But Mattie is really an exception. More women want to and try to co-operate in parole than those who sneak, cheat, or are just "plain ornery" under supervision.

The Unwed Mother

THE UNWED MOTHER is usually a solitary being who has been wandering about seeking approval or affection. Many times she is extremely plain-looking and her normal life has been marred by serious skin disease, partial blindness, or some other disfiguring physical handicap. Seldom, if ever, is the excessive use of alcohol connected with a first illegitimate pregnancy. When considering an unwed mother and child for release, the fate of the child is more important to me than the mother. There are two major questions which these women present to us for settlement. *First*, does the girl sincerely want to raise her own child? *Is she willing* to make sacrifices to do it? Does she realize how confining this may prove to be? Not now, when the dear little baby gurgles and smiles, and stays put, but in two years when the child is running about, getting into things and needing constant vigilance? When the baby begins to need her guidance most, the young mother usually wants to be off on a life of her own, unhampered by the endless drudgery of routine child care.

Second, if she accepts these obligations, *can she fulfill them?* We will do our best to help her along, since it is a rare young woman, indeed, who can handle alone this twofold problem or re-establishing herself and properly caring for and supporting a child at the same time.

In an overwhelming majority of cases such mothers desert the child, give it away, or, on the impulse to give the baby a name, rush into a hasty marriage that may result in failure. The child is knocked about from pillar to post, never knowing its mother, without any security; eventually most of

these tragic children end up with the State for custody or possible adoption. There are, to be sure, many employers who would gladly hire a single girl with a baby, but from long experience we expect the girl to neglect either the child or the employer, or both.

By far the most promising way to success, as proved through the years, is through a domestic placement. This placement must be in a suburb or town fit for the girl, where her child can board nearby so the mother sees it on her day off. This arrangement usually works out pretty well for the child, since it receives some systematic care and living permanence. The young mother, however, frequently objects to paying ten to fifteen dollars weekly to the boarding mother in addition to shopping for all the needs of a growing child. In a few months the typical unwed mother, so dramatically appealing when she affirmed her "mother love" before the Board, is pleading with her agent that she has no time or money for herself — not even enough to buy clothes. She thinks she'd better give up the child. Occasionally, the girl will meet a man who will marry her, adopt the child, and settle down to a happy home, but that is the exception.

Who are these girls that have been sent away to prison pregnant? Why couldn't they be handled in the community? Here are the stories of three of them.

Jane was nineteen years old and lived in a small country town, where her family had a good reputation. She had been a sex problem for a long time. Her mother complained to the juvenile session of the local court several years ago when Jane began to be a problem. There was no doubt of her promiscuity; two or three men would often follow her and hang about her home waiting for her at night. She was frequently seen getting in cars and onto motorcycles with strangers. The judge could not help but find her guilty of "stubbornness" on her mother's complaint, and put her in

the House of the Good Shepherd. There she stayed for a year.

After leaving the Good Shepherd, she behaved well for two months before reverting to her same old behavior. Fearing Jane would influence the younger members of her family, the mother made another complaint. This time Jane disappeared before she could be arrested, and two months passed before she was found in a shack in the woods near a military camp. She was caught then because a soldier reported that she had stolen twenty-seven dollars and a wrist watch from him. Jane told the police there that she had met a friend of the soldier in a café and had gone with him to the shack, where she had charged him seven dollars for intercourse. She said three other soldiers joined her during the evening and she had had relations with all three and had received different sums of money from each one. All the soldiers admitted drinking and spending the night in the shack, but since there was no proof of the soldier's charge that she had robbed him, Jane was given an adultery sentence. The trial brought to light that she had gone through a marriage ceremony some ten months before with another soldier; that he was now overseas; and that he showed no interest in her. At the Reformatory she was found to be pregnant, but there was, of course, no means of determining who the father of the child might be.

Then there was the case of Bertha, eighteen years old, who was brought up on a farm in the Berkshires. The elderly couple that raised her took Bertha when she was four, after their own daughter had died. They never knew who Bertha was or where their daughter found her, but they were sure she was not their own daughter's child. That daughter had been married twice, and they believed Bertha to be the child of one of these husbands by another woman.

When she reached her teens, Bertha became an extremely promiscuous girl. For three years kindly neighbors had tried to help her, and the police had warned her constantly. Her

pastor arranged for Bertha to go to a private school in Vermont for a year. When this failed to work out, the minister and his wife tried patiently to help teach her good habits during a winter she spent with them in the parsonage, but there were always the same discouraging results. Bertha was unreliable, coarse, dirty, belligerent, and a petty thief. She often beat young children, and every time she did she left home and school for two or three days at a stretch. Once the police returned her to the parsonage from a forsaken house where she was sexually satisfying a railroad gang who sought shelter there during a heavy downpour. Many times she was found on the highway anywhere from five to a hundred miles from home, where she had been abandoned by truck drivers. Her first arrest for fornication came when police in a neighboring city arrested her with three men behind a tent at a traveling carnival. She was sent to the Reformatory with the hope that she might still be trained to accept moral standards and work habits. She was found to be three months pregnant, but could not name the father of her child.

A third case was that of Rita, twenty-two years old, the daughter of foreign-born parents, who brought her up in one of our big industrial cities. She attended a foreign language school and spoke that language at home as well. On complaint of her teacher, Rita's mother was found guilty of neglect and she and her sister were placed in foster homes. Rita was only eleven then, but she was never able to adjust, and moved from one placement to another. Even when she was with the most interested relatives or in good domestic positions, she was always untrustworthy and dishonest, saucily bold, quarrelsome, and generally unmanageable. By the time she was seventeen, employers wouldn't keep her because of her over-interest in sex, her obvious familiarity with male members of the family, and because she would receive as many as fifteen to eighteen telephone calls a day from men. At twenty, Rita was hospitalized for scabies and gonorrhea.

She was tested psychologically and found to be a highly intelligent person, but mentally disturbed. She was still without a court record until her last employer notified police that on her day off she brought back a stray sailor who spent the night in her room.

The next report on Rita came from a woman State Police officer who investigated a complaint in a rural area that a steady stream of people was going in and out of an empty chickenhouse. She found a coop with no water or toilet facilities, Rita and her six-month-old illegitimate child, her married sister Vera and her husband, and their two children. Rita, still unmarried, was pregnant again.

Vera had gone to the city for several days with her older child and left Rita to care for the younger and for her own baby. Vera's husband admitted he had frequent relations with Rita — all with his wife's consent. Rita acknowledged this, adding that these acts often took place with her sister present. She explained that it was a custom with their people that a pregnant woman should be denied none of her desires. Both Rita and Vera's husband were found guilty of lewd and lascivious cohabitation.

These three cases are not unusual, but they present various aspects of a complicated problem. Many things are quite obvious to any person with common sense. In each case, there is no immediate hope of releasing either these women or the children to what might be considered a normal home environment. They have been so promiscuous that it is impossible to attempt an adjudication of the babies' paternity. Often the baby turns out to be of a different race and color than the mother. Perhaps he is black or yellow (Negro or Chinese), while the mother is a white girl — or the situation may be reversed — a colored mother has a white child.

A woman of this type has never been self-sustaining and does not know how to be. She has to be taught and her best

chance is a long trial under capable supervision with a sympathetic employer. Sometimes, after such a trial, a girl goes off parole neatly dressed, with money in the bank. She may have become a good housekeeper, trained to cook, buy, and manage a household, and her training in the right environment has helped her become a happy, beneficial member of society, with devoted friends. Best of all, she has attained a decent standard of living.

It is foolish and a mistake to believe that all women offenders can blame their plight on their environment. The three examples I have given may appear to some people to be due to that factor, and the argument that "she never had a chance" is a superficially moving one. But in a great many cases of just this type we find other family members, from the same questionable environment, rising above it and doing well in the community.

Another common misconception is: "Why blame a person for one mistake? Don't we all make them — she's just weak."

The "weak" part of this excuse is right. The exceptional case is the one making only one mistake! Madame De Luzy once said, "One crime is everything — two nothing," and I might add, "three habit."

This seems to be particularly true of the cases of moral neglect. Many people seem to overlook the damage that is done to a child or children in a home where either or both parents are grossly immoral or in the homes where the mother has never married and has led an extremely promiscuous life right in front of her children.

All children need the influence of normal family life in the day-to-day routine of balanced parental judgment and discipline. They need to be taught moral standards by example and not by theory. As I see it, after talking with hundreds and hundreds of children who have been the innocent victims of such situations, the most important aspect of moral neglect is the ridicule and scorn thrown up at these poor children

by their classmates from the very first day they start to school. This is true the country over, whether the children are from the wealthy set in Hollywood or simple rustics from a village high in the hills. Surely these unlucky, unwanted babies born with two strikes against them are not and should not be connected with crime.

In the last few years we have had four women with thirty-six illegitimate children under our department's supervision: two of these women had eight children each, another had nine and still another had eleven. I just cannot understand it! How were these families supported? If not by public funds, how? Why was there such low morality in the community that this prostitution was never brought to the attention of the proper officials in time to control it? These women and their families were not of any particular race or section. One was from a large thriving city, another from a progressive town, and the other two from upcountry, which illustrates that slack morality is not confined to special types of communities.

Alva had given birth to nine illegitimate children when she came before us during her first commitment to the Reformatory. She was a sweet, pretty girl, whose verified age of twenty-eight was unbelievable to all of us, she seemed so young. The appeal of her gentle smile and winsome ways was heightened by a noticeable limp from an early attack of infantile paralysis. Alva was of average intelligence, could master industrial skills, and was on good terms with her mother, who never blamed Alva, but only the company she kept.

Alva's first son was a bright boy, then twelve, who was living with his maternal grandmother. The next was Elvira, who had been adopted by a neighbor. Twin boys followed, and since their father, a married man, was childless, he and his wife gladly took them home to raise as their own. A

wealthy Englishman, whose yacht anchored for the summer in the harbor, was responsible for Alva's next. He made a \$500 settlement and paid for Alva's confinement. This child also was given in adoption. Between and many times during these pregnancies, Alva worked diligently in the knitting mill at excellent wages and lived with her devoted mother or married sister most of the time.

Later Alva went to live with a man who was estranged from his wife, and from this union, four more children were born out of wedlock. This man and Alva, when she was able to work at the mill, supported the household as best they could. He always promised faithfully to divorce his wife and marry her, and undoubtedly he intended to do so. But he was killed in an automobile accident, and his sudden death left Alva with no recourse but to apply for welfare aid.

When the welfare agent sought the children's birth certificates, she discovered the truth. Welfare supported the family for only a short time because the agent suspected and proved that Alva was pregnant again. This time charges of fornication were brought against both the man and Alva. She was sent to the Reformatory on a two-year indefinite sentence, and he was put on probation and ordered to go to work to support the new child. The four children Alva had been caring for were adjudged neglected and put under supervision of the Division of Child Guardianship. The evidence showed that Alva had been a conscientious mother in providing adequately for the physical needs of her children, but she had certainly failed from the point of view of moral standards. Had there been physical neglect, Alva's plight would have been brought to official attention years before.

Alva's tenth, born in the Union Hospital during her Reformatory sentence, was a healthy baby girl. We first saw Alva when she had served almost a year of her sentence and when her new baby was six months old. There were no unexplainable factors in her case history. At the interview we were

all convinced that her family situation did not disturb Alva, morally or otherwise, although she did realize that her behavior had not been acceptable. She was so sincere in promising us that she would bear no more children out of wedlock that not one single member of the Board demurred in voting her parole. The Board knew Alva to be a dependable mother and a good worker, both sane and sober. Certainly, as a responsible offender, she deserved a trial in the community, especially since long institutionalization often has a disillusioning and damaging effect on a person like her.

The parole agent went to work on a plan for Alva. She wanted ultimately to organize a morally decent, comfortable home where Alva could keep all five of her youngsters, but the first step was to establish her safely with the new baby. When the mother appeared eager to have Alva home again and happy to care for the infant while Alva worked, we felt justified in approving such an arrangement.

On her first visit the agent took Alva to the courthouse to register her complaint against the man who had been her co-defendant in the charge of fornication. The probation officer called him into court, where he admitted that he was the father of the baby and was ordered to pay seven dollars a week toward her support. Since he came to court voluntarily and was so sensibly co-operative, the judge put the case on file. He further allowed this man to visit Alva and his baby every other Sunday, but he was never to be alone with Alva. All went smoothly from the beginning.

An agent is always pleased to have a woman with Alva's basic qualities and a substantial family household to work with. She is quick to sense when the family doesn't care, or when it will encourage the girl in further wrongdoings by covering up for her. She also knows by experience when the family will help a woman, and that gives her a real head start. Alva's parents couldn't have been more helpful, or more delighted with Alva's progress.

One hot summer day, Alva appeared at our office in the State House. She was trim and freshly pretty in her bright blue dress, which matched her sparkling eyes, and she was so excited that she couldn't wait a week for her agent's next visit! She and Pete, her co-defendant, had decided to get married on his next Sunday visit. She was so afraid we might not approve. Approve? Why all the Board fairly tumbled over one another in their haste to sign the permission blank.

Their marriage took place as scheduled and did away with the problem of Alva's morality. The agent's supervision for the remaining months was simple routine. Pete was a deep-sea fisherman, and the excellent wages he brought home from his trips to the Grand Banks supported his new family comfortably. The agent helped Alva locate, furnish, and settle down in a conveniently comfortable home of her own, and helped her budget for her family which, after the Division of Child Guardianship allowed her to have her other four small children back, made seven in all.

The next Easter, the case of Alva was moved from the active file to the inactive one, marked with the following succinct and satisfying statement: *April 23, Supervision concluded. Successful parole. Case closed.*

II

The Doll Racket

A PRISON SYSTEM is valueless when it returns its charges to society more corrupt than when it took them, yet this is one of the grave hazards of our prison system today. In many of our prisons the young girls are corrupted by the recidivists and by those hardened offenders who have become sexual perverts. This is one of the primary reasons for never exposing first offenders to the contamination of chronic criminals.

From my own personal observation the crimes committed recently by women offenders are of a much more serious nature and gravity than heretofore and the number of confirmed female homosexuals has increased to a marked degree also.

Many young girls become involved in perversion in an institution just as they had started using drugs on the outside — they do it to be smart and to see what it is like. Others who are lonely and entirely unsuspecting in the beginning become seriously entangled emotionally before they realize it. Yet the number of physically abnormal women inmates, according to our medical records, is negligible.

Some of the girls who have experimented with homosexuality in an institution return to normal living practices as soon as they are released; others never do. To me, the most tragic inmates are the ones who lived normal lives before being sent to prison and who after “doing time” have not the slightest interest in leading natural lives again.

A normal girl can become addicted to homosexuality very quickly, and her appearance and behavior soon show what has happened. One of our agents came in to the office quite

disheartened by the fact that Mary, one of her youngest clients, had disappeared. Shortly afterwards the State Police notified our office that they found Mary in a hospital after an automobile accident in which she suffered a broken leg.

When the agent went to the hospital, she found Mary incapacitated from the leg injury but not seriously hurt. At first parole visits were a simple matter because there was not much that Mary could do while she was in the hospital, but in short order we received word that Mary had walked out of the hospital with an extremely heavy cast on her leg and had completely disappeared.

It did not take her agent very long to locate her, for there could be very few places where a friendless young girl with no means of income, completely handicapped by a plaster cast could have gone. A check with all her family members revealed that they were completely unaware that she had left the hospital. So the only place to look was to check with the State Police for the companions who were with her in the accident. Mary's family had never heard of the two women companions and had no knowledge of where Mary had made their acquaintance. After locating their address, rather than send the police to look for her client the agent decided to go there herself first to see if she could find Mary and also to appraise the domestic situation.

The door of the small city apartment was opened by a large colored woman, who gruffly asked the agent what she wanted. When the agent told her she was there to see Mary, the woman snarled that she had the wrong house and that she had never heard of her. But the agent had already seen Mary through the jamb of the door, lying on a daybed in the room inside, so she ignored the woman who was trying to block her way and went straight to Mary, who obviously would have moved if she could.

Mary was in a sullen mood and would only answer her agent in monosyllables. She did not introduce the woman

who had opened the door or another tall, rangy colored girl, dressed in bluejeans and a dirty T shirt, who kept walking into the room and glowering at the agent. At a glance the agent saw it was useless to try to learn anything while Mary was under the protection and influence of these women. Yet this household was certainly no place for Mary to live in, so the agent asked her to collect her possessions and drive back with her to her brother's home. At first Mary protested that she was too sick, that her leg was swollen and painful and that she was not going; to which the agent replied that she would give her just five minutes to be at the door. The agent walked to the door and stood there quietly waiting, surprised to notice that no one in the group said a word either to her or to one another, and that neither of the women made a move to help Mary, who was noticeably in great pain as she tried to move. Finally the agent herself gathered the handful of possessions that Mary pointed out to her. While she was doing this she had a chance to look over the apartment. It consisted of two rooms, the one with the pull-out daybed was used as a living room, bedroom, and kitchen, and the other had a double bed and cot in it, where two small children, one white and one colored, were taking their naps. That was all the furniture there was. The toilet facilities, shared with the tenants of another apartment, were located at the top of a flight of stairs out in the common hall.

Mary gave no explanation to her friends as to who her agent was or why or where she was going with her; neither did she thank her hostesses or say good-by when she finally got on her feet and hobbled to the door. Since they in turn offered no resistance, the agent realized they knew she was a special police officer who would carry through her plan no matter what they said.

After Mary was in the car, she admitted to the agent that she had left the hospital against the doctor's orders and had herself taken the cast off her leg. Now she was in consider-

able pain and was really grateful that the agent had come for her. As Mary came from a respectable, intelligent family, the agent decided to take her home and ask the family what medical plans they wished to make for her.

During the hundred-and-twenty-five-mile ride home, Mary voluntarily brought up the topic of homosexuality, or "the doll racket," as it is called in the prison world. She told her agent she never knew anything about it before she went to prison but that now she was quite in love with the whole business and wanted to have nothing to do with men. She asked the agent quite frankly if she had noticed the recent change in her appearance, her new boyish haircut and the fact that she used no make-up of any sort and wore only boys' clothes. She said she knew her family were shocked about it all in an old-fashioned way, and so until the next spring, when she would be twenty-one, she could not do as she pleased all the time. But she would take every chance she could get now, and when she was of age and was off parole too, she would leave home and go to live permanently in one of the big cities in America, where Lesbians flourish.

With no encouragement from her agent, she told about being approached three days after she went into an institution by a girl named Dorothy who wrote her a twelve-page letter that initiated her into this new world. She went on to tell, however, that she did not remain permanently attached to Dorothy, but shifted to Martina, to whom she was still devoted. When Martina was released Mary temporarily shifted to Nancy (a notorious homosexual who was still an inmate and whose activities were well known to this agent). Mary went on to speak of the days since her release, the days when she supposedly had been looking for work. Actually she had been searching for her friends. In her wanderings she would hitchhike over most of the state, yet, somehow, for the first month she got home every night. Although very eager to talk about certain aspects of this new life to which she felt

so attracted, Mary was extremely wary about giving her agent any information about the two women she had been found living with and who were the women with whom she was riding when she had broken her leg in the automobile accident. She even declined to answer a direct question as to what their names were and kept on insisting that she did not know. Neither would she tell where she originally met these women. Her only interest was her overpowering love for Martina, whom she claimed she had not been able to find since her release, and the thoughts of the joys of the life together that they had planned.

When the agent left Mary at her brother's, she noticed that the sister-in-law was reluctant to keep Mary again. At the agent's request she agreed to house her for the night, and the agent gave her five dollars to call their family doctor to treat Mary's leg right away. Mary went back to the hospital for many more weeks, and when she did return to the community, she did an extremely poor parole. She would work sometimes but never steadily, and months later the local police-woman told us that Mary had left town, just as she had promised she would. I am sure she has found her Martina or an equivalent by now.

No age or race is immune to the temptations of homosexuality in prisons, but the girls who succumb share the characteristics of being extremely lazy — also a characteristic of all women who enter any form of prostitution. Most homosexuals seem to pair off and seclude themselves at every possible opportunity. They express their devotion in love letters, poetry, and presents, and spend hungry days and sleepless nights haunted by jealousy, fear, and fantasy. Should another woman attempt to interfere and demand the attention of the "wife," vicious hand-to-hand fights or even free-for-alls result. If death or other circumstances severs a pair, the survivor may suffer an acute attack of homosexual panic, with

violent screaming and frothing at the mouth, followed by a period of wan anxiety. But soon she takes on another partner to replace her lost love. Many a girl has come to our office and asked to be sent back to an institution where her partner was. Others have committed new offenses, apparently deliberately, to achieve the same result.

The female homosexual as such rarely comes in contact with law, although there have been a few recent arrests for "open and gross lewdness," "contributing to the delinquency of a minor," or "sodomy"; more often their offenses are armed robbery, shoplifting, or larceny. Many of the older ones take part in drug traffic and are picked up for various violations of the narcotic laws. A true or confirmed homosexual would be an extremely poor parole candidate and I do not recall ever releasing such a woman, but they all return to the community at the end of their sentences. Once free they pursue girls they have known, many of whom are still on parole. We have a perpetual problem protecting young offenders from becoming infatuated, degraded, and finally destroyed by them.

When a girl suddenly abandons her eager, stable efforts to re-establish herself and begins to evade questions, look wan and weary, and stay away from work, an agent quickly recognizes that some unwholesome outside influence is causing the change. The first complaint comes from the girl's employer or from her mother, or both. The reports to the agent run about the same:

EMPLOYER: Brenda hasn't been doing so well lately.

AGENT: Is she sick?

EMPLOYER: Doesn't seem to be. I've never seen her this way. She's restless and seems to be afraid of something.

AGENT: What do you mean?

EMPLOYER: I don't exactly know. She's been getting three or four phone calls a day from some woman. There

are three toll calls on my new phone bill that Brenda must have made last week. I spoke to her about it, and she denied it, but I can't keep on paying her and her phone bills too. I might as well tell you the whole story. She begged me not to, and she's been so wonderful for three months that I haven't. But last Thursday, she was out all night and didn't get back till late Friday. She was so tired I had to send her to bed. She hasn't been to see her baby for two weeks, either, nor has she paid its board.

AGENT: Did you get the name of the girl who is phoning her?

EMPLOYER: No, but each time I answered the voice was the same.

AGENT: Are you still willing to keep her if the Board feels a warning is sufficient?

EMPLOYER: Yes I am, as long as she'll settle down and if that woman will stop phoning her. You'll think I'm exaggerating, but sometimes they talk for an hour three times a day!

AGENT: Not at all, it sounds quite possible to me! After I talk with Brenda, I'll discuss her case with the Board and probably recommend that they give her a severe reprimand and, if necessary, final warning.

The agent talked with Brenda alone and found her most artfully evasive. She admitted being away overnight but was clearly lying when she claimed she was with a cousin in Worcester and missed the bus. Rather than create an issue without enough evidence, the agent appeared to accept Brenda's story and told her the next time she stayed out overnight she would be brought before the Board. Caution and tact are required in handling a case like this. To infer an entanglement when it didn't exist would be dangerously unjust. But the three long distance calls showed that Brenda was actively co-operating with the person who called her. This

kind of a situation never stands still but progresses as fast as a forest fire. Before the agent left the household, she asked the employer to come to an understanding with Brenda about limiting her use of the phone and to notify the Board immediately if Brenda stayed away again overnight. With no discussion or hesitation, the agent told Brenda to pay two weeks' back board for her baby, at once.

All went well for about a week, but then Brenda began getting three or four heavily perfumed letters in the mail every day, all obviously from the same person. She seemed more tense and tired than the amount of work she was doing could make her. The lights in her room blazed away until the wee hours of the morning. On Thursday, her next day off, she drove away in a brand-new car with an older woman at the wheel. That night Brenda returned at about eleven o'clock, which was the time set by the agent and employer. During the night the employer and her husband thought they heard sounds coming from Brenda's room, and ignored them after agreeing she probably was overtired and talking in her sleep. When Brenda didn't get up to prepare breakfast, the employer went to her room. As she opened the door a disheveled and coarse woman of about thirty-five brushed past her, stepped briskly out the door, and drove off in the brand-new car that had been hidden all night in the driveway behind some shrubbery. Brenda remained absolutely mute in the face of her employer's questions and made no comment when the employer finally gave her notice to leave and threatened to tell the agent that she would have to go without references. The employer reported Brenda's dismissal by telephone to the parole office, and the parole supervisor relayed it to Brenda's agent at the earliest possible moment. The supervisor also talked to Brenda by telephone, telling her to collect her belongings so that the agent could call for her and try to iron out her difficulties with her.

This was the effective way to manage this situation, for

unless the interview before the supervisor and the women Parole Board members brought something concrete to light we could only conjecture about the relationship between Brenda and the older woman.

Many a young girl can and has been saved from a life of degrading sorrow, but it is not an easy task, for progress is slow. We have to win her confidence and encourage her self-reliance. Sometimes frank reasoning is enough to convince her, and when this happens she can straighten out very quickly and progress most satisfactorily. It can only happen, however, if the girl is really willing to do her part. Nothing can be superimposed from without unless the desire comes from within. When the parolee develops that desire, we help her reform by devising an entirely new arrangement with different safeguards for her. When she actually wants to break all ties with her former associates, another work placement in a new environment, with normal recreation and social life, will start her on the road to self-reliant success. Many times we have seen a girl slip dangerously at the start in her release period and have had the satisfaction of seeing her recover strength and courage as she progressed. Those girls almost always marry and settle down normally and, we hope, permanently.

Alas, at this stage it just didn't seem to be in the cards for Brenda. When the agent arrived to pick her up, she found that Brenda had already gone off with the other woman, leaving all her clothes, radio, and various possessions behind her. There had been no word from Brenda since, so the agent and employer packed her possessions, which included one hundred and three letters written on sweetly scented note-paper, which the agent brought to the office for information. These, substantiated by the employer's accurate description of the woman recently dominating Brenda's life, established her identity as "Butch" MacDonald, a notorious homosexual. The letters revealed that misguided young Brenda was tragically involved, not only with battered Butch but with at

least four other very aggressive women from different parts of the state. We asked the employer to hold any of Brenda's future mail because the postmarks and return address on the envelopes might give us a clue to the whereabouts of Butch. Additionally, since we were positive Brenda and Butch were together, we issued a warrant to the police to arrest Brenda on grounds of "absconding."

Both the statute and the Board rules give us the power to issue such a warrant, because the Parole Board must know the whereabouts of its charges at all times. It is discretionary with the Board whether the girl should remain outside on parole or should return to an institution.

It was an enigma how and where Butch and Brenda ever met. They came from widely different parts of the state and had never been in prison together. Brenda, twenty-two years old, was on parole, serving her first sentence for idle and disorderly conduct. Butch had served three Reformatory and six jail terms and one voluntary commitment for relief from drug addiction, but she had been entirely free of supervision during Brenda's parole.

We heard nothing new of Brenda for ten days. Her mail had dropped off because she had either broken with these women or was with them now. The Registry of Motor Vehicles was helpful in tracing the license number of the car in which the parolee disappeared. It turned out to be rented from a "drive-yourself" agency, but we could trace it no farther until, out of the blue, the Federal Narcotics Division picked up Butch as a pusher of heroin. The following night Brenda, filthy and forlorn, was picked up on a drunkenness charge in a big city.

The probation officer telephoned our office in the morning just before the court session and asked whether we still wanted her on our warrant. She was not a chronic drunkard, the probation officer felt, and had not been drunk enough this time to deserve a new sentence. We agreed with the officer and thought that if the judge was satisfied Brenda would be better

off returned to us for another opportunity in the community than she would be serving another sentence. We asked the officer to tell Brenda to return to our office voluntarily and sent her agent off to give her a ride back. When she appeared she was contrite and exhausted but quietly resistant. We tried to draw her out, reminding her of her contact with Butch two weeks ago and of her unexplained disappearance; of how relieved we were to have finally located her, even though she was trying to drown her grief at Butch's arrest. We told her she had done so well on parole at first that we were sure she could again. Her agent faced her with one fact after another until Brenda realized we knew more than enough about her situation and only wanted to help her. She relaxed and confided most of what we had not known. We presented her with six of her unopened, newly received letters and instructed her to read them aloud to us. Here is a typical letter:

My darling Brenda,

I disliked leaving you last night, sweet — but this is the way it has to be for a while. Perhaps soon we can be together, forever, forever, my love, my sweet.

Our one weekend, darling, in Vermont cost us surprisingly little. Only \$9 for the car. So I put \$11 of your money into the bank for you. I shall not need it now and it gives me joy, honey, to think of you saving for our future together forever.

I love you dearly, sweet, and I want nothing to separate us ever again. Imagination plays strange tricks, doesn't it, sweet, but when I lay and toss in my bed, and look at the moonlight on the wall, and you are not next to me, I know our sacrifices now are worth so much, for I want you happy always. Nothing will ever separate us again.

I love you, darling. Will sign off now.

XXXXXX

Your loving wife E

P.S. As per your directions, I know you'll be pleased to hear I have my hair cut very short and I wear my T shirt and slacks all the time.

Love XXXXXX

By the time she finished reading the letter, Brenda was transformed into a thoroughly contrite girl overcome with remorse. From these letters and from her own statements we now had proof that she had committed many new parole violations:

1. Leaving the state without permission.
2. Associating with a known criminal.
3. Driving a car without a license or permission.

She begged for another chance. Her two-and-a-half-year-old baby couldn't go back to the institution with her because he was now too old to be admitted. She reiterated her love for the baby and spoke of the devoted care she had given him, not only at the institution but during her first two months on parole. This we knew to be true from our running records and from the statements her agent had made at the time, and it was the factor on which we hoped to build a new life for Brenda. We had to realize too that Butch was probably serving a new sentence and would be a menace in any institution, especially to the weak and wavering Brenda.

The Board voted to withdraw its warrant, and to initiate a new plan for Brenda in a new community. She spent that night at a social agency where she was treated to a hot bath, a hearty supper, and two aspirins at bedtime, which all resulted in giving her a long, sound sleep. Her agent had brought her luggage to her there, and Brenda was at our office by nine the next morning, dressed in her attractive clothes, looking like a new girl, physically refreshed and mentally relieved, as pretty as a young debutante. She sat down eagerly with her agent, and together they worked out her plan.

Could she return to her native town in the western part of the state with her baby? They could board with her cousin, who would care for the baby while Brenda worked in the tobacco fields during the spring and summer, and in a factory during the winter. Could she! After many telephone calls, the details were completed, and Brenda and the baby drove to

the Berkshires with her agent that same afternoon. Before dusk, she and her child were secure under a comfortable roof with a practical, good-natured cousin who promised the agent there would be absolutely no liquor and no calls, letters, or visits from any undesirables.

Five months have elapsed and Brenda is still doing excellently. She and her young man (just back from Korea) came to Boston only last week to seek the Parole Board's permission to marry. The young man was very earnest in his intentions to marry Brenda and was willing to adopt her baby because he loves them both very much.

The Parole Board is not omniscient, and we cannot forecast or foresee how any marriage is going to work out, but we can see that Brenda has made such a fine adjustment in the five months she has lived with her cousin there is good reason to believe that she will not return to her abnormal way of life, and that their marriage should be a success.

John Bartlow Martin states in his book *Break Down the Walls* that he believes homosexuality is even more common in women's prisons than in the male institutions. He goes on to say, "One woman ex-convict said that virtually every woman has engaged in homosexual practices there."

I do not agree entirely with that one inmate's statement, but I do believe the practice is widespread and an extremely serious moral and administrative problem. I have to believe from the information given to both the Board members and our agents that every female inmate has been approached or exposed to such advances while serving time. However, I am equally sure that I have known a large number of women prisoners who have been strong enough to avoid becoming involved in any form of perversion.

Con Women

WHILE IT IS generally impossible to group women offenders into classes or types, there are some characteristics that appear common to persons who commit certain offenses — at least to those who get caught.

We know from our own experience and from figures from other states that more forgers and larcenists are recidivists than any other offenders. No one knows much about the background and roots of such behavior, and therefore there is little anyone can do to cure it. What we do know is that forgers and larcenists are likely to become a prime risk to society if or when they are released.

As a group they are almost always attractive and have warm, convincing personalities. They have usually passed their middle thirties by the time they serve their first commitment to prison, and they are nearly always highly intelligent. Their training and adaptability make them excellent inmates who can be assigned to some form of clerical or administrative work. They are rarely diseased or alcoholic, and they usually settle into a quiet routine "inside."

I cannot help feeling, whenever I meet a forger for the first time at a Board meeting and become familiar with her history and record, that she probably has committed a thousand larcenies no one ever suspects. The serene poise with which they float into the Board is really a handicap to them. An outsider would be baffled if he saw a woman of statuesque beauty and warm personality turned down by the Board, especially if he had listened to her excellent sales talk and her protestations about living a new life. If the woman is a first offender the

Board will undoubtedly release her, but if she has a record as long as my arm, no one on the Board would be unrealistic enough to vote to consider her release. Such women are the best promisers in the world, but lying is their art — and their livelihood. Because of their physical attributes and pleasing personalities, they have been able to talk themselves out of so many tangles that it is second nature to them to think of a parole hearing as just one more tight corner to squirm out of. The record usually shows continued brushes with the law over a ten- to fifteen-year period. “Case filed, restitution made” — “Case dismissed, failure to prosecute,” etc.; in other words, the witnesses may have quit, or the victim may have been blackmailed into backing out, or any one of half a hundred factors may have entered the picture. No one ever knows what happened, because, when a case is not prosecuted, no record is kept. No one but the “con woman” herself, and she never talks.

Most of these confidence women have one more characteristic in common. They are almost nomadic, always on the move from state to state and city to city. Sometimes they do not even sleep a night in a town they hit; just a little forgery, maybe a small check, cashed at a fruit store for \$14.90, of which \$2 pays for the fruit bought as a blind and \$12.90 goes to the forger. A week later the check comes back “No Bank” to the fruit man in Hartford, Connecticut, and Minnie Filch is now victimizing men in North Dakota — but don’t think she got there on the \$12.90. She’s probably written sixty-five little checks and strewn them like the debris from a tornado all over the landscape as she travelled zigzag across the continent.

Each has her own system and her own code. Some have an accomplice and others travel in a group of three. (Many of us who work in parole departments throughout the country believe that people in the confidence game are all members of a large operation working from a central control and training

unit. At present there is not enough evidence to prove this theory, but the amazing similarity of the individual operations lends validity to the supposition. Until there is proof that money is being taken from one state to another, the F.B.I. cannot be brought into the investigations.) Some appear to work entirely alone; but even though they will vigorously protest any inference of an accomplice, I never believe them. The picture is never quite complete without a partner.

The police arrested a most attractive young woman named Elmira for attempted larceny in Boston. She was charged with the crime and subsequently found guilty. The police did excellent work on the case, yet could never locate a contact or accomplice of any sort. In the year that passed while she was in prison, before the Parole Board saw her, not one scrap of information concerning an accomplice came to light.

As the institution searched the records through the Department of Public Safety files, an enormous amount of information was accumulated about Elmira's activities in twenty-one other states and about her connections with at least fifty other people. Once caught, she would not talk on the topic. She was charming, most co-operative on any other subject in the world, but she denied even understanding what we meant when we tried to discover her associates. The Board gave her a six-month setback and explained to her that we would see her again even sooner if she would explain where she came from, how she happened to hit this particular city, where her clothes were, and who her contacts were.

It just didn't make sense. Elmira, the official F.B.I. record showed, was the only child of a Negro mother and an Indian father. She was thirty-eight years old and had been born in a small town outside Oklahoma City, where she had attended a rural school until the age of twelve. Her mother had idealized the girl and brought her up with much more refinement and many more privileges than other children in that area had

been able to have. To accomplish this, her mother journeyed to town and stayed overnight three times a week to labor on her hands and knees scrubbing marble floors in the lobby of the largest hotel in the city. Many times the mother walked the eleven miles to town on hot summer or dreary winter nights. It made no difference to her. She kept the job for thirty-two years and, sick or well, she would get there. She knew that if she missed a day, some younger woman might get the job.

The money the mother made in town provided a living for Elmira and herself. The husband was "no account" and just didn't work more than an occasional day here and there. The mother scraped and saved and bought material in town to make attractive clothes for Elmira, which she made by hand with exquisite care.

Elmira developed into a handsome young woman of whom her mother was justly proud, and the wife of the hotel manager talked about giving Elmira work when she was old enough. As the years went on, the mother felt her drudgery had not been in vain, but the depression ended all her rosy dreams. Even though the hotel did not actually go out of business, it did fail and was reorganized with new personnel. The mother never lost a week's work, but no job materialized for her beautiful Elmira. Finally, in desperation, the mother wrote a cousin in New Orleans and asked if she could find employment there for Elmira. The cousin answered that she could, and Elmira's mother, for the first time in her life, took a vacation (three days) to go as far as Little Rock, Arkansas, and see her daughter on her way.

Elmira reached New Orleans all right, but she had met a man on the train who was to change the course of her life. He was an older man, who told her he was a porter on the railroad and did a great deal of traveling. The traveling part was correct — the "porter" highly inaccurate.

Elmira went to work at the home where her mother's cousin

had found her a job. On her day off, she visited the cousin and was introduced to respectable young friends and neighbors. Her friend the "traveling porter" came to see her on his infrequent visits to New Orleans but always visited her at the home of her employer.

After a short time, he persuaded her to ask for more time off to spend with him, first in exciting night spots in the city, and then on short trips. He showed her gaiety and activity that she had never known existed. No matter what city they went to, he always had friends, busy friends, well-to-do friends, gay friends. After a few months, Elmira was not working at all, and she visited her cousin only every other week. Finally, she told her cousin that she was going back to Oklahoma. Instead she disappeared with the porter.

For seven years, Elmira and her man rode railroads all over the country. He, or his contacts, would size up a situation that looked promising and then would follow the quarry until they could make a strike. Sometimes Elmira would actually take part in the robbery; sometimes things would get too hot for her man, and she would find herself alone on a night train. It might be months until they dared get in touch with each other — but back together they always came.

Elmira became the more proficient of the pair at the badger game — flim flam and pigeon dropping. Most of those seven years they lived high, wore fine clothes, stayed in the best hotels and rode parlor cars when in the North. Every once in a while, Elmira would go back to Oklahoma and visit her mother for a week or ten days, bringing her a few presents and money she had saved for her. Other times, either Elmira or the porter would get arrested. Sometimes they would be fined, and others they were ordered to leave town. Twice she got thirty-day jail sentences and, finally, in an Ohio city, she received a two-year sentence.

When she had completed her time there, she set out to locate her "porter," only to find he had actually married

another woman. In Los Angeles, she finally caught up with them, and the two women battled it out. Elmira drew a straight-edged razor and seemed to be getting the best of her rival, when one of the by-standers passed an ice pick to the wife, who drove it deep into Elmira's forearm. There is no official record of any arrests for a year after that episode until she was caught in Texas, where, while she was out on bail, she decided to forfeit her money and leave the state rather than risk standing trial. Later, after an arrest and conviction in Philadelphia, Elmira was refused parole and served her entire sentence.

Sometime after that, on a clear fall morning, an elderly woman was walking up the street in the heart of Boston's business district, when a rather tired-looking, middle-aged, shabbily dressed woman stopped her and asked her if she had seen anyone pick up a pocketbook. The elderly woman said no, and as she talked to this poor woman she felt sorry for her. She told the woman she had no money with her but mentioned her savings account. While they were talking, a fine-looking young Negro woman came along walking briskly. She was dressed in a Scotch plaid skirt, hand-knit sweater, camel-hair coat and well-polished calf loafers. She looked for all the world as any young matron might look while out to do her morning errands. It was Elmira. She walked briskly past the pair of conversing ladies, then, hesitating, she turned back and asked if they were in trouble. The poorly dressed one told her story and Elmira opened her purse and displayed the fact she had only a dollar and a half, and she needed that for the important errand she was on. At this point, the story became a little vague. Someone suggested this and someone else suggested that, before concluding that "to show her good faith" the elderly lady was to go home, get her bank book, draw \$6000 of her life's savings from the bank, and meet the shabby woman on the bridge in an hour. It was agreed that by a series of miracles her \$6000 would be doubled.

An hour later, with the money in her pocketbook, the elderly lady was slowly walking toward the bridge. The shabby one was nowhere in sight, and Elmira was the only person to be seen anywhere. She walked energetically across the bridge, just as the twelve o'clock whistle at the mill gave its accustomed blast and 1500 workers poured into the street. In the confusion that followed, Elmira moved so swiftly through the crowd that two plainclothes officers (one male and one female) felt it wiser to grab her before she reached her mark than to have the robbery actually take place, with the chances of losing both Elmira and the \$6000 in the crowd. Fortunately the elderly one, with characteristic Yankee shrewdness, had begun to feel suspicious and had telephoned the police from her own house. They had given her explicit directions to go through with the deal and had assured her that they would be there to protect her.

At headquarters, Elmira was searched and found to have only the \$1.50 she had previously shown. She claimed she had come alone to Massachusetts by bus that morning. In court, to the surprise of the police, she pleaded guilty, and the judge gave her a two-year sentence to the Reformatory. The shabby one was never located.

While serving her sentence, Elmira received no mail. She declined to give the names or addresses of any friends or relatives except her good mother, whom she beseeched the institution not to contact. In spite of her meticulous grooming, she declined to say where her personal possessions could be located. She had no keys on her person, no cleanser's marks on her clothing, and she would not talk.

We had already postponed Elmira's parole for six months. When at the end of that time we saw her again, she appeared attractive and charming and pleaded to be allowed to return to her mother in Oklahoma, where, she assured us, she could do an excellent parole. Elmira said that she never had worked at her "business" in the state of Oklahoma, for she "respected"

her mother and did not wish her to be worried or to know the truth; she would do nothing to "jeopardize the sanctity" of her home. These statements indicated beyond all doubt that she was a responsible offender. But she had still told us none of the things we wanted to know, and she obviously did not consider her criminal career at an end. Again adhering to the principle that the protection of society has first consideration, the Board voted Elmira "maximum" and told her that she would have to serve out her full sentence. She rose with great dignity, thanked us all in what appeared to be a genuinely convincing manner, and said she would be most happy to serve her sentence here, where she found great satisfaction in her easy job as personal maid to the superintendent.

There is no doubt in my mind that a lenient policy toward professional offenders is a serious mistake on the part of any parole board. All prison, jail, and police officials know that some of the most frequent topics of conversation overheard between inmates are the length of sentences, attitudes of judges, and policies of parole boards on certain crimes. There is no surer way for a city to get overrun with professional criminals than to have the word go out via the grapevine that you only have to do a short time on your sentence. It is not an uncommon strategy for members of the organized underworld to come into a state that has a reputation for being lenient, and commit a crime so they can be in prison until things blow over in the area where they have previously been operating.

Yet it would be quite unfair to generalize about all forgers and larcenists. Some, even among those who have committed serious offenses of this kind, are not habitual criminals or members of the organized underworld. I have known several women who have been found guilty of grand larceny, such as the continuous stealing in a business operation, where the total mounted up to well over \$30,000 to \$40,000 before they got caught, who made excellent adjustment and never returned

to their previous behavior patterns even as much as in one single small episode. There are others who are classed as occasional or accidental offenders. These women can be reached while in custody and once they show they want to improve, we can release them with reasonable optimism.

Several years ago, a particularly brazen and almost fatal crime shocked the city. The criminals seem to have acted in a hit-and-run manner, and they left the police without a single clue.

A wealthy matron, who lived in one of the most substantial suburbs, was held up and robbed as she put her latchkey in the door of her house at about 10 P.M. after returning from a dinner party. The unusual aspect of the crime was that she was accosted on her own doorstep by a young woman who asked her for a match to light a cigarette. As the victim was searching her bag for the match, she was grabbed from behind. Her attacker held a cone of chloroform over her nose and mouth and then dragged her behind some evergreen trees near her front door. There, she was stripped of valuable rings, pins, earrings, a choker, her bracelets, and her handbag, which contained over \$200.

Toward dawn, the lady regained consciousness and crawled to the sidewalk. She attracted the driver of a passing milk truck, who notified the police. The only lead was her vague description of the young lady who asked for the match and spoke with a western or possibly southern accent. Except for a general idea of her assailants' size, the victim remembered nothing. She never saw her second attacker, but because of the force used believed it to be a man.

The police were baffled. Then by association of ideas a young police detective who was on another case noticed that the young girl he was investigating spoke with an unfamiliar accent. Her name was Barbara, and she was a refined young woman, with no criminal record, who had been arrested for

larceny. She told a story of being disconsolate over the failure of her marriage and the scandal and shame her parents felt her divorce had brought on the family, which was socially prominent in the southern Illinois city she came from. She described her childhood in a home with many servants and told about her coming-out party, and her first trip to Europe, with her sister on a luxury liner. Her marriage to an older man was arranged for her and was unhappy from the beginning. The birth of her little boy had not helped, and separations and reconciliations followed one another rapidly until the divorce, when her husband took up permanently with another woman.

Barbara had returned to her parents' home with her son and tried to adjust to the life there. She received adequate support for her son, but her father managed everything for her and influenced her not to ask for alimony, since he had the means to support her and wished to cut her off entirely from her former husband.

As the years passed, the friction at home became unbearable. Barbara tried to go to work, but apparently the family wouldn't hear of it. Finally, in desperation, she placed her boy in a fashionable boarding school and ran away.

She told the investigating police officer that she had not been able to find work and that she had put her hand in a drugstore till, intending to take only enough money to pay for her room for one more night and to return the cash as soon as she found a job. The officer was skeptical, but as Barbara had no previous record, he requested the court to postpone action and asked his supervisor to put a "tail" on Barbara for a few days to check her story. She seemed too refined and too timid a girl to resort to this type of petty crime in order to live.

The officer's misgivings were substantiated when the young policewoman who had been assigned to watch Barbara reported that she had come out of her cheap rooming house the previous evening exquisitely groomed and carrying a small

parcel. She walked to the Public Library, where she waited an hour until a flashily dressed middle-aged man met her and talked quietly and seriously with her for some minutes. Barbara handed him the package, which he shook and put in his pocket. Then, arm in arm they walked away and soon entered the main door of one of the largest and most fashionable hotels in Boston. In a few minutes, they were seated in the dining room, where they ordered and ate a leisurely dinner, looking just like any other well-heeled, carefree diners.

A dapper plainclothesman joined the policewoman for dinner, but because of the distance between tables, they were unable to hear any conversation, though they had ample time to study the man and identify him if the occasion arose. After finishing a hearty meal, Barbara and her escort lingered smoking and talking quietly until she finally put on her coat and he retrieved his from the checkroom. They left the hotel and took a taxi which the officers followed at a discreet distance but lost when a traffic snarl developed near the city line. The police detail reported its story to headquarters and went home.

The authorities now had sufficient cause to pick up Barbara for questioning in the chloroform robbery even before she was out of bed in the morning. She made a very poor criminal. Her black wool coat was covered with lint, and even fair-sized pieces of the absorbent cotton that had been used to hold the chloroform in the cone over the robbery victim's face were in her handbag from the night before. She also had seventy dollars in crisp bills given by "her man" for her part in the robbery.

At headquarters, Barbara made a full confession. The story of her life at home, her childhood, school history, trip to Europe, marriage, son, and divorce were true, but now, for the first time, she told of her life since she had left home.

She had gone to Chicago and had tried for two weeks to find work, while what money she had dwindled and she ate less

and in cheaper places. Finally, in a railroad station on a rainy Sunday afternoon, when she was in utter despair the man, Harry, bought her a newspaper and a cup of coffee and suggested that they go to the movies. She declined, but when she happened to run into him at lunch the next day, he bought her a good meal and showed her a consideration and kindness she had never known from her husband. At first she did not tell him anything of her background, but he appeared so sympathetic and she felt so grateful that finally she confided in him.

During the next week, she got a couple of days' work at a soda fountain washing dishes. Late each night she met Harry, and they ate together. On the fifth night he took her for a ride in a car, which she later discovered he had stolen. He left her in the car while he went into an apartment building where, he said, he had a business call to make. About fifteen minutes later he came back displaying a large roll of bills. Putting a gun at her side, he forced her to drive seventy miles across the state line to a place where they could abandon the stolen car and board a Florida-bound train.

Harry explained that this was his way of life and that from now on it was hers. He explained to her that she had been an accessory both before and after the crime of armed robbery and that if she did not go with him, he would turn her in.

During the week that followed he changed from the considerate lover she had known the previous week into a thoroughly depraved brute. They traveled by train and stolen car. He gave her new clothes and forced her to discard her old ones. On two occasions in the South, when he committed other robberies, poor Barbara was on the verge of collapse. Harry always left her where he could keep her in sight and changed his threats of exposure to threats of killing if she tried to leave him.

From Florida they moved quickly to Boston, where he insisted that she snatch the \$9.35 from the till to buy chloro-

form and to pay for one night's lodging in advance. Harry found an obscure hangout for them to use after they pulled their big snatch, and that was where the police found Barbara. Harry had dusted town and she was alone. She seemed enormously relieved that her month of horror was over and was glad to sign a full confession for her part. In court she pleaded guilty to being an accessory and received a long sentence.

From what facts she was able to provide and from detailed descriptions which the two plainclothes police officers were able to provide, there was no doubt that Harry was a notorious criminal with a long record. Several states had issued warrants for his arrest since his last release from prison. Massachusetts added hers to the list, but since he was not located for almost eighteen months — when he was arrested by federal officers and received a ten- to twelve-year sentence in the Atlanta penitentiary — he has not been returned to Massachusetts. A detainer is still lodged against him, along with those from four other states. It will be a long, long time before this man is loose to prey on innocent people, but he undoubtedly will be out some day. He is the canny type of criminal who knows all the legal loopholes, and he will never be silly enough to do a job in a state that has a habitual criminal law which would subject him to life imprisonment.

Barbara's case was entirely different. She was a first offender with a record in this state only one week long, and throughout her entire criminal life she was under the influence of a seasoned offender. Since the Board felt further harm would be done by the contacts made during a long confinement, it voted her parole as a "special case" at an early date — after a very careful plan had been worked out.

Barbara was released shortly before Christmas and was allowed to return home under the interstate compact as a visitor to see her son and stay with her family for ten days. She then returned to Massachusetts to start work her agent

had found for her in a hospital. After three months, she was adjusting so well that a first-class hospital accepted her in its nurses' training program. The staff was fully aware of her history and her parole progressed without incident. On her day off Barbara used to drop into the Board office to show us any new clothes she had bought or to display snapshots of her son and her family. After two years she was able to send her son to school in the East, where she could see him every week. Now she has completed both her nurses' training and her parole and none of us feel she will ever be in trouble again. She understood her problem completely and had true sorrow for the great wrong she had done. With firm resolution she set out to be independent by learning to support herself, and she found a great source of satisfaction in the service and kindness to others that nursing involves.

This woman was an accidental offender rather than a real criminal, but, had she not been caught and had she continued under the evil influence of a person of Harry's caliber, she would have become so seriously involved that she would never have had the strength and courage to work her way out.

Teen-age Criminals

ACCORDING TO experienced observers, the rate of juvenile delinquency is increasing. Its exact extent is not known because many juvenile delinquents are never apprehended. Many of you readers may search your memories and recall some of your own foolish actions of adolescent years which might well have landed you before a court of law. It may have been the time you broke a window and "got way with it." Then again it may have been the time you took an apple from a peddler's cart. The truth is that many delinquent acts are never discovered and, by the grace of God — and good parents — your criminal career ended in that early stage.

Much has been said and written about juvenile delinquency in recent years. We apply the term to children and adolescents whose thinking is immature and, therefore, they are not deemed responsible for their acts. Over the years the public has developed a feeling that these teen-agers should not be stigmatized as criminals. This is a laudable aim; no man, woman, or child who sincerely tries to reform should be branded by public opinion.

In many states the statutes require that boys and girls committing delinquent acts must appear before the juvenile sessions of the courts, or special courts, until they reach a certain age. Seventeen years is the average. But this still leaves the older teen-age group exposed to adult methods of correction and rehabilitation. Our Board annually handles the cases of many young women who have learned the facts of life the hard, stark, realistic way. Their cases challenge the fullest capabilities of both the institutional and parole staffs.

It is my purpose to present a factual report, illustrated by actual cases, on this highly publicized problem without criticism of any of the authorities who have dealt with it — in the hope that reading reports of typical cases will make the public discuss them and express some healthy, and eventually enlightened, opinions on the problems they illustrate. The public is paying the bill and, at the same time, is being harmed by these juveniles.

A heart-sickening shadow is slowly creeping over the horizon of all of us who work with adult offenders. Today we see girls who have just reached their seventeenth or eighteenth birthdays giving every indication of becoming hardened, incorrigible criminals. This was not the case even a few years ago.

Sheila is an example of our growing problem. She was a pretty little girl of seventeen, cute as a minute, with bright eyes and soft blond curls. She wore a size nine dress — and wore it to provoke every male she encountered. When I first saw her, Sheila was appearing before the Parole Board. The superintendent of the women's institution in which she had then served eleven months felt the girl was ready for release, and after a long detailed interview the Board voted to parole her, fully realizing she was a very poor risk in view of her history. We agreed that with an understanding employer and under the supervision of a trained agent with whom Sheila could discuss her problems as often as necessary living in the community might benefit her.

Although Sheila had an IQ of only 80, she belonged in that subnormal intelligence group whose members so glibly talk their way out of almost any situation. At the Board hearing she attempted to do just that, but it seemed to us that much of her self-assurance and worldly sophistication was just a front to cover up feelings of insecurity dating back to her childhood.

At the age of seven Sheila, and her five brothers and sisters, had been turned over to the State by court order as neglected children. The original complaint had been made by her father in one of his few sober moments, when he notified the probation officer that his wife was missing from home and the little children were alone. The record is quite vague about Sheila's life before she was seven. But one does not need a vivid imagination to picture it, for in that span of years her father had been arrested eleven times for drunkenness, twice for non-support, once for fathering an illegitimate child, once for violation of the election laws, twice for assault and battery, and several times on loitering complaints. He had served brief jail sentences and one six-month term in the house of correction. It was only too apparent that he was an entirely irresponsible individual, and it is interesting to note that his complaint to the court seems to have been one of the few constructive moves in his life. He disappeared soon afterward and never by letter, phone, or visit did he inquire about his children again. The efforts of all state workers to locate him have proved fruitless.

Sheila's mother was ten years her husband's junior, and at a very early age she became a chronic alcoholic who consistently stayed out until four or five in the morning and only came home when she was hopelessly drunk. The probation officer's report indicated that the six children were inadequately clothed and fed and that they were frequently seen eating from garbage cans in the neighborhood while their mother squandered their welfare money on liquor for herself and her men friends. In spite of all this, Sheila had affection and loyalty for her mother in those early years. It was the rejection of this love that made her unhappy, restless, and insecure. Rather than face and solve the problems she met, Sheila always ran away from them.

When first placed with the State, she was examined by a psychiatrist and found to be "disturbed but sane," and her

first need, for obvious reasons, was a good home. A foster mother who had been able to give the satisfactions of home to many children without them failed to make progress with Sheila, who soon resorted to lying and stealing to express her difficulty. A second foster mother was no more successful. Sheila ran away and was returned to the State as soon as she was found. There followed another foster home, and then another, but to no avail. Sheila was given next a six-month trial in an excellent private school for children where daily study and psychotherapy were possible. Even that was no help to Sheila, who then was ten years old. She wrote to her mother, begging to be allowed to help start a home for herself and her brothers and sisters. When her mother didn't even answer her letters, Sheila ran away.

Fifteen foster homes in over five years all failed to give Sheila a sense of security. When she was thirteen, she came before the Juvenile Court for stealing and was sentenced to the Industrial School on what is termed a stubbornness complaint. This would keep her under supervision until she was twenty-one years of age. Eight times she ran away from the school. Once she got as far as New Jersey; another time she was arrested in Oklahoma City. Twice she was able to "bum" rides with men to California, and once to Florida. On each return to the school, she got great satisfaction by describing her exploits, particularly sexual ones, to the other inmates. Medical examinations proved that her stories were not exaggerated.

The psychiatrist at this time reported her "a seriously disturbed person, lacking completely the capacity for affectionate relationships, unable to relate herself to others, which reflects a marked disturbance in the very early relationships."

She was released under strict parole supervision, but unhappily that ended when she returned to the school pregnant. On a second parole from the Industrial School, Sheila stole small sums of money from her employer, which resulted in

her commitment to the Reformatory for Women, where I first became acquainted with her.

Our efforts to reach Sheila were as futile as those of the two other state departments that had previously tried. She was now strong, energetic, and a reasonably capable domestic worker, but she deserted the job we provided for her the first day she had off.

We had to issue a "whereabouts unknown" warrant for her arrest, but the police were unable to locate her on our warrant until three months later, when she was arrested at two o'clock one morning driving a stolen car with four teen-age boys. They were all armed, and the loot from the residential burglaries the gang had committed during the evening was still in the car. Sheila was completely brazen at police headquarters and talked freely of her career as a "gun moll," signed statements involving the entire gang, and gaily went off with the police to show them the barn they had used for two weeks as a hangout.

The court gave Sheila three six-year sentences to run concurrently, and though she was pregnant again, her stories about her sex activities were so fantastic that it was entirely impossible to adjudicate any one of the boys as father of the baby.

Sheila will come up for parole again when a reasonable part of her sentence has been served and when the superintendent feels she has matured enough to risk trial in the community again. There has never been an absolutely hopeless case, but for Sheila, who has not as yet reached her eighteenth birthday, the outlook cannot seem very bright. Perhaps her baby will have a sobering influence. Perhaps it will provide her with a normal outlet for her emotions and will give her something to anchor to and build on. I am sure her supervisors will foster and explore the mother-child relationship with her to the fullest, but I'm afraid the reasonable conclusion now is that, although Sheila will talk a great volume of mother love and devotion, her performance before the baby is six months

old will be one of gross neglect and rejection. For the baby's own sake, if he proves to be adoptable material, it will be far better to place him at an early age with eager, adequate, and responsible adoptive parents.

Sheila is not an isolated case at all. She is typical of the delinquent teen-age girls who come before the Parole Board. Her behavior is the direct result of her early environment, but when we try to rectify the situation, we can take remedial steps only with the individual, rarely with the environment. Although one can in no way excuse an individual or overlook her faults, the roots of a problem like Sheila's are so deep that one cannot help but question society's approach to such cases.

Medical science has taught us in this past generation that insanity is not inherited. We more or less accept that belief as fact today. Yet situations, conditions, and environments that permanently mar young children's emotional stability are allowed to continue to breed unnoticed in the majority of communities generation after generation. Broken homes and the excessive use of alcohol are, of course, the two most common factors behind neglected children.

As I have watched these very young girls who have received adult sentences to the Reformatory for Women, there seems sometimes to be a gap of only a few short hours between the time they were in conflict at home as children and the day they ride, in the custody of the Police Department, to serve a sentence as an adult prisoner.

That was the case with Edna, who was adopted by an eager, meticulous woman who felt the presence of this child would save her own marriage. Perhaps it would have, too, but her husband had been killed in an automobile accident when the child was four years old.

The mother then concentrated her efforts on spoiling the child, lavishing affection, presents, clothing, and dancing lessons on her, and, in return, demanding perfection that was beyond Edna's natural ability to achieve. In this case Edna's

unreliability was the first sign of serious trouble. Instead of coming home after school, she hung around with boys, came in late at night, lied, and finally began practicing petty thievery. When her foster mother resorted to physical punishment and strapped Edna, which she often did, even after the girl was well past adolescence, Edna's reaction was to become more evasive.

After such an episode, on a pleasant summer evening, Edna went downtown on an errand to the drugstore, where she lingered looking for some of her usual school chums or associates. Soon a stranger on a motorcycle stopped and asked her if she would like a ride. She gladly accepted and that very night had intercourse voluntarily several times with this young married man. (This was in no way a rape case and should not be so regarded.) The next time the man took her riding she was not quite so lucky, since he had a couple of his friends waiting at the isolated spot by the lake where he and Edna had gone before. Edna had relations with three of the four men, but by that time she was so dirty and disheveled that she was afraid to go home. One of the men then gave her three dollars and a ride to a nearby city, where she took a cheap room in a disreputable hotel.

Mother, meanwhile, was wringing her hands at police headquarters over the inefficiency of police departments in general and loudly bemoaning the ingratitude of the girl for whom she had "done everything."

Three days later Edna and a girl friend she had met in the hotel were arrested for evading an innkeeper and for larceny. The new friend had taught Edna how to enter a large metropolitan hotel, order dinner, eat the main course, and after ordering dessert calmly walk out. Each girl picked up a suitcase near the main desk as they left to give the appearance of being tourists. The hotel did not prosecute, but the owners of the suitcases did, and both girls were found guilty of larceny and sent to the Women's Reformatory.

The case of Edna presents a double challenge to the Parole Board. The first step, of course, is to try to get a young, inexperienced first offender out of the institution just as soon as possible so that she will not be further corrupted by the seasoned offenders. However, it is quite obvious that there is much work to be done to help the adoptive mother make a home where Edna can make a satisfactory adjustment. This type of problem is most difficult. Since we have no case history on the mother and no legal control, every step must be made on a voluntary basis. If we find that the mother is sincere in wanting to find out the subtle ways that she herself hurt Edna in the past and the ways she can help her in the future, we usually try to enlist the aid of the family clergyman or a private social agency, for we know that long after the parole department has had to withdraw there still will be problems to discuss and solve.

The judge who sentenced Edna was a very wise man. By separating her and her foster mother he gave each of them a chance to look at the other without emotion and without actual physical conflict. We were able to explain to the mother that Edna was somewhat below normal intelligence and therefore she should not expect too much from her. Mother, who had been an energetic and successful businesswoman herself, had the idea that adopting Edna and giving her opportunities was enough to assure her success. Therefore, when Edna failed the mother thought she was just plain bad. Edna is never going to be able to meet the mother's high expectations, because God did not give that poor girl the mental equipment to do so, but she can achieve moderate success in certain limited occupations if she has the proper understanding and encouragement.

It did not take the trained worker long to explain the situation to the mother, and it was really rather sad how grateful she was. By the time Edna had served six months of her sentence, we were able to release her to start her trial in

the community under the supervision of her agent. This gave a longer period of supervision and the results proved we needed it. The mother actually needed more counseling than the daughter, but the gratifying part of this case was that the mother always was most co-operative and eager to work out their problems.

If this unfortunate woman had sought the services of a family agency, a trained psychiatric social worker might have helped them avoid both the sorrow and the separation.

Another, and less successful, example is Helene — a vital little girl of foreign-born parents. Her mother was an attractive, well-poised woman who was unable to make a go of her own marriage to the father "because he was strong willed, opinionated and intolerant." He had, however, always been able to earn a substantial living.

When Helene was four her mother left home and went to a nearby state to live with "Uncle Lester," and her father brought a "housekeeper" into the home. This woman was more interested in her own son than in the little girl, and when Helene was six, she was placed in the first of a long series of foster homes. Then, four years later, the psychiatrists were called to examine Helene and found her to be a sane and "deprived little girl who has been unacceptable everywhere she went, an unusually nice child and apparently good material."

In the state school where she was placed Helene became involved in a serious situation with another girl. When the matron tried to separate them, Helene rebelled, severely beat the matron, fled, and finally barricaded herself in a room. When the matron tried to drag her out, Helene fought so savagely that four men had to be called. Before she could be subdued, Helene had bitten the little finger from one man's hand. Her language was unbelievably foul and vulgar. She was given a sentence for assault and battery to the

had a record of eleven previous arrests in a three-year period. Four were in Massachusetts: one as a stubborn child, one for vagrancy, and two for escaping from a school for juveniles. She also was arrested once in Birmingham, Alabama, twice in San Diego for vagrancy, once in New York, once in New Mexico and the other two times in Chicago, where she served a three-month jail sentence. She escaped from the Reformatory within four months and hasn't been located since.

On and on they go, one young girl after the other — sodden alcoholics at fifteen, drug users and confirmed prostitutes long before they can legally marry under our laws without parental permission.

Although we know from experience there is never an absolutely hopeless case, we also know from our experience that when a woman has been arrested more than five times her prospects of establishing a completely new way of life are very poor. The only hope lies in awakening within her the desire to conform and the desire to try. If the desire is there, the way can be found. However, as I watch the array of seasoned offenders who are developing around us today, I frequently wonder if we are even heading in the right direction at all.

Perhaps the knowledge of the spread of drugs being used by minors today and the startling revelations and publicity given the problem by national investigations may alert parents sufficiently to realize that right in our own communities — no matter whether city, village, farm, mountain, or seashore — we have juvenile crime. Small crimes lead to larger crimes, and larger crimes to tragedy. The neglected child becomes the delinquent child, and continued delinquency leads to criminality.

I would urge mothers to remember that a little affection and a helping hand extended to a three-year-old unloved child today may save him from the electric chair twenty years hence. This isn't sentimentality. This is *fact*.

Nasty Crimes

TO MY WAY of thinking, abortion is the very dirtiest business we deal with at any time. Our records show that the members of that very lucrative profession take extreme risks to make their contacts. The records also show that they are generally discovered by the law through a predictable pattern of circumstances. A young woman goes to a doctor because she has had severe abdominal pains and has been hemorrhaging for several days. She does for just one reason — a fear she is going to die (and sometimes she does).

The doctor sends her to the hospital at once and notifies the police. If the girl is not too sick to be questioned, the police try to get the story from her directly. If she is dangerously sick, or if she dies as a result of the abortion, the police turn the matter over to the Division of Criminal Investigation, which will have to try to piece the story together, with very few clues to work from. The abortionist and her assistants do not call a doctor or take the girl to a hospital. All abortionists that I have known have nerves of cold steel, and they think a great deal more of money and their business success and reputation than they do of the lives of their victims or the souls of unborn children.

Usually the investigators find the victim has been keeping company with a married man and has been having relations with him regularly until she discovers she is pregnant. Then they both get panicky, and he talks to a "friend" who talks to a "friend" who knows a woman who will help them out. The price runs all the way from \$300 (the fee asked by the organized abortion rings) down to \$75 or \$100 for the woman

who does it as a sideline. Generally, the actual abortionist gets three-fourths of the fee and one-fourth goes to the contact. Small wonder that the people in this racket can have fur coats and flashy cars, when you figure they rarely spend half an hour with a patient.

After the terms have been agreed upon and the cash raised — and this is indeed a cash business — the details are arranged. No names are ever used, no introductions or addresses are ever given. The “friend of the friend” says to the man in the case that if he and his girl will come to “Joe’s” on a certain night at a set time, everything will be taken care of. Joe’s is invariably a third-rate tavern in a low or questionable part of town.

At the given time they sit at a table or in a dark booth. Eventually a stranger walks by and gives them a sign. Generally the stranger drives them, in his own car, to some part of the city with which they are unfamiliar. They drive around the block a couple of times and, when a window shade is snapped up, the driver stops and the girl goes in alone. She asks for “Mabel,” who appears promptly and asks her how many months along she is. If the answer is no more than three, Mabel tells her to go upstairs, remove certain of her clothing, and lie down on a table. Mabel now takes the cash, counts it, and at once produces the catheter, syringe, sharp stick, or a piece of slippery elm and inserts it in the young woman’s body. She tells her to keep it there for twenty minutes. Mabel leaves the room. There is no conversation.

When the twenty minutes has elapsed, Mabel returns and removes her surgical equipment and gives her victim some highly technical advice about what to expect. She always recommends a hot bath and gives her a few pills. The victim dresses. Mabel snaps the curtain and the victim departs, to be picked up by the car which has been prowling in the area.

If the foetus is not passed within the next twenty-four hours, the girl may come back for another treatment without

extra charge. She may even come back for three or four extra treatments — if she lives that long! But, on all the records I've read there has never been a cash refund for failure to produce an abortion. Apparently all abortionists "guarantee satisfaction."

One noteworthy factor about the personalities of the women in this profession is that they are all very pleasant, competent women. Seldom are they young, and most of them are foreign-born or have a foreign background. Generally they are of average or high intelligence. I have never known of one who was an alcoholic or a drug user. They almost always own their own homes, have large families, and are adored by their children. These children always claim to be amazed that "Mamma" would do such a thing and argue endlessly that the one girl who had "complications" was the only one Mamma ever helped. They are sure she did it because she was sorry for the girl.

The police investigation, however, brings out a story that is the direct opposite from the family's. Mamma is known to have been aborting for years. The local police have watched the house week in and week out and have even called in the State Police to help. They have hidden in the shrubbery for hours when they have received a tip, but Mamma has been hoodwinking them for years. She may very likely have been tipped herself, on such occasions, by someone at headquarters who was giving her protection.

When it comes to releasing an abortionist, I always have the feeling that her stay inside has only made a superficial impression, but I do feel society is far better protected if such women are released under parole and local police supervision and made to work at honest employment on their return rather than letting them "go out free" to start right in again.

While all releasing authorities agree that the abortionist is likely to repeat her crime, it is important to note that, as far

as I can recollect, we have never had an abortionist rearrested for abortion while she was on parole and under supervision. I regret to state that we have had many who resorted to it after supervision had been terminated. One of the strongest arguments for the truly indeterminate sentence is proved by that fact. But as long as we can legally keep watch over them, parole acts as a crutch to help these women stay within the law.

Unfortunately, a crutch is no help if a person won't use it, and there are always women who spurn every effort to help them and who resent all authority. Jean was one of those, and the trail of destruction she left behind her before she was finally committed to the Reformatory will be responsibility to the state social and corrective agencies for a long time to come. She is one of those girls whose absolute flouting of the laws of society will always remain a mystery to us.

In time we may become expert at solving problems of correction, and maybe we will even learn to cure people like Jean. But we will still be working in areas where the harm, both to society and to the individual, will already have been done. To make real strides in curing crime we are going to have to learn what causes it in the first place. We hope that the running records that we keep of our parolees, who are living in the community and are faced with the same problems that have always led people to crime, will give us clues to the original causes. We have over a thousand of those records, which we constantly analyze and evaluate, hoping to discover some pattern of behavior or some trend that will guide us, both in the treatment of individual cases and in our work in general, but it is too early to depend completely on the validity of the over-all conclusions we have reached so far.

Jean raised her children in a breeding ground for crime. The conditions of her household were known to the local officials, and, as you read the case, I'm sure you will agree

with me that the town officers, the clergyman, and the court officials who spent years gracefully passing the buck back and forth will have to share with Jean the responsibility for the almost inevitable future of crime that awaits her children.

Jean herself is of Indian extraction and was brought up in a mill town where she lived in happy, pleasant surroundings. She remembers her parents, who are both dead, as being kind and considerate, though she has little to say of her two brothers, who feel she has disgraced the family name and who will have nothing to do with her. In school she was a better than average student but was so uninterested that she left as soon as she was fourteen years old. For the next few years she worked at one job after another around her home town without ever settling down.

Her court record began when she was eighteen, when she was arrested for fornication and served a six-month jail sentence. Afterwards she returned to her mother's home but could not, or would not, fit into the quiet routine. Her mother had always tried to set a good example for her and now tried more directly to lead her toward a wholesome life, but, after months of effort, she could only describe her own daughter as headstrong, willful, and opinionated. Within a year Jean had run away from home to marry an Army man, and we can learn nothing about the next ten years of her life, for she lived at Army posts in various parts of the country.

By the time she was twenty-nine she had seven living children and was taking care of them so badly that the school authorities brought a complaint against her. This is the first of the reports that no one in authority did anything about. It stated that the home was in total disorder, cluttered, poorly furnished and so isolated that only a cart path led to the house. For long stretches at a time the children would be absent from school without reason, and when they did come they were dirty beyond belief. Jean told the investigators that her hus-

band was overseas and the children made her nervous so she kept them in bed most of the time. There was a brief spurt of enthusiasm in the town to do something about that situation, and for a while conditions improved.

Two years later, however, the enthusiasm had died and Jean's family was in more deplorable straits than ever. She was unable to supervise the children and had let them run wild until the school would no longer accept them because they were suffering from scabies, pediculosis, and crab lice that could be traced directly to filthy conditions at home. In the meantime well-founded rumors reached the authorities that Jean had begun drinking heavily and that she was bringing soldiers back to her house at all hours of the night. During one fracas her oldest son had tried to stab her. The authorities warned her that if she did not take better care of the children and straighten out her personal life they would have to take formal court action, but the threat made no impression on Jean.

In another two months neglect charges were brought against her seven children. No one could have benefited more from supervised care, but the case was continued without a finding, and the children continued to live at their wretched home. Six months after that the Red Cross came into the picture and submitted a request to the Army that the husband be returned from overseas. The Board of Health had the house cleaned and thoroughly sprayed with DDT, yet within two weeks the children were again excluded from school for being so dirty that they threatened the health of their classmates. By this time Jean had assumed the attitude that the world was against her and said that she was going to give up trying, though that she had ever tried was difficult to see.

Four months later the father returned from overseas and assured the judge that he would make sure conditions improved, and for a while they did. Yet at the same time a

clergyman who had tried to help Jean reported that she was entirely unco-operative and impossible to work with. Mark, the fifteen-year-old son, had by that time been found guilty of burglary and sentenced to a state school for juveniles, which he liked because conditions there were so much better than those at home. The father was returned to overseas duty because there was no marked improvement in the home conditions. Both Army and local authorities were put on guard to try to prevent Jean's reverting to her old habits of entertaining soldiers now that her husband was away. Apparently the watch was not close enough, because a while later a lieutenant from the Army had to investigate the place. He found it so dirty that he would not sit down, and Jean was filthy, messy, and belligerent. The children were as dirty as she, but by some miracle they seemed healthy. Soldiers visiting a house like that were subjecting their health to a serious threat, and the lieutenant called the school department and the Chief of Police for help. There he learned that only two weeks before Jean had been found drunk, lying in the road, and so covered with filth, which included human excrement, that the police refused to pick her up.

Months went by, while all the interested authorities held conferences about Jean that accomplished nothing. She was arrested for drunkenness in a neighboring town but was released. A year after that she was brought into court for contributing to the delinquency of her two minor sons. Though there are no official details of that proceeding except that the case was dismissed, neighbors were sure that she was having an incestuous relationship with her oldest son and that her husband while he was home had been having one with their oldest daughter.

Another whole year passed, but then the State Police were finally brought into the case, probably by citizens who were outraged by the refusal of town officials to do anything about the continuing disgrace of Jean's household. Investigating

situations like that, where the usual channels have proved ineffective, is one of the most important powers of the State Police and one that is not generally known. Jean's case is a perfect example of its value. For years the filth of her home and the neglect of her children had given the local authorities ample reason to take some action, to protect the children if nothing else. Her continuing prostitution concerned the military authorities and should have concerned the town, but nothing had been done.

The State Police, as soon as they were called in, watched the house constantly for a week and interviewed all the neighbors, from whom they learned that for more than three years the children had never had enough clothes and food and had lived only by begging. They were always dirty and were apparently never allowed indoors at home, but somehow they stayed healthy. Every night a stream of cars came to the house, and singing and shouting went on well into the early morning hours. The police learned that the daughter, Phyllis, hung around with girl friends in local cafés and picked up soldiers. I quote here from the police report on Jean's case.

August 10. Two State Police officers dressed as Army personnel talked with two of Phyllis's girl friends on a downtown street. The first propositioned Mr. J. and later repeated her offer in front of Mr. M. That same day the officers talked with Phyllis, who invited them to go to her home and gave them the address. They visited the home and while there observed Phyllis having intercourse with two different men, Frank D., eighteen, and Harry V., eighteen. While Phyllis was engaged in these activities the officers were able to speak to her, as she occupied a room which opened off the living room. At 12.30 A.M. the same night Jean propositioned both officers. She stated that she and Phyllis would both have sexual intercourse and and she would perform an unnatural act for them for \$10 per person. She used extremely foul language in making the proposition. She was then four months'

pregnant and had been advised by a doctor to refrain from sexual intercourse as the foetus had seated itself in the wrong position and there was danger of stillbirth.

It was noted by the officers that the house was completely devoid of any sanitation. Garbage, urine, exposed excrement of six dogs and seven cats were in every room of the house, exposing the four children, one infant, and four adult residents to any disease.

With more than enough evidence to support them, the police raided the house. Jean was found guilty of neglect of minor children, keeping a disorderly house, and soliciting for prostitution. She appealed to the Superior Court but the decision of the lower court was upheld. The court discovered that though Phyllis was only fifteen years old, she was already married. She was convicted of adultery, and Harry V. and Frank D. were found guilty of rape.

Jean may be unusual, but her record, unfortunately, is not. I cite it to show how a typical neglect case festers when it is allowed to develop in any community. Think of the gigantic task the judge presented to the various state departments that hot August morning when he turned over to them those eight neglected minor children for temporary custody. If these poor children turn out to be juvenile delinquents will it be any wonder to anyone? It will not require very deep research to know the reason why.

There was an interesting sidelight to this case eleven months later, when we were to see Jean at her regular release hearing. I was driving to the Reformatory by a pleasant back road and was about a quarter of a mile from it when I noticed three young women walking along the road ahead of me. They were obviously inmates, all dressed up and on their way to the Board meeting for their interviews. As I came along, one of the girls must have heard the car because, without so much as turning her head to see who or what the occupant might be, she gave her sweater a jerk to display her figure and started

to walk with the age-old swing of the women of her profession. In spite of seventeen children and a year in prison, Jean was still ready for business. I let my car roll quietly past the three girls and then couldn't help smiling to see Jean look a little abashed at her wasted effort.

At the meeting that day the superintendent stated rather strongly that Jean had not adjusted and that her progress had not been what could have been expected from her. I was hardly surprised, and we did not vote to parole her.

Defective Delinquents

WHEN I CAME on the Board ten years ago, there were about one hundred and fifty defective delinquent women prisoners who were eligible for release and supervision. Defective Delinquents are persons of low mentality who give evidence of becoming chronic behavior problems. These women (as well as about 500 male "D.D." prisoners) were under life commitment. They lived in a Defective Delinquent Colony operated as a separate institution, using part of the physical facilities of the State Farm. At one time defective delinquents were held in schools for the feeble-minded. There youngsters with antisocial tendencies could be handled while chronologically young in years, if they were able to retain what they had been taught; but others, as they grew older, could not be handled in the ordinary regime of these schools. The girls developed their natural drives without inhibitions, the boys grew into big husky men with infantile brains who would punch others, attack without reason, and attempt to commit sex offenses.

The Defective Delinquent Colony was started on the theory, therefore, that the feeble-minded who had become a constant nuisance could be better cared for by the trained personnel of the Department of Correction and that the schools for the feeble-minded could then be left to train patients who were trainable. This thinking seemed sound at the time the law was passed, but as time went along the plan in operation caused the colony to become the dumping ground actually of hundreds of unwanted handicapped individuals who were buried there until they died and who had never actually committed a crime.

Children sent by their parents on a stubbornness complaint to a State Training School were transferred on the whim of an institution superintendent to the D.D. colony for life. My hair actually stood on end the first day the full implications of my responsibilities as a Board member came to me. The superintendent of one of our large institutions had invited me for lunch in her own dining room. She was naïvely bragging about the duties and powers of the position. She turned sideways and, with an all-embracing gesture of her hand, pointed toward her institution, saying, "Without so much as leaving my office, under existing law, I can put any woman in my institution away for life." Continuing, she elaborated, "I just pick up the telephone, talk to the District Court Judge, explain that Nellie is guilty of refractory conduct, send him down the papers which he always signs, and away goes Nellie for life."

The superintendent did not add that in so doing she (and all other superintendents who did that) violated the constitutional rights of the individual by not actually bringing the prisoner into court and that all such commitments were illegal because these poor feeble-minded prisoners had not been accorded due process of law. This is only one type of irregular commitment. There are many others.

As mentioned in the preceding chapter, I do not believe that the defective delinquent belongs in the prison field at all. The majority do not know the difference between right and wrong, therefore they are not responsible for their acts. Many are permanent custodial cases and for their own sake and the anguish caused their families, they should not be in prison. Others may adjust in a protected environment with their own family or with a patient, understanding employer in the community — for a time at least.

Our department decided to make a thorough review of the defective delinquents. No one really knew where they all were. There was no complete list with the current status of

all individuals available anywhere in the state at that time. As I explored the defective delinquent situation as the years progressed, many astonishing things came to light. Since there was no psychiatrist employed in the department, dangerous sex deviates and insane persons were among the D.D.'s presented to the Parole Board for consideration. We had no psychiatric advice and no appropriation to obtain any. The recommendation of the superintendent was all that the law required. One girl who had been twenty-six years in institutions, lacking friends or relatives, had never been presented to any Parole Board even for consideration. There were crippled and disfigured women whom no one wanted. Some women had five or six grown-up children, who never came to see them; these children frankly told our agent, as we methodically followed every slim clue to find suitable homes, that they didn't know their own mother, that she never did anything for them when they were children, so why should they do anything for her now? This sounds cold and brutal, yet why should a son jeopardize his own marriage and home by asking his wife to live with an irascible, jabbering, unreasonable old woman who can't even attend to her own cleanliness, much less help with the household chores, a woman whom he remembered — if he remembered at all — as a furtive, dirty, nagging hag, always drunk.

Conferences were held with the several departments on methods of correcting the situation, but progress was slow. In 1947 the Commissioner of Mental Health and the Parole Board, working jointly, obtained an amendment to the Defective Delinquent Law which appeared as a wise solution at that time. In lay language, it provided for the screening of all D.D.'s by two psychiatrists.

1. Those found to be insane could be transferred to the Mental Health Department, where they had facilities for treatment.

2. Those found to be neither defective nor delinquent were to be taken to Probate Court for release.

3. Those still defective and delinquent were to be separated into two classes by the psychiatrists: those who were "suitable for parole" and those who were "not suitable for parole." (At that time 252 were found not suitable for parole; 61 were found suitable.)

This worked well in some cases and we had the satisfaction of knowing that there could no longer be forgotten prisoners, but the appropriation was never large enough and the work of necessity was of a very superficial nature — the reports too meager to be of much value to the releasing department.

Through the years, much knowledge of the problem has now been accumulated from the Department of Correction itself, from the personnel at the State Farm, and from the families and employers of some of the girls. The girls themselves can contribute little if any valuable information, since most of them are so dull they cannot be trained (even in a ten-year period) to tell time or to make change. Consequently, their testimony as to whether they had appeared in court or whether they were railroaded at the time of their commitment would be of little value. Most of them couldn't tell a court from a post office or vice versa.

Many bills have been presented to the Legislature to correct the status of the illegal commitments of these forlorn defective delinquents and most have been referred to Special Recess Commissions for study. Definite progress has been made. Under recent legislation, substantial numbers of both males and females who were improperly committed have been taken into court after application to the district attorney in the county from which they were committed so that their cases could be reviewed and their rights protected.

There is a clause in this new legislation wherein the presiding justice may recommit an individual for thirty-five days' examination to the Defective Delinquent Colony, if he deems it wise. But there are many other inmates who have already been tried for a crime (even though there might have been a flaw in the proceedings) and who cannot be put in double

jeopardy. The judge, if he believes them sane, has no recourse but to declare them free. It is too soon to know what will happen, but I am afraid much sorrow and many tragedies may follow in the wake of the immediate, unsupervised release of these poor feeble-minded souls, who have neither family nor friend to turn to, who cannot work, and who do not know how to care for themselves. Ultimately, many of the women will turn to prostitution as a way of life and as they get older will either be recommitted as venereal contacts, or found beaten to death in some sandpit, or strangled in a town dump. I just do not like to think what can happen to the men released in this sudden unregulated manner. It is most unfortunate for both the inmates themselves and the general public that such a crisis has come to pass. And noteworthy indeed in the passage of time is the fact that about one half of the commitments of the inmates of the D.D. colony have been found by the courts to be procedurally improper. Yet no action or criticism whatever has been made of the state officials who perpetrated these rank injustices on the most tragic group of our citizens: individuals so dull that they do not even know they have been deprived of their constitutional rights.

Until such time as the defective delinquent situation is clarified by law, the Parole Board will continue to see those recommended by two psychiatrists as "suitable for release," will judge each case on its individual merits, releasing those that it deems good risks and continuing to help and supervise all the D.D. girls who are in the community at the present time.

The supervision of the released D.D.'s presents its own special problems and is one of the most exacting and time-consuming phases of the work of all agents. In a suburb of one of our large industrial cities, we had a woman on parole who was under a life commitment as a defective delinquent. Her name was Henrietta and she came from a primitive back-

ground. She had grown up in deplorable surroundings. Both parents were feeble-minded and promiscuous, and Henrietta and her thirteen brothers and sisters had grown up like so many little animals scouring the neighborhood for food. They dressed in rags and as each child reached school age, the problem of privation and sordid living became apparent to the authorities. As one child after another reached the age of eight or ten years, he or she was committed to one of the state schools for the feeble-minded. At times the local police would go in with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and try to work with the parents. Once or twice the home was broken up and both parents went to jail for neglect, but even though the children were sent away, the parents always seemed to get some of them back again when they were a little older.

Henrietta spent six years in an industrial school and did benefit to a degree. She learned certain elementary principles of personal hygiene which she would never have achieved at home. She also learned to accept discipline and to conform to routine. At fifteen years of age, she was discharged to her mother and worked spasmodically in a mill in a city near her home.

Then came Henrietta's first illegitimate pregnancy and nothing was done about it. Although her mother felt no moral outrage about how many fatherless babies Henrietta might produce, by the time the third approached, she decided the family finances could stand no more. She went to the local welfare board for aid, which investigated the case and persuaded Henrietta to marry a young worker in the street department who frankly admitted paternity of the second baby as well as the expected third.

Henrietta was older now, with a husband and a little money which he gave her whenever he didn't drink it up on pay night. She became bolder and enlarged her sphere of activity. First, she would leave home and be gone overnight, then it

became two or three nights, and finally a week. As is typical sometimes among the feeble-minded, the mother (who had led such a life for years herself) became highly virtuous and rushed to the authorities to complain about her daughter. The police found the girl was drinking and hanging around taverns in the poorest section of the city. When questioned, Henrietta frankly admitted she had not worked an hour or even looked for work. She had received "presents" of three dollars each for intercourse with men whose names she did not even know, in parked cars or in alleys behind the taverns. She admitted to having been intimate with eleven different men but this would have to be conjectural, since Henrietta never had learned to read or write, make change, or tell time, and her counting ability was equally vague. At her court hearing, however, she appeared well fed and wore an entirely new outfit, this indicating that her story was undoubtedly true. In place of her dirty housedress she now wore a new black satin dress with a sweetheart neckline and long black silk fringe over the skirt. Judging by the wrinkles and goo that now decorated it, it had been worn all week. It was so dirty it could stand alone.

The judge found her guilty of lewd and lascivious cohabitation and placed her on probation with definite orders to keep in touch with the probation officer, return to her husband, her home, and children and to remain out of the city in which she had been arrested.

For some months, Henrietta and her husband seemed to be making progress, then with winter came another pregnancy. The birth of her fourth child slowed her down to the extent that it almost looked as if Henrietta was going to be able to keep the home together, under her probation officer's supervision. Late in the spring, however, the probation officer heard rumors that Henrietta was drinking again, yet every time she went to the house, she found her sober. Warned about the rumors, Henrietta vehemently denied them and

blamed her mother, the policewoman, and everyone else in the county. She herself, of course, was always blameless.

Shortly after that all the protective departments of the big mill city were called out during a severe thunderstorm to answer a unique call in the center of town. In an alley behind a most disreputable bar, two little babies had been found. A drain pipe was pouring a torrent of water into their carriage and had almost drowned them. Needless to say, the babies were Henrietta's. After the fire department had applied emergency inhalators, the police rushed the babies to the hospital, where the poor little three-month-old had a severe struggle but managed to survive, as did his sister. When the storm and excitement had passed away, the police located Henrietta, her mother, and her four-year-old daughter in the café. Early in the day they had all walked five miles into town from their rural home. When the police found them the mother and Henrietta were too drunk even to be questioned and the little girl, who was dirty and disheveled from many hours of play on the floor, had fallen asleep unnoticed on a seat of one of the dark smoky booths.

The court found Henrietta to be a defective delinquent. This meant she would receive a life commitment to prison. She would either remain in custody or be under supervision until death, unless released by the Probate Court in the district from which she was committed. Her mother was found guilty of being idle and disorderly and was placed on probation with supervision by a probation officer who, by now, had had contact with every member of the family.

The children were returned to Henrietta's husband, and since they were judged "neglected children," the court retained the power to supervise them. The court did not deprive the father of legal custody, but directed him to continue working for the city department and to live with his own mother, who was willing to care for his four children. The husband and children did quite well with his mother, under

the watchful influence of the probation officer. The husband drank very little. Reports, however, from the school doctor and other community officials indicated to the probation officer that all was not well at the home of Henrietta's mother. On investigating, she discovered the mother had been living in an incestuous relationship with her fifteen-year-old son for several months and, because of the very crowded living conditions in their tenement, many of the acts took place in front of other minor children in the home.

When the probation officer presented the verified details to the court, the judge decided summary action was needed. Since the whereabouts of Henrietta's father had been unknown for years, the home was broken up. The mother was given a five-year sentence and the children were committed to the Division of Child Guardianship.

This case might seem extreme to many people unfamiliar with the problems of the underprivileged, but it is far from unique. Every city and town has such cases, and society will not face up to the situation. Every schoolteacher, clergyman, police officer, doctor, and welfare officer is familiar with just such case histories. They know the true definition of a case history — that it deals with the entire environment, background, and situation of the individual and the number of his court appearances, not just the color of his eyes and his intelligence quotient.

By this time Henrietta had served several years, had given birth to another baby, and appeared well built up both physically and emotionally. She was examined by two psychiatrists, who found her suitable for parole. After being recommended by the superintendent of the institution, she was granted her hearing before the Parole Board. We are extremely hesitant to release a defective delinquent, but we know that some of them, given the proper circumstances, can and do adjust and become useful members of society. In this case, we proceeded very slowly. After a long and what we

felt to be a constructive interview at the Board meeting, we took an "action pending" vote to allow the field agent to make an exhaustive investigation of the home and family situation before voting her final release.

One thing should be made clear. The skilled officer investigating a case does not bring the Board a report of living conditions as she herself would desire them, or based on the standard of culture and living of the Board members themselves, but, rather, on what would be reasonable to expect as decent conditions for a family of the intelligence and financial background of the particular case assigned to her. In this instance the agent's report, based on interviews with the husband, his employer, his mother, the police, and the probation officer, as well as the children, indicated to the Board that this was the psychological moment for parole. There was a home for her to go to. Her husband was not drinking. The children were well, and Henrietta's mother, an obviously bad influence, was still in the Reformatory and would be there for some time to come. We voted her release, and our parole agent took on a new girl in the person of Henrietta.

The agent's actual physical meeting with the girl as an individual was new, but, as a seasoned agent, she was really just moving into the middle of the case and had thoroughly familiarized herself with the entire history before she made the home investigation. The agent left Henrietta and her prison-born baby with the husband, mother-in-law, and the four other children, but strife broke out at once. The divided loyalty of the children for the mother and the grandmother caused immediate trouble and Henrietta did not have the balance or understanding to work out her problem.

"After all, *I'm* their mother, and what does their grandmother have to say about it, anyway?" was her attitude, and the agent soon saw that Henrietta was inflexible. Another series of conferences with interested town, city, and county officials brought forth a plan whereby Henrietta and her

husband moved into a tenement next door with the three youngest children. The grandmother, who received Old Age Assistance, kept the two older children, and the father contributed toward their support.

The next year passed in relative quiet, according to the agent's reports, but Henrietta had developed a brawling tongue and a chip on her shoulder. She was in constant turmoil with her neighbors. Then another baby came along. One of the conditions of her parole was that she was never to go to the neighboring city, but other parolees told the agent of seeing her there on holidays. Henrietta, warned by the agent, always vehemently denied the stories, and the agent, on her frequent visits, could see no evidence of drinking.

There came a long, wearying hot spell when all humanity was exhausted from the endless repetition of humid days and hot nights. An emergency call for the agent came in late one afternoon. The agent was in the field and could not be located for several hours, so the supervisor took the call. The person phoning insisted on remaining anonymous, but the details of the complaint sounded too real for the supervisor to take chances. She phoned the local police and asked them to investigate at once.

Just about the time the police cruiser arrived at Henrietta's home, the agent also happened, by coincidence, to drive up. She knew that any parolee as disturbed as was this poor girl would probably be upset and at odds with her neighbors after the long stretch of unbearable weather. But she found quite a different picture. Henrietta was dressed in a new outfit. She had a few clothes tied in a box and defiantly told her agent and the police that she had met a man in the city recently with whom she was going to elope to Maine that afternoon. She felt there was more in life for her than "caring for those — brats." Henrietta was sober.

The agent indicated to the police that she would like to talk to her charge alone, and they tactfully withdrew a short

distance. Without a masculine audience Henrietta calmed down considerably, but she told her agent that if prevented from going to Maine that afternoon she would drown all her children by holding their heads under water in the river that night before her husband came home from work.

The agent went into the yard and talked to the two oldest children. They told her that the night before, when their father tried to stop their mother from dressing up to go to the city, she had taken a carving knife and held it at the oldest boy's throat until her husband grabbed her and threw the knife into the river behind the house. With that, the agent jumped in her car and raced to a telephone to ask us to issue a warrant for Henrietta's recall. The Board was entirely familiar with this case and the poor adjustment the parolee had been making. With the utter confidence we place in the sound judgment of our officers, we issued a warrant at once and sent another officer to the house with the necessary papers. In the meantime, the local police took Henrietta into custody to hold her for safekeeping. The agent collected all the little children and took them over to their grandmother's house to await the return of the father from work and asked her to tell the story to the husband.

The Parole Board asked for a psychiatric report from the institution to which Henrietta was returned. It revealed she had deteriorated so seriously that the two psychiatrists signing it felt "she was not suitable for parole consideration." It is interesting to note as a sequel to this case that in a very short time the husband divorced Henrietta and married again just as soon as the law permitted.

The sum total of human wreckage and accumulated suffering, grief and woe that is touched upon in this one case history is appalling, but what is more appalling to me is that these conditions exist, have existed for years, and continue to exist

in every city and town. The public at large continues to sleep smugly between its own clean sheets every night and spend their days complaining about high taxes, never giving a thought to the total picture of such situations, either in terms of moral, human, or purely economic values. There is a feeling among many otherwise intelligent and good people that crime is none of their business. So long as this attitude continues, cases such as Henrietta's will flourish and increase. I do not believe the majority of these mental defectives belong in prison; I do not believe they should be punished for their behavior if they clearly do not know the difference between right and wrong. But they form the most seriously disturbing disciplinary element in any reformatory, where their very presence defeats the purposes for which our reformatories are established. Some frank prison officials will admit they like to have D.D.'s in their population because they can get them to do the heavy drudgery day in and day out, where prisoners of normal mentality would revolt. The majority do not belong on parole, and their supervision siphons off the time and labors of agents from hopeful cases. My point is that prison and parole would never enter the picture at all if the community took an early and effective hand and accorded these unfortunates permanent custodial care and training — before they have committed criminal acts.

People like to close their eyes to unpleasant facts. Nevertheless, I ask the reader to total up this picture as I have sketched it from the maternal grandmother down over a twenty-year period.

TOMPKINS FAMILY

Parents

Father: Edwin, born 1887, one of a family known in the vicinity as a name synonymous with degeneracy. Members of the family had intermarried and immorality is prevalent.

Mother: Nettie Jones, born 1890, mentally low. Makes no attempt to discipline her children or keep them clean.

Children

1. Henry, born 1906, illegitimate. Brought up by foster parents.
2. Herbert, born 1914, committed to Division of Child Guardianship permanently. 4 years in foster home. Now self-sustaining.
3. Henrietta, born 1916, committed to D.C.G. permanently. Married, 6 children.
6 years Industrial School
3 years Defective Delinquent
2 years parole
Returned to D.D. colony in 1949, found to be "unsuitable for release."
4. Margaret, born 1918, committed to D.C.G. 3 illegitimate children. 8 years in School for Feeble-minded.
2 years in D.D. colony
On parole for life, doing well in protected environment, supporting self and youngest child.
Other 2 children permanently committed to the D.C.G.
5. Robert, born 1920, committed to D.C.G. Deaf-mute, will remain in School for Feeble-minded for life.
6. Hortense, born 1921, committed permanently to D.C.G. This girl was the only one of the Tompkins children found to be of normal intelligence. She was placed in a foster home where she did well, saved \$428 before her release. She kept in touch with her brothers and sisters and took the baby Kenneth to live with her. She is now married and living in Florida.

7. Herman, born 1922, committed to the D.C.G. This child is blind in one eye.
11 years in Training School
3 years under supervision in community
Now self-supporting as a laborer.
8. Alden, born 1923, permanently committed to School for Feeble-minded as custodial case.
9. & 10. Martha, born 1924 (twin Thomas died at birth), died 1935.
11. Zella, born 1926, committed to D.C.G. Has always been a patient in School for Feeble-minded. Has been released to the community on trial visits, but remains only for a few months, as she is unemployable and cannot be trained.
12. William, born 1927, committed to D.C.G. Placed in foster home where he was well liked. This boy worked here until he was drafted. He is believed to be still in the service. Does not contact any of his relatives. 12 years foster-home supervision.
13. Myron, born 1930, committed to D.C.G. Adjusted well in foster home. Married, 3 children. Milkman. 10 years foster-home care.
14. Kenneth, born 1934, committed to D.C.G. Feeble-minded and a crippled foot. After 10 years' foster-home care allowed to live with Hortense, where he still is. Works regularly as an elevator operator in Florida.
15. Wilhelmina, born 1936, died at birth.

"All of the children, except Hortense were retarded in school and all were low grade mentally" is the statement that the judge made the day in 1936 when he found the parents guilty of neglect. After making a finding of all of the children as neglected children, he found the parents guilty of neglect.

He sent the mother to the Reformatory for Women and put the father on probation, ordering him to pay toward the support of his children.

A check this spring, nearly twenty years later, reveals that in all that time the father has contributed a grand total of \$812.56 toward the support of his children, even though he has worked regularly, while the state paid out in cash for board, medical care, and clothing for the minor children while they were in foster homes \$13,869. It is quite impossible to reckon what the total cost might be for the maintenance and training of this family; but if we take \$1000 a year as a fair figure to use as the annual cost per patient in one of our special training schools and figure that since the date of commitment there have been ninety-four years of custodial care already extended on this family, we come on the most conservative estimate of a figure well over \$100,000 already expended by the taxpayers. Four members will continue to need custodial care as long as they live.

The story of the Tompkins family points up two facts very clearly. First, we see the working out of the theory that if feeble-minded children are given proper care early enough many of them can be taught to be self-sustaining persons who lead useful, happy lives. Second, we see that the only two who became delinquent were the two oldest girls, who were left in that blighted home environment until they had developed into serious behavior problems themselves. Surely Henrietta and Margaret would never have been sent to prison or given life commitments to the D.D. Colony if they had been placed with competent and understanding foster parents before they reached adolescence.

Lifers and the Advisory Board of Pardons

THE PAROLE BOARD has no jurisdiction over anyone sentenced to life in prison. However, after a person has served fifteen years of such a sentence, we act as an Advisory Board of Pardons on her case and conduct a public hearing on it quite different in nature from our usual parole release hearing. The fifteen-year hearing is designed to give hope to all prisoners and is an essential part of the correctional system. In it the Board has no power to release an inmate, but can only make its recommendation to the Governor. We review the entire case, including the prisoner's behavior and adjustment during the past fifteen years, and make a recommendation on clemency to him.

Besides holding fifteen-year hearings on lifers, the Parole Board acts as an advisory board on all pardon petitions submitted to it by the Governor. Such petitions cover a wide range of cases, all the way from a newly sentenced murderer proposed for pardon for some special reason to an alien who may never have served time but has been put on probation under a suspended sentence for some minor crime committed dozens of years ago and who, now by the terms of the McCarran Act, can be deported for it.

In cases where the law provides for a public hearing on a pardon petition, as it does on the fifteen-year hearings, the Parole Board must notify certain specific interested public officials, among them the district attorney in the county where the crime was committed, the chief of police in the town, and the attorney general, of the time and place of the hearing. The inmate may be represented by counsel and all witnesses are sworn.

If the Governor pardons a person found guilty of murder he may release him at once as an entirely free person or he may commute his sentence to a lesser one, thereby making him eligible for parole consideration and future release. The Governor may also release a prisoner "on parole conditions," which actually means that acting with the consent of the council, he commutes the sentence and in so doing serves the same function as the Parole Board does with other prisoners. Although it is a most unusual procedure, it has occurred.

The general misconception that all or most pardons granted are granted to murderers probably arises because the newspapers only publicize those pardons. Actually, murderers are a very small part of the total number of criminals granted pardons each year. The parole procedure of releasing a lifer whose sentence has been commuted to a lesser one is exactly the same as that followed by the Board in the release of any other prisoner. It is quite possible that the Governor and council could commute a lifer's sentence, so that she would immediately be eligible for parole, but that the Parole Board, after studying the case, would vote not to release such a prisoner. I do not remember that such a situation has come up during my service on the Board, but it could easily happen.

While the parole department only acquires jurisdiction of the release or supervision of murderers and other lifers after pardoning action by the Governor and Council, we do control the release in manslaughter cases. When people think of trials that were given sensational publicity, they often forget that the judge may have finally accepted the prisoner's plea of being guilty of manslaughter rather than proceeding on a long-drawn-out court battle on the murder charge, especially if the outcome was debatable in view of the evidence available to the prosecution. That is why the public may be surprised when such a criminal comes up for parole a few years after the trial.

The press glamorizes all women charged with murder; those I have seen are a drab, tired group, but when we have

them under supervision, either on commuted life sentences or as direct releases in manslaughter cases, they have done well outside and have been little or no trouble after their early period of adjustment. We always seem to know these women a little better than we do other prisoners, perhaps because the awful emotional shock of realizing that they have taken a human life makes them reach out and want more help than other prisoners do. When they finally reach the moment of release, these women are usually timid and apprehensive. Many of them have been inside for many years and the world has changed greatly since the last time they saw it. Others, who have not served so long, are naturally worried about how their former associates are going to accept them. Generally such a girl wishes to leave the area where her tragedy took place and make a whole new start. This makes our part in setting up her plan much more important and keeps our contact with her much closer. Surprisingly enough, our experience has taught us to regard most killers as good parole risks. Rarely indeed do women make a habit of repeating that offense.

Not many years ago a young woman was released by the Governor on parole conditions, although the Board, acting as the Advisory Board of Pardons, had unanimously voted against recommending her. However, on Thanksgiving eve, she was pardoned. She had neither home nor people to go to, and since our division had been given no warning, we had neither lodging nor employment available for the girl the night of her release. When the parole supervisor made an emergency trip to the Reformatory late that evening after she had prepared the necessary release papers for the girl to sign, she found a rebellious and hostile young lady who refused to talk to the parole supervisor. She announced with ire that she did not care to leave the institution and that she had neither known about nor desired a pardon. When the supervisor tried to hand her her release papers, she threw them on the

floor, so the supervisor left the papers, the girl and the institution for the night. The day after the holiday the young lady calmed down and decided that she wanted to come out after all, and was assigned to an agent, who in due course set to work and found her a home and a job. However, her parole history was extremely stormy, and all the people who ever had to work with her wished for her sake, as well as their own, that the Governor had followed the recommendation of the Advisory Board of Pardons and had left her in the Reformatory until she had settled down.

The previous history of a girl sentenced for manslaughter is an extremely important factor in our consideration of whether or not to parole her. Had she been previously delinquent? Was she alcoholic? If so, did alcohol have a distinct bearing on the crime? Was it a crime of passion? Had she been involved in other situations where crimes of great violence had occurred? Had this girl been antisocial all her life, or was this episode a single isolated situation? The answers to these questions tell us a great deal, but they do not control our decision. In a manslaughter case, the girl has usually been institutionalized so long that she may have changed completely, and her present attitude and her present mental and physical condition are decisive. Therefore our final guides are the report of the institution, the recommendation of the psychiatrist, and what we learn about the girl in our own hearing.

Although the Board never prejudges a case, we always give much consideration to women who have taken a life, and weeks before we are to see such a woman we are all fully familiar with the details of her case and usually have discussed the various aspects of it, informally, at the office many times. So when we finally saw Marcella at her regular Board hearing she was no stranger to any of us. I don't remember any publicity about her case; I knew nothing about it except what

was in the official record. Since she admitted her full responsibility and pleaded guilty in court, the newspapers were probably not interested.

When Marcella walked into the Board room she went directly to the chair indicated by the Chairman, sat down and answered in a clear voice when he asked her if she was Marcella ——. As he introduced her to each of the Board members she turned and looked at each one of us pleasantly. She was a mature-looking woman about thirty years old, with natural curly black hair which she wore brushed back off her forehead; her eyes were bright blue, as was the plain gingham dress she wore. The impression she made on all of us was as different as possible from what we expected from her history, for Marcella was serving a manslaughter sentence for having killed her own four little children.

This comfortable-looking woman had actually admitted to killing those four youngsters, and she never denied it. She did it during her one and only period of delinquency and, heartbroken though she was, she always accepted full blame for her act. Marcella had been born in a normal family situation and had spent a happy childhood. She finished high school without any unusual incidents and soon after married a man her parents had not approved of.

While her marriage lasted she gave birth to four children, but she soon discovered that her parents had been right about her husband. He turned out to be an irresponsible loafer, always able to keep himself in good clothes somehow, but unable to support his family a single week. At first Marcella had sympathized with him and believed him when he said he was going to land a good job and be a big success next week. But next week never came. For years Marcella had struggled valiantly trying to do the two jobs of caring for her children and working to support them at the same time.

To add to Marcella's worries, her husband began getting into trouble. First the police would come to the house to

question him; then he would be missing for a day or two; then he would dust town for a while, obviously waiting for something to blow over. Then he served a six-month sentence in the House of Correction for being an accessory to a burglary in the next town; and finally he received a long State Prison sentence for armed robbery.

Marcella had always been able to get her mother to care for her babies when she worked nights, and she took good care of them during the day herself. However, as the two oldest children reached school age her mother became too old and sick to be of any help. Rather than escape from work, Marcella threw herself into it more furiously than ever, driving herself beyond endurance to earn more to support the children and pay a woman to be with them when she was working. Then she met a man who started to drive her home after work at night. In the beginning his sympathy and admiration were a tonic to her after the dull drabness of her own life. Soon they were spending all their spare time together, and Marcella was starting to drink. Their friendship only lasted about a month or six weeks. In spite of the relief it gave her from her drudgery, the whole relationship troubled Marcella keenly, and she made up her mind to leave the man and give up drinking completely. When she explained her attitude to him one night, they had a serious quarrel and she went home alone. Marcella recalls that she had been drinking some that night but it could not have been much, because only two hours after she left the large restaurant where she worked, a neighbor met her in the hallway of her house and spoke with her without noticing that she was drunk.

No one will probably ever know exactly what happened in there that night. Marcella was overcome by her plight, tired and exhausted by overwork and responsibility. Her husband was in prison, her mother in failing health, and she herself gradually sinking deeper and deeper into debt. Now,

to cap her torment, she was drinking. She was hysterical over the quarrel with the boy friend and she had no place to turn. Slowly, after what seemed to her to be hours and hours of emotional torment, she decided to commit suicide. She felt it would end all her problems and that somebody else would then take care of her children and give them a far better life than she ever could.

As soon as Marcella had made her decision, she went to the bedroom, straightened the children in their beds, tucked each little one in and, without waking them, kissed each one a long gentle farewell kiss. Then she made sure that both bedroom windows were open and went into the kitchen of the little apartment, closing the door behind her. Methodically she taped the crack around the kitchen door and tucked rags in the large crevice under the door. Next she locked all the kitchen windows, and after turning out the lights so that no neighbors would observe her, she fumbled around putting more rags around the cracks in the ill-fitting double-hung windows of the old house. Marcella now had to work quickly for she realized that it was almost dawn and her youngest child might wake at any moment. She turned on all the burners on the gas stove, opened the oven door, and lay down on a chair in such a position that she was able to thrust her head way into the oven.

This is all Marcella remembers until late the next afternoon when she found herself lying in a hospital bed with nurses and doctors working around her and a uniformed policeman sitting on a chair by the door. There she learned that a few hours after she had turned on the gas a neighbor had noticed that the children were not moving around as usual in the apartment and that it was time for them to start getting ready to go to school. When the neighbor went to the door to knock she smelled gas and gave an instant alarm to everyone in the house and notified the police. After the door was broken down, Marcella was found unconscious on the floor

where she had fallen. In the children's room, the two youngest, whose bed was nearest the kitchen wall, died before they were discovered, and the other two died soon after, without ever regaining consciousness.

In spite of all Marcella's precautions she had either failed to notice or had completely forgotten that there was one of those old circular holes, left by the removal of a stove pipe, directly behind the gas stove. The temporary metal cover originally placed there had been removed, either by the children or to allow some heat to go to the bedroom from the kitchen. In some freak manner, after Marcella turned on the gas, a high wind that was blowing that night made the fumes siphon directly through that hole into the bedroom, and out the open windows. Tragically, the hole was placed so that the fumes blew right across the children's faces and left its path of death on all four of them, while Marcella herself lay unconscious but alive on the floor scarcely three feet from the same hole on the other side of the wall.

Marcella was immediately placed under arrest and held for the grand jury, but it was several months before she had sufficiently recovered from the horror of her act to be able to stand the strain of the trial. Her condition was so serious that the presiding justice asked that she be sent to a mental hospital for observation. She was found to be sane and the court was advised that she be treated as a responsible offender because she was sane the night she tried to commit suicide. The court proceedings were brief, for Marcella pleaded guilty to the charge of manslaughter on four counts. She was sentenced to serve four sentences of six years each, the sentences to run concurrently.

Board procedures vary slightly in different states and in some it is part of the routine to discuss with the inmate the details of the particular crime for which she is then serving her sentence. I agree that many times it is highly necessary and good parole procedure, but when we saw Marcella that

day the Board unanimously and spontaneously concluded there was no need to go into the past with her. Whether this gave us a head start or not, I'll never be able to say, but from that moment we overcame her natural fear and began building an excellent relationship with her. She was, of course, extremely lonely and very timid and insecure at first.

Her mother had died while she was in prison, so she had arranged a plan to go to her only relative, an elderly cousin, who had kept in touch with her at the Reformatory and who welcomed her after her release. Unfortunately that cousin fluttered over her so that poor Marcella was scarcely able to take a bath alone at night, much less start an independent life of her own. After the agent had made a few visits to the over-solicitous cousin, we all could see that the plan was not going to work. Since Marcella had found suitable employment right away and worked every day, earning very good money and paying her way entirely, we knew we could work out an alternate plan. We asked her to take a day off and come to the office at a time when her agent would be there. Here we could all talk freely and Marcella had a chance to express her feelings about living with her cousin without hurting the good lady's feelings.

In view of Marcella's unusual history, we all agreed that she would be much better if she was miles away from where she was known. Since she wanted an occupation which would keep her constantly busy, and busy with people, where she would never have a chance to think, we decided that as soon as she had saved up enough money to support herself for a week she could come to Boston and look for work herself while she lived in lodgings approved by her agent.

This plan worked out very nicely. The first winter Marcella actually had two jobs, one in a factory during the day and the other as a fountain girl in a restaurant five nights a week. By spring the restaurant managers had discovered

what a dynamo of energy they had and they prevailed on her to give up her stitching job and take charge of the short-order department in their very busy downtown restaurant.

With the first money she had been able to save, Marcella had filed suit for divorce from her husband, who was still in prison. As he did not contest the suit, she won her divorce and became a free woman.

We all grew well acquainted with this girl, for she dropped into the office to see her agent and to talk to us on her days off. Never once did she or anyone ever make a reference to her tragedy. How much it had marked her life or damaged her personality I cannot say because I haven't the slightest idea what she was like before it all happened. There were times in the first few months when it looked as if her compulsive drive might work her up to such a pitch that she might be just whirling around in space; but that intense zeal for work gradually leveled off until she carried a normal work load and carried it well. Every time I dropped into the restaurant when she was on duty and had a cup of coffee at another girl's station, Marcella found an excuse to leave her post and walk by me to say hello. One day at the office she asked me if there was any reason why I would not let her wait on me. I told her that it had only been out of a wish to save her any embarrassment in case any one of the other customers in the restaurant recognized me and might wonder how I knew her. That idea had never occurred to her. She said she just thought of us all as her friends, and in Marcella's case I'm sure that was true.

The years rolled by and Marcella worked on in the same place. Probably a business day never passed that someone from our office did not see her on the way to work or at her job. A few months before she was to finish parole she confided in her agent that she had met a very fine man about her age and that they were planning to be married when she received her discharge. Her agent asked her why they were

waiting until then, why didn't they decide to get married in the nice summer weather. Marcella hedged a little and said no, that she would rather wait. She wanted to be free and done. The agent explained that she was sure the Board would be happy to see her settled with a home of her own and a good husband. But the agent got nowhere with her little talk.

Marcella stayed at her job until the final date of her Good Conduct Release. The next noon, as I was walking down the long narrow State House corridor to go out to lunch, I met our Marcella excitedly rushing in toward our office. After we had greeted each other she said breathlessly to me how delighted she was to see me because she had an extraordinary favor to ask. This was a personal favor she was asking of me as a friend, since she was no longer a parolee.

I suggested that she tell me what the favor was before I either agreed or declined. Shaking with excitement, she produced a postal money order for \$200 that she had not been able to get cashed without some responsible person to identify her. She hoped I would be willing to go to the State House post office and tell them that I had known her for many years.

I was more than pleased to be able to help her. As we walked along I asked how she happened to be receiving such a sum of money. She explained that it was from the man she was to marry, who was in Chicago, and that she was leaving by plane that afternoon so they could be married in the morning. The postmaster gladly gave her the money when I told him she very definitely was the individual whose name appeared on the money order. With her money in hand, radiantly happy, Marcella dashed off waving me a gay farewell. So that was the last I ever saw or heard of Marcella, the parolee who had admitted to taking more lives than any other girl I have ever known about.

Just as I left the post office the postmaster called after me, "Say, Miss Sullivan, who is that girl? Marcella ——? Marcella ——? What do you suppose makes me think I've heard

that name somewhere before? Work in your office?" he asked.

"She was connected with our department for years," I replied, "and she is getting married tomorrow."

"She's excited, just as they all are!" he observed, with a wave of his hand, dismissing the topic completely.

When I went back to the office and told the supervisor and her agent the news, we all hoped she would find happiness in her new life, wherever it might be, but we all still wonder if she has told the man her life's story. Wasn't that probably the reason she never would bring him in and ask for permission to be married while she was on parole?

The Helpful Husbands

ONE OF THE most surprising revelations of my work on the Parole Board has been that the surest way for a girl to catch a husband is for her to go on parole. When we ask the girls at their interviews what they plan to do, the ones without husbands invariably say they are going to get married. And be they sixty-five years old, toothless, and alcoholic, they do!

Parole Rule Number 9 states that a girl may not marry without the Board's permission and, unless there is a good reason for refusing, we are happy to approve a girl's application. Having a man of her own and a home of her own usually makes a girl more stable, and her newly acquired partner is often the key to a girl's successful parole.

Some of these husbands are outstandingly helpful. Lay people think of ex-convicts as a distinct class, skulking around corners and snarling at their fellow men. That is true of only the exceptional few, while the great majority who have put the past permanently behind them live just like other people, and are proud of it. They are, in the main, a happy group, for if they are meeting with the approval of their neighbors that is success. Some, indeed, are unusually happy, and when our girls find husbands it adds tremendously to their sense of belonging.

I can hardly write about the women I have known and leave out Eloise, who is one of our most faithful friends; if she should ever read this book and not find herself in it she would be crestfallen. I shall skip the details of the long history of delinquency that she stacked up between the time a trolley car ran over her and took off her leg while she was playing

truant from school and the time we released her on her last parole, when she was serving her fifth commitment on a morals charge.

Eloise is a big girl, pretty, talkative, and extremely energetic. She had no family and grew up in a long succession of foster homes and institutions, yet her irregular childhood did not dampen her spirits. Every time she was presented for parole her optimism was boundless. She was so familiar with the routine of a Board hearing that she came in with a fine sales talk each time and was always ready to admit all her past faults, though of course she would shade their gravity a bit. Then she would go on to list and elaborate on her assets: she could get work right away and earn good money; the fact that she had only one leg was in no way a liability since it interfered with neither her work nor her play. To prove it she always brought in her clippings to remind us that she once won a prize as a dancer in a competition where no one knew that she was handicapped. Lastly, she did not drink. All her statements were true but, alas, she did have a long list of liabilities, which she conveniently passed over. We finally succumbed and voted her a parole, telling her that as far as this board was concerned it was her last trial.

Six weeks after she went out, Eloise appeared at the office with a large, handsome Marine sergeant. They had known each other three weeks and wanted permission to marry. There was nothing hasty in Eloise's plan, this was for keeps. They did not even suggest getting a waiver of the five-day law. For that matter they were not going to be married for a whole week after the Board gave them permission, because Johnny was going to give his Eloise a new plastic leg as a wedding present and it would not be ready until then.

The Board went over the necessary routine questions and happily gave its consent. Eloise, in her usual forthright manner, asked us all to come to their wedding. She insisted that we were her only old-time friends and Johnny had such a

large family that she wanted to match it with some evidence of permanence and respectability. Our presence, however, did seem a little inappropriate to us, so we declined, saying that we would not be able to leave our work just then. Eloise and Johnny seemed to understand and left the office happy to have found each other. But Eloise's invitation had not been just a gesture. A week later, at closing time, the bride and groom dropped into the parole office to show us how really fine they looked. Eloise was wearing a bright red taffeta dress and a huge orchid over her heart. First she showed us her two rings and then her new plastic leg, which was a marvel of camouflage, in color so lifelike that no one could tell the real from the artificial; and, best of all, Eloise had on a pair of high-heeled shoes, the first pair she had ever been able to wear in her life.

So far this marriage seems to have given Eloise a foundation and a goal for a happy life, which she never had before. There have been some severe tests, when Johnny was sent out of the country during the Korean War and Eloise was alone. Yet she avoided serious difficulties during that time, and whenever she felt low she would ask for half a day off from the munitions plant where she has worked for over five years to come to our office on a social call. She would bring the presents Johnny had sent her from Japan to show us and would read us some of his letters. Now Johnny is back home, out of the Service and working in a foundry. Many months ago Eloise finished up her parole and was given her Good Conduct Release, but she never fails to drop in to see us once in a while. Not long ago they both came in, looking fine but seeming a little timid about something. After we had covered all the usual topics of casual conversation Eloise asked if I would mind if they asked a favor. When I assured her that I would be delighted, she told me that it was their fourth wedding anniversary and, as a present to each other, they had just bought a new movie camera that took colored pic-

tures. They had come to the office to take my picture as their first film so they could have it to show all their friends. I agreed as gracefully as I could and said I was sorry they had not let me know ahead of time — I should like to have been in my best dress to be immortalized in color. Eloise said it was all right, her friends would understand that I was just a working woman.

The mighty ex-marine swung the desk around, posed me in a posture to his liking, with Eloise sitting in a chair by my side chatting pleasantly. He mounted another chair in order to get the exact focus on the pictures he wanted. Just as he was slowly turning off his reel, while his wife and I talked, the two male guards who watch out for the Board's safety converged on my cubicle to save me from some new kind of attack. After a good laugh by everyone, Johnny completed his reel.

I imagine they have as much fun when they show their friends that movie as we all did the day Johnny took it; and I hope they even have more fun, because it is people like them who make us love our work and make us sure it is worthwhile.

Other types of girls, the ones with strong personalities, often need the responsibility of taking care of someone to make them settle down, and they are likely to choose the most improbable husbands just so they can fill that need. Evangeline's story does not have a completely happy ending, but it illustrates how important a weak little man can be in changing a girl from a defiant misfit to a successful parolee — from gun moll to quiet housewife and mother.

The Board first heard of Evangeline when Mr. Smith, her grandfather, came to the parole office soon after her commitment to ask if he could be of any help in preparing for her release. Finding a responsible relative who is interested in a case always encourages us. His insight and devotion go a long

way toward guaranteeing a good relationship between the family and the Parole Board from the very beginning.

We meet many fine relatives, but Mr. Smith will always stand out in my memory as the individual who best exemplified the cardinal virtues of faith, hope, and charity. He was a fine-looking, well-groomed man in his early sixties. He told us his wife had recently died, which left him the only relative interested in Evangeline in the difficult years ahead. She, in turn, was his only surviving relative now.

As a top executive of a large shoe factory he traveled so much of the time that since his wife's death he had sold their house and taken a room in the men's club. Mr. Smith sketched his successful business career and told us of his happy home life with his competent wife and their very promising only child, Charles. He told of the boy's childhood schooling and finally of the opportunity of sending his son to college, which he himself had so longed for yet had never been able to achieve. Charles had developed into a substantial, respected young man who was working his way up in the same shoe factory where Mr. Smith was employed, but he had married an extremely superficial, though strikingly attractive, young woman.

The marriage was blessed with the birth of Evangeline, his only grandchild and the girl in whose interest he had come before the Board. However, before he discussed the present, he wanted us to hear from him the story which, he felt, gave the background for Evangeline's unstable life and explained how she had become involved in the crime of armed robbery for which she was now committed.

Slowly, with neither bitterness nor rancor, the grandfather told of the great joy and happiness he and his wife experienced for the first two years of "little Evie's" childhood. He told of the birthday parties and of the holidays that the whole family spent together — all the nice small things that mean so much, especially to grandparents. Then the blow

struck without warning. One night on the way home from work Charles disappeared completely. There was not a single clue as to his whereabouts, nor was any motive for his departure ever unearthed.

His father told us of the horror of the first few nights of the active police search, when the newspaper headlines, false tips, anonymous letters and phone calls that always accompany such situations turned life into a nightmare. The groundless hope each message aroused was followed by even blacker despair, until every member of the family was at the brink of nervous exhaustion. Then came the long emptiness as the trail grew cold and no new valid information came to light. The excitement died down and the police, without a single lead to follow, gave up the search. Mr. Smith hired private detectives until all his immediate funds were exhausted and he mortgaged the family house to pursue even the thinnest thread of hope. He told of long grim trips that he took alone to morgues in many distant cities whenever officials had an unidentified corpse of the general description of his son. Each trip proved futile, and as the winter gave way to spring he and his wife consoled themselves with visits to Charles's wife and "little Evie," who at this time was completely unaware of the tragedy that was to shadow her entire life.

Then, Easter Sunday morning, a police officer came to the door to tell them that Charles was dead. His body had been discovered half hidden under planks and shutters behind an old boathouse on an isolated sandstrip almost two hundred miles from his home city. There could be no doubt of his identity, and the autopsy disclosed that he died of gunshot wounds. The coroner's official finding on the case was "murder, assailant unknown." No clue was ever found as to who shot him or why. Once more Mr. Smith hired private detectives to try to help the police, but again they failed. The only possible explanation, and it was only rumor, was that this isolated stretch of ocean front was used by small-boat

rumrunners during the winter months. Even that did not explain why or how Charles met his death, for none of the exhaustive investigations ever linked him with the rum rackets.

Little Evie's mother waited to remarry only a few months after her first husband's body had been found. Her second husband was a wounded war veteran with no character and low standards of conduct. Within a very short time it became all too apparent that he and his new wife were drinking heavily. As the years passed, three other children were born. While the family retreated slowly to less and less desirable neighborhoods, the parents neglected the children and brawled without letup. Mr. Smith and his wife always kept in touch with Evie and never gave up trying to provide her with clothing, schooling, and affection even though they saw that her parents were rebuffing them and meeting every offer with cold hostility. By the time Evie had reached high school, she had developed into a blonde of statuesque beauty and classic features, but her emotional growth had faltered far behind. As she began to skip school and stay out nights, her grandparents tried to work with the school authorities and had even asked the court to intervene. Sometimes they would take Evie to live with them for several weeks at a time, and for a while she would be the sweetest, happiest youngster that any family could ask for. Then she would go into long stretches of being so insolent and grossly vulgar that her grandparents could not cope with her. At the end of one of these outbursts Evie would always run away and usually turn up at her mother's late at night. When the day finally came when she did not come home to either house, Mr. Smith went to court and asked to have her arrested as a stubborn child.

The police located Evie, and when her case was heard she acted like such a co-operative young lady, as she had so many times before, that the judge allowed her to go on probation,

with a stern warning that she should obey her probation officer and conform to the plan her grandparents had arranged for her. According to that plan, she was to go to a private boarding school where she would have no contacts with the undesirable acquaintances in her own home neighborhood or with the people in the city she had always gravitated to each time she had stayed away before.

For a while the reports from the school were encouraging and her own letters showed that she was in a happy frame of mind. Then came the same old story. The school notified both the probation officer and the grandparents that Evangeline had run away and told them she had been so rude, vulgar, and difficult for three days before she ran away that she would not be welcome at the school even if she was located.

Once more the Smiths started a dogged search for a loved one and maintained it for month after painful month. They were older now and the strain of the anxiety wore on them. Repeatedly they would ask each other how that handsome young girl could protect herself when their Charles could not. Where is she? Why does she run away from life? they would wonder. Though they had no answers to any of their questions, they searched on.

A year later Evangeline was arrested in a hangout with six teen-age boys. The investigation revealed a hoard of loot that the gang had accumulated from its burglaries during the preceding four months. Silver, radios, electric tools, and a veritable arsenal of firearms and ammunition were found stored in the old barn where they met to plan their operations and to hide out after they had made a strike. Evangeline, now eighteen years old, was positively identified during the court proceedings as the striking blond gun moll who had been so brutal and ruthless during some of the holdups. The court found her guilty on four counts of armed robbery and sentenced her to serve four concurrent sentences of six to eight

years each. Since the court gave a definite sentence in this case, Evangeline had to serve two-thirds of her minimum sentence of four years before she was eligible for parole consideration. Most women offenders are given indeterminate sentences and the Board has complete discretion as to when to consider paroling those inmates. If, as here, however, a judge gives a sentence with a minimum and maximum date, the Board has no discretionary powers, and the statute covering definite sentences is in force. Judges rarely give very young persons or first offenders such severe sentences, but the prosecuting attorney brought out that Evangeline was older than any of the six male members of the gang and that as well as being the leader she had on all occasions been armed.

When Mr. Smith first visited the Board, Evangeline's parole hearing was still months away, so there was nothing immediate we could do except outline to him a rather general line of procedure, which included his making visits to her and encouraging her to be thinking of a constructive plan of what she would do when she was released. During her commitment Evangeline received no letters or visits from her mother, her stepfather, or her brother and sisters. The Reformatory officers, feeling that insight into the entire family picture is valuable in the appraisal and treatment of all individual prisoners, tried vainly to locate those members of the family, first by mail and then by sending a staff case worker to look for them.

In some cases it seems that the family is more of a liability than an asset, and Evangeline always claimed that this was true of her mother. As time went on, all of us interested in her future came to agree with her, and we excluded all her family from the plan except her grandfather.

One thing Evangeline had in her favor as a parolee was her looks. With her natural blond hair, worn in long braids coiled around her head, serving as a frame for her fine features, she made a splendid appearance. She was slightly taller than

average, and she wore her clothes well on her magnificent figure. In addition, she was a girl of high average intelligence with an outstanding flair for leadership, but she was restless and needed constant activity to hold her interest.

When the day of Evangeline's regular parole hearing finally arrived, we had settled on a plan for her to work as the phone operator and receptionist in a large private hospital in the city near her grandparents' former home. She was to live in the hospital and spend her time off visiting Mrs. Martin, a fine woman who had been the valued friend and neighbor of the Smiths. Since Mrs. Martin had been to see Evangeline many times in the past two and a half years, she was fully familiar with the background of the case and felt she could do a kindness for her old friends. Several of her own children were about Evangeline's age and could be stabilizing companions for her. And finally, because Mr. Smith and Evangeline otherwise would each have only a cramped room to live in, she thought her house would make a comfortable and attractive place for them to meet.

Evangeline was released to follow that plan, and all went well for a time. The diversified activity of her job and the fact that it kept her constantly before the public seemed to fill a need within her, and she proved able to do the work assigned her so well that her employer was thoroughly pleased with her. As time went on, there were a few of the minor flare-ups that are to be expected in a person making the adjustment from confinement to living once more in the community, but they were all settled by the agent and the employer. Mr. Smith and Mrs. Martin had the highest praise for her behavior on her days off, and for many months all her time was accounted for, which is particularly encouraging in the case of a girl with dual personality like Evangeline; for as long as she did not seek her old associates, even temporarily, there was hope for her. Then one morning, without explanation of any sort, after five months of regular

living and good work habits, Evangeline got up, dressed carefully in her street clothes, and left the hospital on a day when she should have reported for work. She did not go to Mrs. Martin's house, nor did she try to reach her grandfather.

After checking every possible location, the agent reported the matter to the Board, which, after a reasonable time had elapsed and nothing had been heard from her, issued a warrant for her arrest for absconding. Evangeline's case was moved from the Active Supervision List to the Warrant List.

Six months later we received a teletype message that the police of a large city in Maine were holding our girl on a vagrancy charge. She had been arrested with a crippled little man who claimed to be her husband on the street late at night, without funds and with nowhere to go. They had no proof of their marriage with them.

Evangeline, who was about five months pregnant and in need of immediate medical attention, admitted to the police that she was a parole violator from Massachusetts, so they called our office at once to verify that we had an outstanding warrant to revoke her parole. Following the customary legal procedure, the Maine probation officer, acting in an advisory capacity for the court and the police department and the Massachusetts parole supervisor, arranged with us by telephone that Evangeline would be held for a formal court appearance in the morning, so that she would have her day in court and so the facts of the new arrest would be definitely settled. We advised the probation officer that Massachusetts would send for Evangeline if Maine did not impose sentence, and, if Evangeline would waive extradition and return voluntarily with the officer, we would send for her. Evangeline signed the voluntary waiver of extradition before the court hearing in the morning, so the judge, having found both her and her husband guilty of vagrancy, placed both cases on file: the husband's because he had no previous court record,

and Evangeline's on the condition that she return to Massachusetts as a parole violator.

At the court hearing the judge had only been able to learn from the husband that his name was Mr. A. L. Pearl and that he claimed he did not know the names of his parents, nor have any home, nor even a mailing address. He did maintain under oath that he had married Evangeline somewhere in Boston six months before, but he was unable to give either the name of the officiating Justice of the Peace or the address at which the ceremony took place. The judge told him that if his story were true he should return to Massachusetts and get in touch with our department to start planning and working to establish a home for his wife and their expected child.

The Parole Board sees all inmates returned for violation at the next regular Board hearing after their arrest. We allow the inmate to tell us her version of the violation and to discuss any other pertinent matters before we vote as to how much of the remaining time of the sentence she will have to serve before we consider her for parole again. However, long before we were to see Evangeline, Mr. Pearl arrived in the parole office asking for her immediate release. I shall never forget my surprise when the receptionist showed in a most pathetically appealing little man who in size and personality resembled nothing so much in all the world as a leprechaun. He was thin and short, probably no more than about five feet tall and at the most about a hundred pounds, and at that moment he was dripping wet. Either congenital deformity or polio had caused a serious twisting and semicrippling of his left arm and leg, so that as he came in the door he hobbled noticeably and seemed to be constantly about to fall forward. His eyes, very dark and set deeply in his little owl-like face, never moved off the person he was talking to, and he just held that steadfast gaze as if to prevent the other person from getting away from him.

After some preliminary questions which were necessary to

give us time to send a messenger to the Division of Vital Statistics to look up the records and make sure that this man really was Evangeline's husband, we resumed the interview with an entirely new situation to work with and develop. Heretofore Evangeline had been involved in serious crime, a gang leader who, as the victim of an insecure and emotionally deprived childhood, had gone out to find power and attention any way she could. One psychiatrist who had tried to work with her had said that her armed robberies had been an attempt to inflict upon others the hurt she had experienced. Many times she had told us herself that she was always seeking affection and happiness and never could find them, and that then, after she had done some reckless act to "get even," she would be so afraid that she would run from the situation. Always, always escaping, running from life itself, always seeking and hoping to find some kind of happiness and security.

But now, as the interview with Mr. Pearl progressed, we learned the story of another lonely life, and the climax of that story showed us a new Evangeline. This crooked little man sat curled up on the very edge of the chair, with his sharp chin held tight in his left hand while his other hand gripped his elbow as he talked.

He remembered nothing of his early childhood, although he had been told that as a baby he had been abandoned in a trash basket on a city street. He had been brought up in an orphanage and had lived in several foster homes while he was a "State kid." His very early memories were not too unhappy, but as he began to get older the foster parents were always complaining to his visitor that he wouldn't work and they wouldn't keep him any longer. He was moved from one home to another, hardly staying a month in each, so as time went on, he said he was changing schools so often that he could not keep up and had no friends. Other "State kids" had visits from their mothers at Christmas, and some even received birthday presents and a letter or a card once in a while, but he had never had a visit or a letter in his life.

His story went on with grim monotony. Social workers on his case were well meaning, but he had a harder time adjusting to every foster home and school where he was tried, until one day, when he was fifteen years old, he just ran away. Although he had no plans, was too frail to work, and had no money, life was wonderfully exciting at first. Because of his crippled condition, motorists always gave him a ride. Many of them, on hearing his story, would buy him a meal. After many months on the go, hitchhiking back and forth across the country, going south in the cold weather and north in the summer, he began to tire of the life and wanted some secure anchor. It was going to cost money, and he had never been able to get more than a few hours' work at a time, shining a car or sweeping out an all-night restaurant. Even then no one ever gave him money. They paid him with a meal.

As he roved the continent he met all kinds of people and did any number of amazing stunts to keep body and soul together. After a while he learned the habits of the other homeless wanderers and he developed a method of petty stealing for which he never was caught. Late at night, whenever he was in a large town or city, he would go to the local skid row and hang around at a street corner or in a drugstore until closing time of the barrooms, when all the derelicts would be on the street with no money and no liquor. Mr. Pearl graphically outlined how he would go and stand alone by a lamp post until someone more familiar than he with the particular area would finally draw him into conversation and suggest that he help them out on a small robbery they were plotting. The bums would locate an open window or a transom over the door of some grocery or variety store, and they would boost Mr. Pearl up and into the open window, which would have been too narrow for any normal-sized man to go through. Once he was inside, he could work leisurely and often make a considerable profit by eating all he could hold before he collected the cash in the till, the cartons of cig-

that the gang had ordered him to steal. Then, by piling a few boxes under the transom to climb on, he could toss the swag out to his confederates who had been waiting hidden in a shadow. They would then be off, and he would wait until he thought it was safe to drop to the street and go on his own way. Sometimes his confederates did not believe that he had fairly divided the spoils and would lurk in the dark waiting to search him and take everything he had. Twice he was badly beaten by accomplices, and once they kicked him brutally and left him in a gutter to die because they didn't believe he hadn't found the money they were sure had been in the store. That time he was hospitalized for several weeks and told the police that he had been hitchhiking to California when he had been set upon, robbed, and beaten. For some unexplained reason the investigating officers did not connect him with the robbery of the corner store and felt that he too had been a victim of the gang who did that job.

Mr. Pearl told us that he then began working alone. After he arrived in a small city he would look around and locate a likely store and visit it a couple of times before coming back late at night to rob it. He always left town at once so as to be miles away before morning when the break was discovered. He would live on the profits of one break as long as he could and only do another when he was in need. If he could ever find work, he never robbed.

Then his story came to the climax we all had been waiting for. He told us of going to a dingy little variety store in Boston, with a counter and a couple of booths where neighborhood patrons could eat a sandwich, soup, or coffee. Twice he went there to eat and to estimate the possibilities of robbing it, and on both occasions he saw a magnificent blonde sitting quietly alone as if she were waiting for someone. She drank cokes and smoked endless cigarettes while she walked over and sat at the counter or just stared out of the dirty window. Finally she spoke to him and asked him what he was doing there.

When Mr. Pearl came to this part of his story, he took his hand from his chin, moved back rather comfortably in the chair, and in a calm and relaxed manner told us of the amazement and joy that came permanently into his life by his chance meeting with Evangeline that night. He still could not believe that a beautiful woman would walk with him on the street, much less be interested in him, and, in less than a week after they had first met, marry him. However, it was true.

He told us briefly of their discovering that their lives had so much in common. Both were always escaping, moving on, endlessly hunted, forever expecting the knock at the door as the police located either one of them for a past job.

He thought they must have been married only about ten days after Evangeline had left her job in the hospital. Ironically enough, they had been married by a Justice of the Peace within a quarter of a mile of the gilded dome of the State House, where we sat wondering why she had run away and what we could have done to stop her.

We asked him why they had not phoned or come into the office, as we ask every girl to do if she finds that she is not adjusting or is beginning to slip. He said they talked about it and even walked as far as the door one night when they knew the office would be closed, and yet they could not bring themselves to meet their situation. We asked too if Evangeline had talked with her grandfather, Mr. Smith, and his answer was just the same. She could not bring herself to face him, even though she knew he would be kind and that she was causing him agony all the months that he was searching for her.

They had moved around among the summer resorts in the eastern states, where, content with each other and firm in their mutual desire to leave their old lives entirely behind them, Evangeline had always been able to find waitress work, until her pregnancy became too obvious. Mr. Pearl drew himself up with manly dignity to his full five feet as he told us that

they had found each other. Of course this was only Mr. Pearl's version of the story. It might be true or it might be a figment of his imagination. But one thing was certain: Evie had been away for six months and had not become involved, so far as we knew, in any crime like the serious ones of her early career.

Pathetically the poor little man pleaded with us to release her at once so his baby could be born at home. We explained that we would see his wife in about two weeks and then would hear her side of the story, and for the time being we recommended that he see her at the institution to tell her of his visit to us and to discuss with her the wisdom of her letting her grandfather know of her marriage.

Then we outlined a program for him. We explained that as sympathetic as we were about his wife and his baby, the essential thing for him to do was to find work and establish himself in a permanent way of life. He was to keep in touch with us and, when he had made suitable arrangements to provide for his family, the Board would be most happy to review his wife's case. We emphasized how important it was for him to live temporarily at some protected lodgings like the Salvation Army and to bank his savings, no matter how meager, in case he should fall in with any of his previous acquaintances who would be likely to rob him of any money he had with him.

Two weeks later, when we saw Evangeline at her revocation hearing, we found her a very changed girl, calmer and much more mature. Her story was exactly the same as Mr. Pearl's, and she had already been in touch with her grandfather, who had come to see her and again proved his great-heartedness by finding work for Mr. Pearl driving a taxi in the city where he lived. Evangeline was quite realistic as we talked to her about remaining at the institution until her baby was born. A most severe winter had settled in, and she could see that it would be many months before she could take care

of herself again. She also admitted that she knew nothing of child care and that it probably would be better if the baby were a couple of months old before she went out.

After four months we had another visit at the State House from Mr. Pearl. He was an entirely new man now. His baby had been born (in a hospital outside of the Reformatory) and he proudly showed us a picture of the smallest little girl imaginable. He had come to Boston to report his progress. He was working regularly, had a room with a private family, and had saved some money. He then produced a bank book to prove his thrift. The deposits had been regular, one dollar a week for the past eight weeks, a grand total of eight dollars had been saved toward setting up a home. Then we noticed that on that very day there was a withdrawal of five dollars. When I asked him what that was for, he proudly told me it was to pay his train fare to Boston to show us how well he had done. For him he had done well, very well indeed. We complimented him but went into fiscal matters a little deeper to explain that we would be equally happy and encouraged to hear from him by mail, which would not take him from his work for a full day nor cost over half of all he had been able to save in the entire winter.

In the spring Evangeline and her baby were released and went to live in a four-room furnished apartment on the outskirts of a village where her husband's taxi company had transferred him. Grandfather and two of his faithful old neighbors and Evangeline's agent had worked with Mr. Pearl to provide clothes, a crib, a carriage, and the other basic necessities for setting up housekeeping.

This parole was an entirely different matter. No longer did Evangeline run away from life. She stayed at home and took good care of her husband and baby. Sometimes they had quarrels and upsets, but whenever they did Mr. Pearl loaded his entire family into the taxi and headed right for Boston to have us in the parole office referee his problems for

him. Usually by the time they reached us the trouble was over and the visit boiled down to a friendly chat, with everyone in the office admiring the baby, still hardly any bigger than a robin though one of the smartest youngsters who had ever come into the office.

By the time Evangeline had earned all her good-behavior time reductions, and was finally discharged from parole, she had given birth to a big blond baby boy who was named for the grandfather. In the years that followed, the agent saw Mr. Pearl once in a while in his taxi or saw Evangeline walking in town with her children. They all looked fine, and though the grandfather had died, one of his old neighbors still kept in touch with her.

Many times the agent who had been on the case discusses Evangeline with us. We all agree that she is the perfect example of a girl whose adjustment was possible because her situation fitted the needs of her personality. She was a natural leader and a girl with considerable ability, and having three weaker persons depending on her made her feel responsible and kept her occupied and using all her capabilities.

For several years we completely lost touch with the family but we did not cease to think of them and wonder how and where they were. Then the agent saw a small news item telling that, while fishing in Lake M—— on the opening day of the fishing season with two male companions, Mr. A. L. Pearl of Massachusetts fell overboard and was drowned. His body was not recovered in spite of extensive dragging operations. His home address is unknown. When the boat capsized, the two survivors swam to shore safely but were unable to rescue Mr. Pearl, who, being a cripple, was not a strong swimmer and sank almost immediately.

We often speculate now about Evangeline and wonder where she is and if she had gained maturity enough to be able to go on without Mr. Pearl to take care of and without Mr. Pearl to take care of her. We hope so, because we know it

can be done. We see girls like her succeed over and over again, but the individual has to have reached the mental and moral state where she sincerely wants to "make good." There is nothing new about this idea. In the sixteenth century Cervantes said, "the woman who is resolved to be respected can make herself so, even amid an army of soldiers." Perhaps he was right, but I wouldn't go as far as to rephrase Cervantes' last line to "amid the Navy in Scollay Square." The point is that the girl with a strong will stays away from Scollay Square.

One of the benefits of the parole supervision statute is that the Board has the power to make any rules, stipulations, or safeguards it deems necessary in each individual case. It is in the Board's power to decide whether a violation of a particular rule is a minor or major infraction, and what, if any, action shall be taken in each case.

A person reading the parole rules for the first time may find them frivolous, amusing, or even consider some of them as an intrusion into the private affairs of the inmate. Sentimental "do-gooders" frequently get frothed up over them. I have served ten years as a member of the Board, and I wouldn't change a comma in them. Neither would an inmate who sincerely wishes to succeed, as many of them have told me over and over again. I have talked to over 3500 women and have tried to plan with them for their future. Those who really want success live in such a way that the rules are not a hindering factor in their lives at all.

Confusion Confounded

SYLVIA IS, as some people would put it, quite a girl. She began life on the wrong side of the tracks in a midwestern city twenty years before we heard of her. We have known her now for four hectic years, and even though she completed her parole without having to be returned to the Reformatory, I would hardly think of calling our work with her a success story. Perhaps I should, for in light of her early accomplishments, her four years with us must have been very dull stuff. Or were they? I am not too sure that Sylvia did not become the successful criminal who did not get caught. I have always wondered.

At this point I would hazard a prediction that our Sylvia either will turn out to be runner-up to the greatest con woman of the century or will die by mistake in one of her fake attempts to commit suicide. Either way will be all right with her. She will have impressed herself that she is a "big shot" by that time. There will be no one around who will care very much just what the end is, because she is entirely unable and unwilling to remain in a sustained relationship with any other individual.

Sylvia's physical appearance was nondescript in every way. Neither large nor small, tall nor short; one could not call her pretty and yet it would be quite unfair to say that she was drab. She was just an average American girl that one sees by the hundred riding in to work in the subway every morning. Sylvia did not even have a wart, an inflection in her voice, or an unusual mannerism that could attract one's attention long enough to help identify her later on. To go with her colorless physical appearance, she had superimposed a very moderate, bland personality.

I have come to believe that her complete lack of distinction was a studied accomplishment and part of her stock in trade. With a record like hers, which practically reared up off the paper it was printed on, it was pretty clear that her nonentity was a tremendous asset when she went out to do business.

Let us take a look at that record. It started at the age of thirteen, after some skirmishes with her parents over which high school she should attend. The parents wanted her to go to the school in the neighborhood where she lived, but she had other ideas and insisted on going to a school miles away in an exclusive and wealthy neighborhood. To finance her plan she forged her first check — or at least was caught for the first time. Her parents at this time were anxious to co-operate with the authorities, and when they promised to repay the money on a weekly basis, Sylvia was given probation. The court instructed her to obey her parents and attend the local high school.

But her war with society had started, and she would run away from school and absolutely defy her family at home. She had been running around to the large hotels with young Army officers, staying out nights and dressing like a movie star. The child who had forged the thirty-eight-dollar check in the fall was by early spring in serious trouble. She announced to her mother that she was pregnant and that the man responsible, the son of a very prominent family, was willing to marry her to avoid the serious consequences he foresaw when he discovered she was a minor.

Partly because the man was just about to be commissioned in the Army and partly because by now they were at their wits' end, her parents consented to her marriage, and off Sylvia and her husband went to the South, where he was to be stationed. That is the last that was ever heard of the pregnancy and the last the family heard from Sylvia for about five years.

The official record gives no details about the husband except

he made restitution for checks that she had forged. By the time he was sent overseas, he had paid out a grand total of \$6000 for her. What Sylvia was doing in those distant and unusual parts of the country where the checks were drawn we don't know. On most occasions she apparently would arrive by plane, dressed in simple elegance, and go into the most expensive and exclusive stores to make a small purchase, maybe for about \$16. To pay for it she would present a check for some large amount like \$131.67, and she always seemed to be able to get off, not only with the merchandise but also with cash for the balance. She made it a practice to hit two or three shops in quick succession and then disappear. Nothing more would ever be heard from her in that part of the country. Sometimes she went to the trouble of establishing credit by opening a bank account of about \$10 and then drawing about \$500 before nightfall. She always paid her hotel bills by check and stayed only in the very finest hotels in the country, where she could have "the accommodations [she] was used to and where [she] would meet [her] own class of people."

On one occasion in a very small but exclusive hotel in the high Rocky Mountains disaster hit her. She was arrested and given thirty days in the local jail for the larceny of three pairs of stockings at \$1.95 each and a portable radio that cost \$37.50. This must have indeed been humiliating for a lady used to juggling much bigger amounts.

About this time her husband ceased to send money or to answer the letters she sent him, so she was soon back on the East Coast, where she was arrested by the federal authorities, charged with using the mails to defraud and sentenced to the Federal Prison. Once more Sylvia announced she was pregnant so she could land an easy work assignment. Inside she became a domineering, loquacious, vulgar, and bothersome prisoner, always wanting her own way and never able to adjust to the institution program. Before long both the other inmates and the institution officers cordially disliked her.

The authorities found her to be such a chronic and proficient liar that they were unable to verify many of her statements, including the whereabouts of her parents. She kept to the story that her father was a high Army officer who was overseas, but whose name and address she refused to give in order to avoid bringing shame on him and her mother in their important position. They were never able to compile a reliable history (as is customarily done on all prisoners) because of the tissue of lies she created and because she had either never worked or else had always used assumed names which were impossible to check.

After it became apparent that her pregnancy was just one more figment of her imagination, she turned her full attention to playing up her ill health, of which no medical investigation could ever find any sign. The psychiatrist really held the key to her behavior when he said in part, "Sylvia reveals no mental symptoms of psychosis. She definitely has no signs of mental disease but she has a psychopathic personality. It is hard to believe she will be amenable to persuasion or advice."

The official record goes on to tell us that after Sylvia had served one year and nine months in the Federal Prison she was released on parole. It also appears that she complied with the conditions of the Federal Parole authorities, at least superficially, for she received a good-conduct discharge. Three months later she was arrested passing a false check in a state where she had never been known to operate before. The police investigation revealed that she had met a Navy officer and gone to live with him the day of her discharge from federal parole. They had lived in three different states, in each one of which she had assumed his name and looked forward to marrying him. The authorities charged them both with adultery, but the record did not show how the case had been disposed of. Apparently the Navy officer took that opportunity to swim right out of her life.

When next heard from, not too many months later, our

prize con woman was in Boston, where her exploits were so amazing that she hit the front pages of all the papers — with pictures. This was the big time. She had passed checks in six of Boston's stores on the same day, but what really caught the city's imagination was her effrontery in going into one of the country's most elegant jewelry stores and cashing a rubber check big enough for her to walk out with a simple watch strap and \$116.43 of the store's cash. So, though it was substantial enough to make good newspaper copy, Sylvia was again tripped up on a comparatively minor transaction.

That put her into the Charles Street Jail, where she summoned an attorney to find her Navy officer. But he must have asked for duty in Greenland or for a peaceful winter in faraway Gander. At any rate, he couldn't be located, though Sylvia was careful to tell the Navy authorities that she was pregnant and he was the man responsible.

That summer must have been long and hot for her as she languished in jail, unable to raise the heavy bail that the court imposed after all six stores she had victimized that same day brought separate charges against her. Since she could no longer afford to hire an attorney, either, the court appointed the Voluntary Defenders to represent her. When the case came to trial she was granted one continuance after another as she vainly attempted to import witnesses from other states who could substantiate her alibis. None of her maneuvers worked, and when her mother saw her pictures in the paper and contacted the police some truth began to emerge from under all her stories. Her parents and a six-year-old sister still lived in the area where she had been born. Her father was a clothing salesman who did not work too steadily, and her mother supplemented the family income by working in a delicatessen Saturdays and evenings. When the court found Sylvia had lied to them about her parents being in high military circles and about every other circumstance of her life, it found her guilty of all the charges against her and gave her as severe a sentence as was permissible in the situation.

Immediately she started in on the same rigmarole she had followed in the Federal Prison, except that she had to abandon her usual pregnancy report. This time, in order to attract attention and avoid work she experimented with two or three dramatic attempts at suicide, and consumed huge doses of a powerful cleansing fluid which made her violently and noisily sick. The suicide attempts subsided as time went on and as she gained what was to her a gratifying notoriety with the inmate population. Inquiries began to come in from all over the country now that her picture had been reprinted in most of the big-city newspapers. From all sides the police, following up the complaints of her many victims, wrote for official descriptions and identification of her. In an adjoining state three warrants were issued on charges of forgery, but a charge of using a bad check for \$3286 to charter a private plane for a week's leisurely vacation trip across the country failed for want of adequate identification. Once more the completely anonymous lady had acted her part to perfection.

The notoriety she acquired inside was just the tonic she needed, and she settled down to such a comfortable adjustment that in no time at all she was recommended for early release by the superintendent. She had cultivated the interest of a very young and inexperienced chaplain, who was so eager for her release that he had been able to persuade a splendid woman in his congregation to take her into her home. Together they had developed a plan for Sylvia's parole that looked most constructive, and they presented it as an argument for her early consideration. In the meantime Sylvia had received a paper about ten feet long from the Chinese embassy. Translated, it said that her husband had divorced her in Canton, China. The translator was unable to decipher whether the lady in question had been present at the court proceedings in China. Unlikely as it may sound, I have always had a suspicion she might have been. She certainly showed no emotion or interest when she heard about the document, and our Sylvia certainly could have arranged her

own transportation and expenses (and probably picked up some money in the bargain) if she had had notice of the proceedings in advance.

I recall only one other female offender to whom the Board devoted more time and more serious study before paroling her than it did to Sylvia. The chances of her completing a satisfactory parole appeared to be nil, no matter what prediction standards were used to evaluate the pro and con factors. However, we decided to give her one trial in the community. Sylvia never failed to extract some benefit from any situation she was in, so, since Massachusetts was the seat of culture and learning, she had plucked all the resources of the institution dry and earned herself a high school diploma. By the time of her hearing before the Board, she was exuding culture from every pore of her little body. This, her extreme youth, and the three outstanding warrants in the neighboring state on which she might have to serve even more time were among the reasons that the Board decided to release her, fully aware that it was in for hard work. At that time we approved the chaplain's tentative plan for her, but before it could go into effect we notified the neighboring state with the outstanding warrants against her that Sylvia was ready for release. Since the police of that state decided to prosecute the case, it had its officers at the Reformatory waiting to serve their warrants and transport the girl in custody back to its court.

Therefore, only a few weeks after the Board had seen Sylvia and voted her parole, she was on her way over the state line to face her three warrants. True to form, she had thought up a perfect set of props for this situation. Her accomplishments had so impressed the naïve chaplain that he too made the trip over the state line in his own car, to be with her during her courtroom ordeal in case she needed counseling in matters spiritual.

The court procedure turned out to be more of a nuisance

than an ordeal. Since Sylvia's crimes had been committed more than two years before, no one could still be very sure about identifying her. By noon she had been acquitted on all three counts and she was now free from custody and on parole to Massachusetts, with instructions to report to the State House in Boston as soon as possible. All worked out very nicely for Sylvia, and the chaplain drove her back himself. (We have always wondered how his wife liked the idea; he has never volunteered to do out of state counseling since.)

As soon as Sylvia was back under our supervision we sent her to the fine woman who had offered to give her a home. Next day her agent took her out to find work. Here the trouble started: she balked at the first interviews and didn't stop. Even though she had only \$2.86 to her name and had not paid her board, she refused every position offered. She felt the officer was quite unreasonable not to allow her a two-week vacation to find "old friends" and to make her arrangements to continue her studies. Handling a situation like this with tact calls for all an agent's experience and accumulated knowledge. She wants, of course, to help every parolee make and develop her own plans, but she has to be able to spot the difference between a program leading to a sound life in the community and one that looks like a shortcut back to a previous pattern of behavior. Sylvia's proposal had all the trademarks of the latter, and the agent was able to persuade her to take a job as an assistant in the diet kitchen of a big hospital where the personnel director knew all about her record and where she would have no reason to handle funds. The other employees would know nothing of her history unless she told them herself.

In less than one week's time our new charge dropped into the office to pay a social call on any of the Board members who happened to be there and to thank them for her release. We were a little amazed to see her dressed in a new smartly

tailored raincoat and hat, and equally surprised to learn that she considered herself an artist of no mean ability. She told us how pleased she was to find that Boston provided certain really adequate courses in the history and background of art as well as advanced courses for artists of her caliber. We reported on both her wardrobe and her new interests to the agent. Though the Board would have no way of knowing exactly what clothes a girl possessed, the women members knew perfectly well that the raincoat Sylvia wore was not designed, or even thought of, two years ago when Sylvia went inside. When she telephoned the office a week later to say she had changed jobs because the hospital work had conflicted with the full summer school course in which she had enrolled to earn college credits, we were presented with three problems:

1. Where did she get the money for the course?
2. How was an entirely self-supporting woman going to underwrite a college career?
3. Her new job was waitress work in a night club, which is against parole rules.

This was the first the Board had heard of Sylvia's proposed college career. It did not startle us, because we had become used to the truly amazing schemes parolees submit to us every day. As long as Sylvia was competent, there was no reason not to explore the plan and perhaps work it out. Indeed it might even be her salvation; but it would take more innocence than good sense to believe or even hope that a woman who had stacked up Sylvia's verified court record, to say nothing of her unreported exploits, was going to settle down at twenty-two and just spend her time with the classics in the long winter evenings. Again we relayed our information to the agent and asked her to find out just where Sylvia had found the cash to pay the tuition to summer school. Of course it might turn out that she never had enrolled, and this would mean that we would be faced with a situation of outright living.

The next time the agent arrived at the office she was thoroughly perplexed. On a surprise visit she had been unable to locate Sylvia and had found Mrs. Martin, her sponsor, most disturbed. Sylvia had bought many new clothes, had been going to the theater constantly, and the ticket stubs showed that she sat only in front row seats. She in general was living on a scale that Mrs. Martin, who was a well-paid executive in one of the largest insurance companies in Boston, could not afford. Sylvia had not yet paid her one cent of the room and board money she had promised before she left the Reformatory. Then there was a matter that Mrs. Martin did not like to bring up because she was not sure she understood it. Almost every night and all day Sunday a young woman came and stayed alone with Sylvia in her very small bedroom. Mrs. Martin was sure that this was an unwholesome friendship and she was concerned about her own daughter of high school age. She had begun to wonder if she had been wise to take a stranger into her family. Mrs. Martin asked the agent to wait until she was a little surer of the facts before she did anything, and requested that her complaints be kept entirely confidential.

It did not take long for the agent to find Sylvia. She laid the law down to her. Together they found a suitable job where Sylvia could earn good money as a waitress in a first-class busy restaurant. Sylvia gave her notice at the night club where she had been working and the agent warned her that if she wished to remain out in the community she would have to pay her board in full and comply with all Mrs. Martin's household rules. Lastly, the agent told her frankly that she had begun to distrust her and that on the next weekly visit she would expect a full accounting of every cent she had earned in the three weeks she had been out and receipts and sales slips on any purchases she made in the future.

A few days later the agent took occasion to stop in for lunch at the restaurant where Sylvia was working. She could see by the efficient way the girl was doing her job that she had

been well trained as a waitress and should be able to earn big money on that job. She also noticed that Sylvia was wearing a sparkling new diamond ring on her engagement finger. On her next visit, when she asked about the ring, Sylvia disposed of the topic with her usual calm. Oh, yes. She had forgotten to mention that she was now engaged to a young exchange student from Norway who sat next to her in her Abnormal Psychology course at summer school. The agent cautioned her about Parole Rule Number 9, which required her to tell her Norwegian about her parole status before the Board could give her permission to marry him.

The next problem for the agent to iron out was Sylvia's financial situation. When Sylvia forgot to include the \$97 for summer school tuition, for which the agent had seen a receipt on her previous visit, it looked as if the girl had got in over her head. But no, never Sylvia. She jogged her memory and recalled that it had been an outright gift from a new woman friend, the student counselor at the summer school, who was so interested in her adjustment that she had wanted to help her with her education. She was the young woman who had spent the week end with Sylvia at Mrs. Martin's house.

By the time of the agent's next visit, Mrs. Martin reported that she had taken all she possibly could and completely realized her mistake. The Norwegian, in the meantime, had vanished out of Sylvia's life because she had decided she "did not care for him in that way," so no more was seen of the big diamond ring.

At any time during this period the Board could have returned Sylvia to the Reformatory, since she had obviously broken several rules; but in the light of her previous exploits these skirmishes seemed minor infractions, and the Board concurred with the agent's recommendation to continue working with the girl in the community.

Under Rule Number 4 the Board has a right to limit the

friendship of any parolee with a questionable character, and it is often a thorny problem for us to decide whether or not the individual under discussion is a disturbing influence. We go a long way to foster and encourage any friendship, even of lonely individuals, that may be of any remote benefit to the girl. In trying to learn about this new young woman friend who had been living with Sylvia we proceeded with great tact and caution. In about a week's time the agent had arranged a joint conference of Board, supervisor, agent, Sylvia, and her friend. The Board has always felt that a conference of all concerned with a problem has an extremely beneficial effect, and that a frank and thorough discussion in which everyone could say what was bothering him and what he wanted has helped many a troubled girl back on the path to a successful parole. This is so, however, only if each is sincere and working for a common purpose. That was not to be the case this time.

Little or nothing came from the interview except that the student counselor admitted that she had *loaned* Sylvia large sums of money ever since she had met her. The Chairman thanked her for coming but asked her in the name of the Board to let Sylvia support herself in the future and suggested that she sit down with the agent to make detailed arrangements for Sylvia to repay the loans in regular installments. The agent noted in the running record for the day how unsatisfactory that interview was. The woman seemed much more anxious to cater to Sylvia's whims than to work for her long-term improvement, but she did agree not to lend her any more money.

Sylvia cut her losses with accustomed speed and in less than a week's time came into the office dripping with emotion. Ever since her mother had seen her picture in the paper, mother and daughter had been corresponding, and now Sylvia had a wire that her mother was seriously sick and a money order to cover the cost of her transportation to her

mother's bedside. None of us really trusted Sylvia, but, if she was telling the truth, turning her down might do her an irreparable wrong. We decided to allow her to fly to the midwestern city where her home was, on the condition that she report to the state parole office there in person and ask that office to notify us of the time and date of her arrival. She was to tell them her home address and all other relevant details, and was to stay no longer than a week, since people in her family's economic situation cannot support a nonpaying guest long, no matter how dire the emergency. As an added check we wrote to the state parole office about her expected visit, which was not under the compact regulations but only a special privilege because of critical illness.

Off to the Midwest she flew. Days passed. One week, then two, and no Sylvia. About the middle of the third week, just as the agent and the Board were discussing the advisability of issuing a warrant for her arrest, a phone call came from the other state's parole office. She was there in person asking permission to remain and care for her father and her little sister while her mother was in the hospital undergoing major surgery. The request sounded reasonable, we hoped that being with her family and feeling responsible for her sister, then only eight years old, might even do her some good, and so we granted it. A little later she asked if she could remain in her home city permanently.

Our next step under the compact was to forward the request with a full copy of Sylvia's court history, institution reports, and parole running record to the home state, which, in turn, investigated the conditions for parole there. On the basis of all the information, the home state accepted. From then on according to proper compact procedure, it handled the routine details and sent us a summary every few months. Theoretically, after a transfer under the compact our interest in a parolee becomes only nominal, and in most cases that is true. But not with Sylvia: the correspondence

was so heavy it actually arrived in bundle form rather than by letter.

When the mother came home from the hospital, friction and suspicion sprang up between her and Sylvia. Soon Sylvia took an overdose of sleeping pills and was taken to the hospital in her town. After a protracted convalescence, during which her still frail mother had to wait on her, Sylvia announced that she was happy to be alive so she could dedicate her life to her family, especially to her dear little sister. Later a report came that her mother had died suddenly, and soon after that her father began complaining that Sylvia was never at home to get his supper. She was after an education again and had registered and paid the full tuition for a college semester and had hired a baby-sitter for her little sister. The reports we received about the courses she was taking were confused, so all we could be sure of was that Philosophy and Group Guidance were among them. Next, the college staff felt that her program was too heavy for such a frail girl, so a sympathetic professor arranged a subsidy for her. About that time we received a letter from Sylvia herself, asking permission to marry her "interested professor," who was an eminent man in the Old World but was here as a "displaced person."

However, before the formal request for permission to marry came through under the compact, we received a report that there had been a gas explosion in the laboratory where Sylvia was working alone after hours, and that although she was in a serious state of shock at a local hospital, she would survive. The report made no mention of the impending marriage, and we never heard any more of the "displaced professor." The next year passed in a similar state of confusion, with Sylvia valiantly resisting every effort made to get her to work at suitable employment. There were months on end when she never went near her father and her little sister, and then she would trot back in times of crises. I have always

suspected she used them only when she needed an alibi.

After another year had gone by she started on a new campaign of learning, with her emphasis on art and her chief interest in portrait work. But that did not last long, and she turned next to raising and breeding thoroughbred dogs. This came to a sudden end with a fire in which all the dogs were lost and Sylvia was once more pictured in the press for her valiant but futile efforts to save their lives. From time to time the home state would report that Sylvia had a fine position doing waitress work in a famous restaurant, but these reports were few and infrequent. Once, when she had asked for psychiatric help, the parole authorities had been glad to allow her to go to a first-class hospital, on the provision that they should be advised of the outcome. Unfortunately there was no constructive outcome; in fact, the doctor's summary almost matched the one given five years before at the Federal Prison.

Next Sylvia found herself a steady job for the first time in her life. She was reservation clerk at the central office of one of the large transcontinental airways. It seemed incredible that a company so reliable should hire staff members without checking their criminal records but there she was, and under her right name. Massachusetts had no reason to interfere, since the details of employment come under the supervision of the home state, which probably felt that though Sylvia never followed the letter of the parole rules, she had been in the community for several years without committing any known major violation.

That summer, on the very hottest day, we received a telegram requesting permission for Sylvia, who had by that time worked for the airline long enough to earn a vacation, to fly to Mexico for a week and then to the Canadian Rockies. There, she and her friend the student counselor, who was planning to spend her vacation with her, would visit the latter's parents at their mountain lodge. Since in Mexico they

were going to be the guests of a wealthy oil man, and since Sylvia's job provided her with free plane fare, her only expenses would be the transportation tax on her trips.

This was the end. Not one member of the Board thought there was any excuse for such a trip, and we quickly dispatched a telegram saying, "Request denied under Rule 5," which forbids a parolee to leave her home state without the Board's permission. Maybe we were unfair; perhaps the afternoon was too hot in our narrow little office in the back of the State House, but somehow when that telegram hit me I could only think of the justifiable wrath of the hard-working taxpayers who pay my salary for my judgment in assisting women to adjust in the community. That junket was too much.

Our record shows that Sylvia had worked steadily for the airline and never received more than \$42 a week. Yet not too long after her discharge from parole she dropped into our Boston office just to pay a friendly call and to thank us all for what we had done for her. She told us then that she had just flown with her little sister, whom she wanted to treat to a few meals in the better Boston restaurants. They were stopping for a few days in an exclusive Back Bay hotel where they had an apartment and were here to say hello to "old friends" before they hopped to Bermuda for their vacation. Sylvia wore quiet, exquisitely simple clothes and large bonerimmed dark glasses. The little sister spoke only once and that was to tell us they had a new light blue car.

Sylvia talked on at some length about her blighted romances and said she was "much too nice a girl for the majority of men she met." The psychiatrist at the Federal Prison who diagnosed her as a psychopathic personality who will not be amenable to persuasion or advice certainly was right. Sylvia has not been so since she was a child, and she is not going to be so in the future. In spite of all her pleasing ways (and she has many likable and attractive characteristics) I am very

much afraid that if Sylvia ever came before me again at a parole hearing I would have to vote her "maximum," for I do not see how I could feel that there ever will be "reasonable probability that if such a prisoner is released, he (she) will live and remain at liberty without violating the law, and that his (her) release is not compatible with the welfare of society" as it specifically says in the statute, which I took an oath to uphold.

We later received a request from a sister state asking us to forward them a summary of our contact with Sylvia. The teletype message relayed by Division of Public Safety read:

**SYLVIA ——— IN CUSTODY. FORGERY 3 COUNTS. HAS APPEALED.
SEND SUMMARY.**

Looking Ahead

As I WRITE about parole and illustrate what it can do to promote the interests of both the individual and the community, it is only fair to give a few practical ideas on how to improve our releasing program. The whole idea of putting criminals in prison is only about two hundred years old. Before that dungeons were reserved for the political enemies of the government, and criminals were punished by being flogged, mutilated, sent to the galleys, exiled, or just hanged.

Then came a period of a hundred years when society was satisfied to throw them in prison and forget about them. Punishment and retribution, they thought, were the answer to crime. The abuses of that system were horrible — and history tells us it did not answer the criminal problem. In fact it returned criminals to society far more bitter and hostile than when they were incarcerated.

Around 1900 the emphasis in research into crime shifted from treatment to prevention. People began to ask, "Why did this prisoner commit his crime? What makes him act this way?" Sometimes no one knows, but in some cases very definite explanations have come to light, and with these cases the progress has been most encouraging. Thus when we can find the cause for an offender's behavior, we help him and we help protect the community.

This is just one of the measures we can take that overlap in protecting society and reforming the criminal, so let me start there and say that to satisfy both of them the great emphasis should be on preventive work. Signs of instability that mark the potential criminal show early in her childhood,

but they are usually ignored. All too often that instability is caused by a disturbed home environment, so the parents will not even recognize it. But the school authorities should. They have a real opportunity to help a child who is wavering on the verge of delinquency.

Even after a girl is out of school, she does not become a criminal all of a sudden, and why should the community wait until the harm is done before helping her? Friends know when the strains of a situation are driving a woman toward antisocial behavior, and there are usually signs obvious enough even for neighbors and casual acquaintances to spot. One of them is alcoholism. Others are neglect of home responsibilities, irregular living, and unexplained absences. The guidance and advice that a social worker can give at that early stage can frequently lead a girl back to a healthy life, whereas waiting until later will make the process of rehabilitation much harder and the prospects of success much dimmer. Unfortunately families, neighbors, and friends usually wait and hope and do nothing until after an explosion.

The second important preventive measure is a greatly expanded and improved probation program. Probation agents now have so many cases that they often have no time to work with their most serious cases, and most do not even have time to make any calls, but have to require their probationers to come in to report to them. That procedure is clearly unsatisfactory and frustrates the whole purpose of probation.

Theoretically, a first offender or anyone who has committed a crime under extenuating circumstances can, in the long run, become a safer and a more useful member of society if she continues to live in the community under firm regulation than she can if she is separated from her family and environment and sent to an institution. If a mother is sentenced to prison, her family must usually be broken up, and the State generally has to bear the expense not only of keeping the mother in the institution but of maintaining the children in

foster homes. As long as it is in keeping with the best interests of society, how much more satisfactory it is to allow the girl to remain at home and to help her become a useful and stable member of her community.

For the theory to work, the regulation must be enforced and the probation officers must be able to give the girl guidance that will help her stand on her own feet by the end of her probation. That kind of assistance cannot be halfhearted. It must often include psychiatric diagnosis and therapy adequate to rehabilitate girls with nervous disorders that already have an ominous head start. It also, of course, requires the constant and forceful supervision of probation agents with enough time to devote to the problems of their clients.

At first glance such a program looks like a lot of added state bureaucracy, but in the long run it is almost sure to save money. In the first place it will keep a lot of people out of institutions who never ought to be there anyway. And the expense of keeping each girl in the Reformatory is \$2564.18 a year compared to \$93 per year to keep her on parole. Second, it will save all the subsidiary costs of families that have to be taken care of when the mother is sent away. Third, it will displace some of the work now done by the parole authorities. And, fourth, I am quite sure that it will help prevent crime by keeping girls who are not real criminals from coming in contact with the hardened recidivists they would meet in prison.

Another step that would save both to protect society and reform the individual would be to increase the number of policemen on local beats. For the past fifteen or twenty years the theory has been that cruising cars were so efficient that they should displace the well-known figure of the cop who knows all the people on the block. During this period the local beat has come to be looked at as the worst job on the police force, and it has been sadly neglected.

Now the pendulum is beginning to swing the other way,

and both the authorities and the public are realizing that an officer familiar with the people he is policing can do a much better job than unknown policemen cruising large areas in prowl cars can of discovering trouble before it starts and of making sure that gangs of boys don't turn into gangs of delinquents. We need both beat and prowl forces in our large cities.

There is one specialized job I feel I must mention, and that is regulating carnivals and warning the public about them. Those traveling amusement shows present one of the most serious threats to the moral health of any community, yet well-meaning people often invite them into town to entertain their own children for the sake of raising a few hundred dollars for some worthy cause. Almost without exception, those shows are staffed by derelicts, drug users and pushers, perverts, bail jumpers, and runaway prisoners who have sunk so low they wouldn't even dare try to live on skid row. All too often impressionable teen-agers get their first contact with a world they have never known or even suspected from these outcasts. Some, dazzled by the shoddy glamour of the bright lights, join up and leave town and are soon enmeshed in serious delinquency. Others are introduced to drugs and perversion and started on a way of life from which they will not easily be turned. Because of local by-laws, or total lack of these today, adequate supervision of the traveling enterprises is impossible. This is one of the more obvious of the many worthwhile jobs that expanded forces of local patrolmen could and should assume.

From my experience I am quite sure, although I cannot prove it, that these preventive measures would cut down our prison population drastically and make for a much healthier community. Prevention can never be one hundred per cent effective, and certain women will inevitably end up in prison, so let us look next at some constructive improvements in the preparation for release of prisoners. There the great need

(and I am certainly far from the first to mention it) is for adequate psychiatric service in all phases of crime work. Since the legal and moral responsibility of each individual depends on his mental capacity, and imbecility and insanity are conditions which affect his legal responsibility, the services of trained mental health experts are essential — not only during the police investigation and trial — but constantly during incarceration.

These specialists should work with the girls who need help — and many, many do. I have said before that most criminals are unstable, but that fact bears repeating and emphasizing, and it is especially true of the girls who drift into crime through alcoholism and the use of drugs. Remember that the girls who display serious behavior difficulties have been unable to adjust to life's problems in their own immediate environment. Those problems, our case histories tell us, have existed for years while the girls have reacted to them by repeating the same pattern of antisocial behavior over and over again. In these cases the institution offers the golden opportunity for study, analysis, and treatment.

The psychiatrists should make definite recommendations to the Parole Board on the fitness of candidates for release. Today many of the girls presented at parole hearings have never been seen by a psychiatrist, and those who have are many times given reports worded in such carefully hedged terms that they are of little if any guidance to the Board.

The doctors are not to blame. Psychiatric treatment and diagnosis demand time and continued observation and study. Yet there is not one single full-time psychiatrist on the payroll of the Department of Correction of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts! Some states are a little better off, but all are far below the level of what should be minimum requirements. In Massachusetts various psychiatrists are hired by the day, an expensive method which destroys the continuity absolutely essential to any psychiatric treatment. Hiring doc-

tors is expensive. They are highly paid experts, and the State must offer a pay scale high enough to attract good men. Few items in the budget would pay off so well, nevertheless.

Another aspect of prison administration that needs reform is the treatment of recidivists, the hardened criminals who have served time before and who, unfortunately, probably will again. They are one of the most serious sources of moral contamination in any institution. They "know the ropes," but they have failed. In order to save face (an understandable human trait) they lie and blame everybody else for their predicament. They cause unrest and suspicion at the same time they are spawning delinquency among the other inmates especially those who are about to go out.

These girls are an entirely separate problem, since they do not respond to any efforts made to rehabilitate them. They should be in separate quarters, isolated from first offenders and accidental and occasional offenders so they cannot corrupt them.

We need some reform in our releasing procedures, too. Good sense and orderly procedure dictate that each state should have one unified release system that can be easily understood by the public, by social agencies, by the interested departments of the state, and by the inmates themselves. Since I am most familiar with Massachusetts, permit me to cite my own state as a horrible example. Here, instead of one we have five distinct ways of releasing a person:

1. All the women who are sent to the Reformatory for drunkenness receive a one-year sentence and are released by the State Commissioner of Correction. They receive little or no supervision.

2. Drug addicts serving voluntary commitments become eligible for release after an indeterminate time and are also released by the State Commissioner of Correction, again with little supervision.

3. Women sentenced to county jails for misdemeanors are

released by the County Commissioners. They are supervised and given as much assistance as possible by the conscientious but terribly overworked probation officers attached to the county courts that sentenced the girls in the first place.

4. Suffolk County (Boston), with its large Deer Island House of Correction, has special releasing procedures under the jurisdiction of the Penal Institutions Commissioner of the City of Boston.

5. All male prisoners (except lifers) from State Prison, the Concord Reformatory, Norfolk Prison Colony, and the State Farm, and all female prisoners (except lifers) from the Reformatory for Women at Sherborn are released by the Massachusetts Parole Board.

How anyone is supposed to keep that all straight I do not know. But even more important than cutting through the confusion is the fact that a single method of release would unify the standards governing it. All of these measures of reform can be accomplished with little change in the law or in the basic outlines of the state's correctional system.

It's Up to You

THERE IS one thing certain about parole work — it is never dull! Often it is exciting, grimly tragic, and sometimes very amusing. Our official mail provides us with some humorous episodes, for it is the privilege of all inmates to write uncensored letters to the Parole Board, as well as to the Commissioner of Correction, or the Governor. We get a volume of daily mail, which we conscientiously read and promptly acknowledge and which establishes a hopeful feeling of individual recourse, helpful to inmate and Board alike. Some women are forceful letter writers, expressing themselves as well, and better, in a letter than at an interview.

Occasionally, a tensely nervous girl realizes she might have made a better impression at the Board hearing and will remember an important factor which might alter the Board's decision. At other times, she may fly off the handle at the hearing and, deeply regretting it later, may wish to apologize. Any prisoner is free to write to us; we feel this policy promotes a better understanding.

One of our prisoners, whom we shall call Cynthia wrote such a letter. Cynthia is a buxom, attractive redhead of thirty-five who has had eleven arrests for drunkenness, adultery, and lewdness, and finally the theft of an automobile. Her voluble, husky, alcoholic husband Fred has been in and out of the county jail every summer, because it is cool, and the State Farm every winter, because it is warm. Fred calls on us twice a year at the State House, usually on the day he is released. He is sober, rested up, well dressed and, like most chronic alcoholics, he blames everybody and everything for

his situation. It is the veteran's agent, the Chief of Police, the landlady, or even the Parole Board, who have wronged Fred. Anyhow, he has learned his lesson this time, and he is never going to get in wrong again. No, sir!

There is no such thing as a completely hopeless case. However, Cynthia and Fred, as husband and wife, have been heavy drinkers for fifteen years and the future is not too promising. They both are good-looking, likable, and lighthearted, and we always have a pleasant visit with them. They appear as sincere in assuming their family responsibilities as if it were their first offense and they had been away only for a night. When you see and listen to this handsome, hearty couple, you believe the world is at their feet. Not until you read their case histories does anything dim the picture.

Their effervescent personalities are really quite unusual. This last letter from Cynthia I quote in her own words. Of course, her grammar might startle the king, but I think she tells her own story better than I can.

Women's Reformatory

1/11/52

My dear Parole Board Members:

Through a complimentary opinion of you, and for what you have already done for we girls at "Framingham," I am taking the opportunity of writing to you to plead for consideration of my case. All of which is greatly confused and rather malignant. I shall briefly try to relate to you so you will be able to grasp conditions and form your own opinion — of which I am assured will be most satisfactory.

I have done considerable time here, generally about eight years in all. When I was last released, I broke my parole and got arrested and the judge gave me regretfully another sentence. From this, shortly after returning to the institution, I escaped as I had some unfinished private business to attend to. However, I myself walked into the Police Station and gave myself up, therefore causing no trouble — to the state and no necessity for a costly

search. With due consideration of this, I believe the court and now the Board should be more lenient—and have put me on probation or on file—rather than giving me two years more.

Now, please, I beg you to consider this. I have had my seven children taken and are on the state—and as you see with eight years here and seven pregnant, my husband and I have never lived. We have both made mistakes and we both repent and would like to hold the reins we were cut off from.

He has now been released and if you will release me now, I am sure that within a year, we will again be a proud mother and father to be admired by society. I plead with you again that I may be released soon so that we may start “marital and family reconstruction.”

May God bless you always for the fine work you are doing!

I remain,

CYNTHIA

Many of our letters do us a world of good too. A wee thank-you card from a timid girl completing parole sometimes means more to us than anyone can imagine. We get a surprising number of carefully thought out, kindly expressions of heartfelt gratitude. Even the men members of the Parole Board will interrupt their busiest day to read a thank-you note, always commenting, “Well isn’t that nice to hear!”

One of the most welcome notes we ever received came from a cultured woman who became enmeshed in grave financial discrepancies. She was given much publicity during her trial and at the time of her commitment because of her prominent social position in the community. Because of it, she became apprehensive and distrustful of the whole release setup and feared the reaction of the public to her release, just as she feared the Board and her agent. Nevertheless such an intelligent prisoner, when she does start to co-operate with her agent, gets on so well that after her Good Conduct Release, she is apt to miss her agent’s regular visits. This woman’s words in thanking us for our help during her four-year parole

we esteem as the highest praise we ever received. I quote in part: "The courtesy, friendliness and comfort I have experienced on parole will always be happy memories to me. I regret they shall come to an end."

Another letter, which we received from a soldier who asked us to forward it to his former wife in prison, was very revealing:

Hello, Gert:

Remember me, your ex-husband? I thought it will not be fair if I leave the U.S.A. without saying goodbye; and letting you know how I made out on the divorce.

I got a five-day extension on my pass, went back to camp and got the divorce using the picture of you and Frank taken at New Grove on Labor Day. Remember? He had his arm around you then, as evidence. I found the picture as I was cleaning the house.

I didn't use Pete's name, at all, even though I know all about "the miss" [miscarriage] you had of his the first week of June. I saw him in the bar and gave him your address, but he said he didn't want it now. I guess the people were right. They said all he wanted was your \$120 a month anyhow.

The only girlfriends you have are Peg and Martha. They were the only two who refused to say anything about you. Gwendolyn told me everything that happened while I was gone: that Joan and Eric don't belong to me anyway — only Skippy — that Joan is Frank's kid and Eric belongs to Doc.

You told every one of your friends you were expecting but I loved you too much to listen — then. That is why I asked you to stay home the thirty days I was home and not leave me alone as I didn't want to know — but you couldn't be true for thirty days even.

Did I ask too much then?

I have sold one-half the furniture. I still have \$836.44 to pay on your bills. I gave all your clothes away to the cleaner to pay his bill. I'm leaving in the morning for Camp Stoneman, California. I'll send you my address if you still want to write. I have enough points to stay out but I think I'll stay in another year to try to pay off these bills.

I'll keep the kids until I can't support them, and love them as if they were my own. When I can't support them, I'll send two of them to the state, but "Skippy," I'll always keep him.

Well, honey, be a good girl, and don't lie too much —

I'll be in Korea, for Christmas.

Be good —

Remember your husband,

GILBERT

This letter tells enough of the whole story. Need we wonder what causes crime when we know of children left to start life this way? This is not an unusual situation, either. The day never ends without a similar case of gross neglect passing my desk. I was present one night at a biweekly meeting of a local Community Chest and Council in a fairly large New England town. The meeting was an informal one of serious-minded citizens bent on understanding the problems of their community and trying to better their town and the life of everyone in it. There were about twenty persons present, including the guest speaker, the superintendent of schools, and a school principal. The discussion was intimately direct. The topic had been "Recreational Facilities," and there was much frank and direct discussion about damage done to existing facilities, the reasons for the damage, those perpetrating it, and possible community action to guard against the continuance of such behavior.

The superintendent of schools, a man with excellent academic training and experience, spoke: "It's perfectly clear that it's that 'Arkansas Gang.' Every boy I've kicked out of school this year has been in with that bum they call 'Arkansas.' I'm disgusted with the entire town and the police force particularly. I've asked them time and time again to send that whole gang away — and they haven't committed one yet!"

The high school principal added, "That's just what I say, too. When they send them away, they'd better keep them there permanently because they're all no good!"

These two schoolmen were well paid to plan and direct the education of our next generation of citizens in one of the area's more progressive towns. Their honest, informal opinion was that all youth must conform to uniform educational standards set by the school authorities or be branded hopeless failures to be "kicked out of school" and eventually "sent to jail" by the police. I assume that being "sent up indefinitely" probably meant for life so that the youths would not be a problem for the schools or for the community.

I was shocked by such statements from civic leaders and startled by the apathetic acceptance of their opinions by all the Community Chest members present. These outstanding citizens, studying the problems of their town, sat silent and unmoved by the announcement that a group of unstable boys should be cast off by the schools and literally run out of town by the police department. Yet this group is typical. When people band together to do good, they want to create something tangible — baseball diamonds, playgrounds, and parking facilities. Take any project that produces something people can see, and almost everyone will join in. Bring up a problem that reflects society's failure and no one even wants to hear about it.

Potential crime exists in every broken home, in every unwanted child, in every schoolroom where a child is retarded or ridiculed as a misfit. That tragic potential exists in every town, but so does a powerful weapon to fight it — a school system led by people who make use of the intelligent guidance of educated personnel to investigate the students who fail and to find a remedy for these failures in a sane, sensible, and practical manner. Through this efficient medium, the wayward or unadaptable child gets individual attention in a compatible atmosphere while he develops talents with which eventually to earn his own livelihood.

If the public could sit at my desk and talk to the endless line of parents coming before us to plead for the "special early

release" of their children, it would realize that crime is everyone's business. It no longer is a problem for the police department to handle alone.

Until our public and private consciences are aroused and educated to our responsibility for those of us who have failed and become criminals and other outcasts, those failures will continue to multiply and innocent individuals will still be victims of their rash acts. In contrast, the child who is loved at home, who is wanted and feels secure, does not suddenly grab a gun and go lusting for excitement. Violence and instability like that are almost always the culmination of long years of neglect, sorrow, loneliness, and bitterness produced by broken homes, or pampering and spoiling by the over-indulgent parent.

It must be kept constantly in mind that the great majority of women sent away by the courts will need assistance from time to time all their lives. Some get rested and cleaned up so they can work out their own lives under the guidance of a stronger individual like a husband, mother, sister, brother, or daughter. Such prisoners have learned the value of co-operating and are not likely to become enmeshed in tragedy again.

But most, although they may not run afoul of the law, will need constant, trained guidance. This may come from some clergyman, a town welfare officer, the veteran's agent of the husband, or the psychiatric worker from the Family Society, and last, but indeed not least, the Alcoholics Anonymous groups. These organizations call on the services of any of a hundred capable persons living in nearly every community. It is tragic that so few people who need them know where to find them or have the will to seek their help and guidance in time. Both private and public social agencies offer splendid services that too often go unused because potential clients do not ask for them.

The middle-income group especially seems to resist working

with social agencies. People in this group seem to feel such help is just for the poor, that one has to be a certified pauper before becoming eligible for help from public or private agencies. How far from reality this point of view really is! I am frequently alarmed to see how little these agencies are used and what general ignorance of their true functions exists even in our department. Through the years we have maintained a continual policy of educating our staff and the released girls to the help available to all types of people. We have had marked successes which we know we could not have achieved otherwise, but we realize we still have a long, long way to go.

There is no true measure of success for any social worker. How is anyone ever going to know what grave crime may have been averted by the proper guidance offered to the potential malefactor at the psychological moment? Nor is there any rule for achieving success. We do know that with the average criminal, a severe crime is not his first exhibition of unstable or irregular behavior and the severest crimes are committed by the seasoned or hardened offender. The recidivists in any of the large institutions contaminate the first offenders if these two groups are allowed to mingle freely. To remove a first offender from the influence of the vicious and incurable criminals, the parole authorities harness every resource at their command to get a first offender out of prison and established in the community as early as possible.

Once when we were at the Reformatory for a regular hearing one of the research officers asked us if we could find time to talk to a priest during the lunch hour. Since he had come a long distance to discuss the possibility of an early release for one of his parishioners, we naturally welcomed the opportunity to talk with him. We discovered that the elderly priest was deeply concerned about Beatrice, who was the wife of a coal man (who had been employed at the same job for twenty-two years) and the mother of ten children. She had

been committed to the Reformatory the previous month for neglecting her children. The cleric could not understand the charge, and neither could we as we listened to the information he had about the background of these obscure parishioners. He felt it was a mistake that conclusive court action could have been taken in this case, before the probation officer or the nurse had discussed the entire family picture with him. His interest centered chiefly on the problem of Beatrice's fifteen-year-old Inez, who had assumed the mother's role in the family. Three younger children had been placed temporarily in a boarding home, and the sorely neglected baby was still in a local hospital while Inez cared for her father and the other children, all of school age. Father W—— was afraid that Inez, who was above average mentally, would be so loaded down by family duties she would not be able to return to school.

In early July when the priest first spoke to us, Beatrice had been committed so recently that the material for the usual case study had not been assembled. We readily agreed to look into her case and set in motion all the departments necessary to accumulate the information. By the time of our August meeting, we had a complete picture of Beatrice, and it completely substantiated what Father W—— had told us. The father never drank but worked long hours to bring home his pay regularly and provide a steady income. The institution's tests of Beatrice indicated that she was feeble-minded; in fact, with an IQ of 55, she was so dull that it was doubtful if she could ever learn more than simple, manual chores.

The circumstances of arrest were a surprise to husband, family, and priest alike. Fortunately, the case had not been given newspaper publicity. It was held in the lower court and, as no appeal had been taken, there was little material available. The accumulated story ran somewhat as follows.

The district nurse or the school nurse (who make constant calls where there are many children, new babies, infectious

diseases, etc.) called frequently at Beatrice's home and always found the family living in such primitive conditions that the children, dogs, and hens all were constantly in and out of the kitchen. There was plenty of food, although it was never prepared as the average person sees it. If the children were large enough to rush in and grab a chunk of bologna or a heel of bread off the table, they could satisfy their hunger all right, but from the time they were weaned by their mother until they could fend for themselves, their existence was hazardous indeed!

About a year earlier, when the district nurse called at the house, she found the nine-month-old baby in a tragic state of malnutrition. Its poor legs were as gaunt and its abdomen as distended as those of the wretched children rescued from European concentration camps. Beatrice was taken to court and found guilty of neglect and placed on probation, while the baby was placed in the Children's Hospital and brought back to normal after months and months of expert care. The woman probation officer had a long uphill grind working with Beatrice, because in addition to being feeble-minded, she "had no English." All interviews had to be conducted through the father or one of the children.

Late in the spring a Public Health nurse was checking a male escapee from the County Tuberculosis Hospital and by chance found him hanging around a garage and gas station next door to Beatrice's home. At the garage the nurse learned that when the older children were at school and the husband at work the escapee would climb through the bathroom window and stay with Beatrice for the entire day. This man had active T.B. and the Public Health nurse reported this fact to the probation officer. Together they made a call. They found no evidence on which to bring a new charge, but the court felt that the dangers of both moral and physical neglect warranted the termination of probation. The court sent Beatrice to the Reformatory for a two-year sentence for

"neglect of ten minor children," and the would-be lover was returned to the sanatorium.

The supervision and help that parole offered Beatrice could not continue beyond the end of her sentence, but it was obvious that, with her limited endowment, her predicament was permanent. Therefore we made an all-out effort to co-ordinate every available community resource before actual release so that we would have a well-developed plan in operation during the parole period that would continue when we had to withdraw.

The women Parole Board members invited Father W——, the probation officer, the two nurses (to plan the child care and family health program), the husband, our own field agent, and our supervisor to a staff field conference. The poor husband did not understand how dull his wife was. He was sure she simply *would not learn* to budget his money and buy proper food and clothes. He could not realize that she *could not* and never would be able to understand.

Father W—— contributed the single item which started the whole plan ticking. He said he would have two young Italo-American girls, high school graduates and white-collar workers, go into Beatrice's home regularly. These girls belonged to the Legion of Mary in his parish and were to go once a day for the first week, and twice a week thereafter for as long as their services were needed. They would co-operate with the parole agent, and, since they could speak Italian, they would explain to Beatrice what her agent wanted her to do. The husband interrupted at this point to ask if these girls would also help his wife with her weekly shopping. Of course, they would be willing. Out of this conference came one of our best working plans for rehabilitation. With the framework of this plan mapped out, the Board voted to see Beatrice when we went to the Reformatory for the August meeting. We wanted our plan to be in operation before the school reopened in September.

At her hearing Beatrice was in tears, convinced she had done no wrong, and unable to understand why she had been taken from her children. Using slow, simple sentences, we explained that she was going home on a special early parole. Beatrice happily agreed to listen to her husband, Father W——, and her agent, but we could see that she was very resentful toward the Public Health nurse, on whom she blamed her commitment. We persuaded the Health Department to send another nurse on any necessary home visits and released Beatrice before school started.

She did so well with her school-age children in the first few months that at Christmastime all her children came home permanently. Parole supervision ended about eighteen months later, but one private and two public agencies kept up their work with her. They made her understand that she had enough to do in caring for her family. She was not to seek society at the garage which would only get her into trouble, and she was sure that she did not want to get into trouble again.

Sufficient attention was brought on the case by the court action so that the pastor and his volunteer helpers now have an authoritative appraisal of the entire situation. They never could have acquired this authority on their own initiative, for any private agency must await the appeal of the client before entering a case. The public agencies are authorized to act under statute and may do so in the initial steps.

It is regrettable that in a case of this nature conditions had to go to extremes before anyone started remedying them. Some interested party might have taken the initiative to inform the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, which in most states is empowered to investigate any complaints and if necessary start court action. The S.P.C.C. does splendid case work, and few people realize how many cases it takes on and brings to a successful conclusion without having to resort to law or court action. I am also surprised how few know that

the S.P.C.C. is granted immunity in the courts, and does not, even under oath, have to divulge the identity of the complainant.

If the average citizen could realize how true the old adage "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" really is, he would react very differently to explosive situations. Instead of waiting for disaster to strike, he would take the initiative and go to any clergyman, police officer, or social worker to ask for advice. If the trouble springs from alcoholism, he would speak to a member of A.A. Such early action could save numberless homes, salvage marriages, protect children from disaster and start them on the way to useful and happy lives. People do not flout society's rules just because they want to, but because a highly complex interplay of social, psychological, and cultural forces is working on them. Most of those forces can be properly directed by giving the unstable individual sympathetic help before he reaches the breaking point.

Our work, alas, comes after the disaster. We pick up the pieces and start again, helping women patch up their future lives and the lives of their children; and we try to leave our clients with the knowledge and understanding that there is always someone to help them — if they only will come and ask. We try to teach each girl this while she is on parole. It is extremely interesting as the years go on to see how many learn.

That is why I have loved every minute I have worked with the girls on parole. They have all met failure in the past, and most of them want desperately to overcome it in the future. We on the Parole Board can help, and we know we do help. There will always be the Sylvias, who will revel in the trouble they cause, but as I look back, my memories of them fade. Instead I think of Eloise, happily married to her handsome Marine; of Marcella, the haunted killer of her own children who found a better life; of Harry and Martha, who

drank their way to disaster and fought their way back; and of Lillian, who refused a blood transfusion so others could have a chance at life. They are all fine citizens now, and there is no greater satisfaction in life than helping them on their way.

But we want help — your help. We welcome mature community interest in our charges. They need the encouragement, the jobs, the suitable places to live in, and the all-important sense of “belonging” that such interest can mean for them. Many of you are meeting the challenge and helping to integrate parolees into the community, but many more of you will have to join the work if we are to have an effective reintegration program. In the last analysis, it’s really “up to you!”

