

MY APPRENTICESHIP TO CRIME

An
(To the memory of my
Autobiography

Grace Maria Treadwell.

-by-

ARTHUR HARDING

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The recidivist or habitual criminal is the product of

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them, as has been maintained, steels me against all pity.

Now this famous Italian criminologist believed that there is a "criminal type" midway between the lunatic and the savage, marked by physical signs. This is simply not true.

There are no criminal types marked by physical signs.

There are psychopaths.....sick persons who are classed mistakenly as criminals.

I spent many years in convict prisons in Britain, in none of these prisons did I discover any so-called criminal types.

The brutal, ignorant, cunning Bill Sykes type of person you will find in all ranks of the community. I have met them in prison, in the ranks of the police force, prison service

and in every walk of society.

The recidivist or habitual criminal is the end product of the present prison system, which caused him to spend the early years of his life in some penal institution where he learned his apprenticeship to crime.

PREFACE.

This autobiography is the true history of my long life. Cesare Lombroso writing in the 1890s believed that of some eighty odd years, during which I have been described capital punishment should be retained for the born criminal by police officers and learned judges as a very dangerous incapable of reform.

criminal; whether this is a true assessment of my character, The fact that they exist organically fitted for evil, I am content to let the reader be the judge, knowing well that in the words of Job, if I justify myself, mine own fiercest animals, far from making me more compassionate towards them, as has been maintained, steels me against all pity.

In this story, I shall tell the plain unvarnished truth. Now this famous Italian criminologist believed that so that the learned criminologist and the psychologist can study the facts which made me act as I did. there is a "criminal type" midway between the lunatic and the savage, marked by physical signs. This is simply not true.

During the years before 1924 I was friendly with many notorious criminals. There are no criminal types marked by physical signs. I had no illusions concerning them; There are psychopaths, mentally sick persons who are when I write that a man was innocent of the crime for which he was convicted then you may be certain, he was wrongfully classed mistakenly as criminals.

he was convicted then you may be certain, he was wrongfully convicted. I spent many years in convict prisons in Britain, in none of these prisons did I discover any so-called criminal types.

During the 1880s the term "East End" began to be used generally. The brutal, ignorant, cunning Bill Sykes type of person you will find in all ranks of the community. I have met them in prison, in the ranks of the police force, prison service my own justification for using the term generally, such as "the Nichol", is that this part of London was supposed to

and in every walk of society.

The recidivist or habitual criminal is the end product of the present prison system, which caused him to spend the early years of his life in some penal institution where he learned his apprenticeship to crime.

This autobiography is the true history of my long life of some eighty odd years, during which I have been described by police officers and learned judges as a very dangerous criminal; whether this is a true assessment of my character, I am content to let the reader be the judge, knowing well that in the words of Job, if I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me.

In this story, I shall tell the plain unvarnished truth, so that the learned criminologist and the psychologist can study the facts which made me act as I did.

During the years before 1924 I was friendly with many notorious criminals. I had no illusions concerning them; when I write that a man was innocent of the crime for which he was convicted then you may be certain, he was wrongfully convicted.

During the 1880s the term "East End" began to be used generally. It suggested a different world, an unknown world. My own justification for using the term generally, such as "The Nichol", is that this part of London was supposed to

contain the most destitute population in the East End. This autobiography is not intended to be an attack upon the Police Force generally, but a true history of the evil that a few unscrupulous policemen can cause if they deviate from the truth, or their duties, and allow their personal whims or ambitions to influence their actions in carrying out their duty. a few years there will be at least a thousand or more. It must be remembered that the conditions which existed during my childhood and the resultant causes which led to crime, doomed thousands of children to a prison life or an early grave. criminals serving sentences of 10 years or more. The Conditions in the last century and the years before the 1939-1945 World War were the direct causes of crime. Poverty, unemployment, slums and ignorance led many good people into breaking the law. Harsh laws administered by incompetent Victorian judges and magistrates manufactured many criminals. These conditions created the criminals of my early life. But today, 1969, the modern criminal cannot blame social conditions for his behaviour, for in the words of a former Prime Minister, "They have never had it so good": prisons like convalescent homes, public assistance to keep his family, full employment on release from prison. The Welfare State which exists today in Britain is the nearest approach to Utopia that the world has seen. What

They have chosen the road they will travel, the road that poverty there exists only because the people have failed should have ended on the scaffold; let them spend the years to respond to the advantages which the State has given to all left to them in Dartmoor. Dartmoor could be rebuilt to form

In this year, 1909, the country is faced with a crime sheet so appalling in its seriousness and gravity that the Government must face up to the facts that crime and criminals have become a menace to the whole community. The prison could be enlarged to double its present size.

Within a few years there will be at least a thousand or more men serving sentences or life imprisonment. Also if the whole of the prison system could be changed so that Dartmoor would be the most modern penal settlement in Europe. The increase in serious crime continues with the necessary factories, shops, cinemas would help to make life worth living. heavy sentences, then there will be a thousand or more

From the evidence now available, it appears that Dartmoor in the 1960s had been an ideal place to serve a life sentence. The question arises: where will the Prison Commissioners

put these long serving men?

For reasons of security these long sentence men must be kept in prisons far away from large towns.

Parkhurst, Camp Hill, on the Isle of Wight, will continue to be a security zone for the lesser villains, but the most

dangerous or the convicted criminals should be sent to the ideally situated prison, Dartmoor.

Dartmoor should be the maximum security gaol for the really dangerous gangsters or the violent disposition; these vicious desperadoes must be sent to a prison which will tame their viciousness. These thugs and brutal murderers, such as the Krays, have forfeited all rights as ordinary criminals.

They have chosen the road they will travel, the road that should have ended on the scaffold; let them spend the years left to them in Dartmoor. Dartmoor could be rebuilt to form a very modern penal settlement, with the cells centrally heated, the halls with the landings boarded over to make dining and recreation rooms. The prison could be enlarged to double its present size.

The whole of the prison system could be changed so that Dartmoor would be the most modern penal settlement in Europe. Factories, shops, cinemas would help to make life worth living.

From the evidence now available, it appears that Dartmoor in the 1960s had been an ideal place to serve a life sentence.

Life sentence men allowed to walk about outside the prison walls, their pockets stuffed with five-pound notes, spending large sums of money in the pubs and hotels, taking bottles of spirits into the prison at night to have parties, no doubt with the warders giving a sing-song. No wonder crime is on the increase.

The permissive minority who rejoice at these actions, who have led the nation into the abolition of capital punishment, homosexuality and abortion.