The Young Delinquent in his Social Setting. By Thomas Ferguson.
Oxford University Press. 10/6.

This report by the Professor of Public Health and Social Medicine at Glasgow University follows on his earlier one, "The Young Wage Earner", and investigates the delinquency rates among three groups of Glasgow boys between the ages of eight and eighteen. The groups are (a) some 1,300 "ordinary" boys who left school at the earliest permitted age, (b) some 500 physically, and (c) some 300 mentally handicapped boys.

The delinquency of the boys is primarily considered, as is natural for an expert in Social Medicine, from a social and environmental angle, with the emphasis on the setting rather than on the individual. The book contains over 20 histograms and almost 80 tables of statistical data, which show the incidence of delinquency in relation to a wide range of factors: age, intelligence, physique, position and number in family, school attainment, type of job, attendance at church, cinema, youth club, housing district, overcrowding, convictions of other members of the family.

The bringing together of the statistical correlation of such a wealth of information is of very great value, and in this lies the importance of the book. (It is a pity, though, that amongst so many tables none is to be found on the relation between delinquency and hospitalisation at an early age.)

The statistical data are, on the whole, interpreted with caution, and little generalisation as to causes and cures is attempted. This is fortunate, especially if Professor Ferguson really believes that "in the absence of training the delinquency of young folk may be a natural enough phenomenon, an uncurbed animal instinct". The conception that juvenile crime is due to social immaturity, which Professor Ferguson shares with Dr. Norwood East, because it often stops after adolescence, is not convincing, since in adult life the social maladjustment previously expressed in delinquent acts may later take different forms such as poor personal relationships (which in their turn, of course, produce a new generation of delinquents!) and poor work performance.

Professor Ferguson's figures justify some general impressions on the subject: the small stunted boy is indeed the delinquent par excellence, badly undersized boys have a high delinquency rate, and among these the proportion of boys convicted more than once is relatively higher still—about 94% greater than that for boys with more than one conviction in the survey as a whole. Among the undersized, delinquency is shown as just as heavy among church attenders as among non-attenders—in contrast to the average sized boy whose church attendance goes with a higher moral code. On the other hand, some other popular beliefs are contradicted by the factors of this report: the mother at work out of the home does not

appear to contribute to the delinquency rate, nor does the broken home, except in the case of the mentally handicapped, constitute a major factor. The absence of the bad parent is shown to be preferable to his or her presence.

Professor Ferguson's findings agree with Professor Mannheim's Survey* in that the incidence of delinquency among re-housed slum families in new housing districts equals the delinquency rate of the family in the slum. The Survey shows that the most powerful single factor associated with delinquency is poor scholastic attainment. Its combination with severe overcrowding, a slum area, or the presence of a convicted member in the family, produces a high incidence of delinquency.

Professor Ferguson is careful to talk of factors associated with delinquency rather than casual factors. It is doubtful whether a single or the co-existence of several adverse factors investigated in the report, could be assigned as the direct cause of delinquency. Poor scholastic performance is, without doubt, strikingly associated with juvenile delinquency, but is it not symptomatic of the very condition that produces delinquency?

A.W.

Practical Child Psychotherapy. By Curt Boenheim, M.D. Second Edition, Staples Press. 15/-. Pp. 183.

The secondary title of this book, "A Guide for the General Practitioner" sets forth the Author's intention. He has written it for the guidance of medical practitioners and laymen engaged in psycho-therapeutic work.

The presentation is clear and covers most of the problems concerning which the family doctor is likely to be consulted by anxious parents.

There is a great deal of information in its pages, one might think almost too much to be absorbed by anyone not deeply conversant with the psychological outlook. Dr. Boenheim has obviously read widely—there is an excellent bibliography—and it may be that he over-estimates the time at the disposal of the busy practitioner for psychotherapeutic treatment. The book will certainly be of value however to those who have the time and the inclination to practise it, and to those who have not, it will provide enlightenment on many aspects of child behaviour, both normal and aberrant.

W.M.

**Juvenile Delinquency in an English Middletown* (Routledge 1948).