

These papers provide excellent value. They are informative and balanced, and Cleghorn's pair deserve a place on any professional reading list—as well as extended discussion. In default of the latter, two groups of critical comments may be made. Firstly, there is good evidence that pain can be a hysterical conversion symptom. The term 'psychogenic regional pain', rightly, has not found general acceptance, and 'psychogenic regional paralysis' is even less attractive as a technical term. Secondly, it is almost certain that the occurrence of conversion symptoms together with multiple hypochondriacal complaints is not coincidental. To ignore this (and to reject the solid systematic work of the St. Louis school) is to turn away from one of the most interesting aspects of clinical psychiatry; one of those aspects where the abnormal is likely to help us to understand better how the normal functions. Anyone who thinks of denying the reality of this clinical problem should perhaps look at an old (anecdotal) account by Kraepelin (1904).

H. MERSKEY.

#### REFERENCES

- KRAEPELIN, E. *Lectures on Clinical Psychiatry*. Ed. F. Johnstone. New York: William Wood & Co. 1904.  
 REES, W. L. *A Short Textbook of Psychiatry*. London: English Universities Press. 1967.

#### A PRISON WELFARE OFFICER

**No Easy Road.** By SALLIE TROTTER. George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1969. Pp. 283. Price 42s.

This account by a woman social worker, who was a Prison Welfare Officer at Wandsworth from 1960 to 1962, is particularly interesting in the parts which deal with her actual experience on the job. It is written with sympathetic understanding of the complexity of the administrative and human problems involved in the running of prisons and the provision of after-care. Nevertheless, the frank descriptions of official resistance to change, and of the petty jealousies and demarcation disputes between different grades and types of person involved in the work of furthering rehabilitation, provide plenty of ammunition for anyone wanting to denigrate the system.

The author's views about her own and other people's roles in rehabilitation are firm and forcibly argued. She sees social work as a professional occupation requiring specialized training and experience, and she sees danger in allowing bungling amateurs to meddle. Voluntary associates, acting as prisoners' friends, have their place, but they should refer to a social worker rather than try to advise on social problems themselves. She disagrees violently with Lord Stonham, who is quoted as being in favour

of prison officers, who have daily contact with the inmates, taking an active part in rehabilitation. She argues that prison officers could not one day claim to be a man's friend and adviser and the next day have him removed to the punishment block. They could not be social workers, because there are already well established professional social workers in the prisons. Because of the amateurs' lack of knowledge and techniques, advice given by prison officers would be often inaccurate and unhelpful.

The book suffers from being out of date. As a small-print footnote to the foreword admits, many changes have taken place since the author worked in Wandsworth Prison. Prison after-care is now firmly in the hands of the Probation and After-Care Service, and the power of voluntary agencies to interfere has gone. Furthermore, the system of parole, introduced by the Criminal Justice Act, 1967, which is discussed in Chapter XIII as if it were a vague prospect for the future, has now been in operation for two years and has given new impetus to the work of prison welfare officers.

Many sensible and practical points emerge. Chapter XVI shows the inevitable results of releasing a homeless long term prisoner unescorted and unaided in his dealings with the then National Assistance Board. Chapter XII points out the futility of delaying contact with a prisoner until discharge arrangements are required. Chapter VI describes the advantages of a period in a prison hostel before final release, and suggests that the present limits of eligibility (men serving four years or more) could profitably be extended.

On matters of theory, Mrs. Trotter's ideas are less sensible. In Chapter XVIII she appears to prefer interpretations in terms of the seven deadly sins to accepted psychological concepts. In Chapter XV her classification of offenders—drunks, con-men, inadequates, psychopaths, etc.—is imprecise, idiosyncratic and impressionistic. In Chapter XI her discussion of the value of criminological research reveals more suspicion than knowledge. In Chapter XIV, her discussion of 'other theories' in so far as it is not second-hand Barbara Wootton, reads like a random list of talking points, such as prison officers' attire, the use of fines, and the desirability of case-work being undertaken by one person rather than a series of persons.

On the dust cover the publisher comments that the way in which the author's personality emerges is particularly striking. That is certainly so, but for an author anxious to maintain professional status in the face of rival claims a more objective and dispassionate approach might have served her better.

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