One Little Boy. By Dorothy M. Baruch, with the collaboration of Hyman Miller, M.D. Gollanz. 13/6.

This is the story of the treatment by a clinical psychologist of a seven year old boy who suffered from asthma. Although the case material is used to illustrate the boy's unconscious phantasies, his hidden aggression and sexual wishes, the form used is more that of a novel. A good deal of skill is employed in rounding off each chapter and in starting the next with a vivid happening and the plot is enhanced by the novelette stories of both the parents who at the same time are being tempted to break their marriage vows—figures which might have stepped out from a Hollywood film.

We are assured this is a true story and that nothing has been attributed to Kenneth which he did not say or do. At the age of 12, he read and checked the manuscript (heaven help him!). To English readers however, the form in which the book is presented, the cheap drama of the parents' encounters with the opposite sex, and indeed some sentimentality about the boy, make it hard to accept it for the serious case study which it is.

There is real value in the repeated emphasis on the fact that all children have hostile thoughts against their parents, intense jealousies, fears and sexual phantasies. The harm does not lie in having such thoughts but in not being able to master them so that the struggle to repress, and the guilt and anxiety involved, render a child unable to progress. Kenneth was unusually intelligent, but failed in school. His physical development was hampered by the choking of his asthma. In the play therapy sessions, he is seen working out his relationship with the psychologist, expressing his morbid fancies and venting his aggression, while the asthma attacks act as a barometer of his progress. His reactions to his parents and his half knowledge of their problems are cleverly indicated. The whole picture is lucid, all the parts fitting together and receiving explanation.

Whether unenlightened parents who read the book will benefit from the sound psychological principles which are its backbone, or will stop at easy, factual explanations of the situations presented is a question. The danger of the "novelette" form is that it offers too easy superficial explanations. The great novel gives a universal truth, and science also works by laws which can be applied to any case. But such principles exist in this book and it reveals the author's own warm humanity.

R.S.A.

The Social Services of Modern England. By Penelope Hall. Routledge and Kegan Paul. 25/-.

This is a worthy addition to the International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction. It is a monument of careful labour in the collection of facts from relevant fields, and comments from recognised authorities. The classified bibliography and sug-