

hour. The social impulse is to forget that incest was rife in the early families of mankind, or that the patriarch might kill or castrate the young male who challenged him for the mother. Actually, the whole history of the human family must be taken into account in the socializing of the child. In this book Dr. Lindner takes many an antisocial adult back to his childhood, and there finds out enough about him to explain his criminal conduct. If it is revolutionary to consider the unresolved Oedipus complex as a cause of crime, Dr. Lindner has in this book a case history which offers the proof that it may be. His case histories are always well written, and are used to point up his thesis. The part that our prevailing culture, and what is meretricious in our economic system, play in criminal careers is well illustrated. Alcoholism is not a cause of crime, though it may be a precipitating factor. Like crime, it is a symptom of the basal conflict.

Criminotics and simple lawbreakers go to prison together. Of the futility of the life they live there, Dr. Lindner writes from intimate knowledge, and he also lets the inmates tell their own stories. Every man in prison is a candidate for schizophrenia. Like Du Maurier's Peter Ibbetson, every prison inmate is inclined to withdraw into himself and live a dream life beyond the walls. In the static, abnormal life of the prison this schizoid retreat of the psyche from reality has dangers of which alert penologists are aware, but about which they can do little. Homoeroticism in prison (a word the author prefers to homosexuality, under the circumstances) is one of the major problems of every prison administrator, but the one he is least likely to mention in his annual report. Dr. Lindner thinks there has been enough success with the so-called conjugal visits (broadly interpreted) abroad, to justify experimentation along this line in American prisons, but as a psychologist he should know that this conflict with American mores could not be successfully met by our prison wardens.

The cure for the psychological trauma of prison experience is less prison life. As every penologist knows, the majority of men and women sent to prison could be safely supervised in some community through a treatment program managed by competent probation and parole officers. Dr. Lindner has little or nothing to say about probation and parole, but it will be through the intelligent use of these enlightened substitutes for imprisonment that we shall decrease the burden of our crimes of punishment.

Old Folks at Home

THE ROLE OF THE AGED IN PRIMITIVE SOCIETY. By Leo W. Simmons. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1945. 317 pp. \$4.

Reviewed by EDWIN GRANT BURROWS

THE core of this work is a tabulation of 112 traits or bits of custom among seventy-one primitive tribes all over the world. Details about treatment of the aged are compared with a great variety of other customs, in order to bring out any consistent relationships that might suggest how the treatment of the aged has come to be what it is. Professor Simmons finds, for example, a positive coefficient of correlation, .17, between patrilineal descent and the killing of aged women. Although the 1,164 correlations are relegated to Appendix A, they make the book what it is.

Before we come to Appendix A, this information is presented in rela-



tion to such general topics as "The Assurance of Food," "The Use of Knowledge, Magic, and Religion," and "Reactions to Death." This puts some flesh on the statistical bones. The author will even go a little out of his way, now and then, to startle his readers with some amusing or gruesome glimpse of ways that are dark. Yet though he has wrestled manfully to make good reading of what is essentially not unlike a catalogue, there is still only one "Golden Bough."

Of course, a book that is not altogether a success as reading matter might still be important as a report of scientific inquiry. From this point of view, one advantage of this one is that it is not entirely library work. Some of the observations were made by the author at first hand on the mesas where the Hopi Indians live. Yet they have somehow the air of insertions into a study that had already been assembled indoors.

The procedure is admirably scientific, at least in a negative way. That is, Professor Simmons does not defend any preconceived theory, nor indulge in fanciful speculation. He lets his material speak for itself. Unfortunately, it has not very much to say. It composes into a panorama of a wide range of practises, but does not reveal any new insight into human behavior.

The trouble with this as a job of

scientific research is that it did not ask any very searching question to begin with. If the only product were to be this book, it would go on the shelves for reference, but probably not be taken down very often. It would be in the main just one more piece of honest work on a problem that was hardly worth it, unless for training or to get a man a degree.

Happily the prospect is not that cheerless. Professor Simmons has carried the matter a step further in an article, "A Prospectus for Field-Research in the Position and Treatment of the Aged in Primitive and Other Societies," which appeared in *The American Anthropologist* for July-September, 1945. Here he asks three broad questions: "What do old people want for themselves? How may their interests be safeguarded? And what are the implications of the old-age problems for society in general?" Convinced by his previous labors that the answers are not to be found in libraries, he suggests a way of investigating the subject by visiting primitive peoples with those questions in mind.

So if this book does not itself provide any very important answers, it has at least led to the formulation of new questions that may prove to be well worth following up.

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: No. 139

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer to No. 139 will be found in the next issue.

BE NOT HALT HTLN SCHL AL

NOT GCNNJTE, KBNYACNAEF

BYCET AL NOYTT FTL.—

NCYNAJJB VJBN—ICOL

ENTALGTDM.

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 138

The true contrast between science and myth is more nearly touched when we say that science alone is capable of verification.—Philosophy of Santayana (Reason in Science). —G. SANTAYANA.

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