

readership of this little book (which has been sensibly kept within everybody's price range) could do much towards increasing the happiness and self-knowledge of thousands.

Men, particularly—assuming they can swallow their strong fear of appearing un-masculine—would benefit enormously from this book, particularly from the insight it gives into woman's emotions and moods related to sexuality.

Jeremy Portland

The sociology of mental disorders

Ed. by S. Kirson Weinberg

(Staples Press, 75s.)

THE TITLE of this book states its subject-matter well. The contents comprise an introductory theoretical section, and sections on epidemiology, personality development and mental disorders, disordered behaviour and social deviance, the mental hospital, post-hospital adjustment, out-patient treatment, community psychiatry and cross-cultural studies. Each section has an introductory comment from the editor and about a quarter of the work is from his pen. The rest consists of reprinted articles from American journals and one or two specially written by the editor. The contents look much like a list of common topics in social psychiatry.

The difference between social psychiatry and psychiatric sociology is held to be that the former is concerned with the diagnosis and treatment of mental disorder whilst the latter is a social science. The object of psychiatric sociology is a study of mental disorders as social phenomena. This seems to the reviewer to be a matter of stating the claim of sociologists and some psychiatrists to study psychiatry in its social manifestations and causes, making use of the techniques of the social sciences. Such a claim is not only legitimate—it is also welcome, and the involvement of social scientists of various types in mental health research has already been fruitful. However, it is doubtful if this separate term does more

than make a distinction without a difference.

Perhaps because of the concern to emphasise the sociologists' contribution the proportion of medical contributors is low (11/53) and some of the material not very exciting. A volume which drew more on the joint work of psychiatrists and social scientists might not have had this fault. It might also have had a slightly better coverage. Surprisingly, there is a relative neglect of criminology and, sadly, some important work from this side of the Atlantic is not considered by any of the contributors. For example, the work of John Bowlby, D. H. Clark, D. V. Martin and Peter Sainsbury is not mentioned.

On the positive side, some material presented is rich in stimulus and interest. An intriguing item is the finding by Myers and Schaffer that, even within a nearly free clinic, patients of the higher social classes were largely treated by trained psychiatrists and patients from lower stratas of society got their psychotherapy from residents and medical students. It was also fascinating to learn that the Saulteaux Indians have an attitude to illness like that of the population of Butler's 'Erewhon'.

More importantly, there is a reasonable proportion of significant original papers and critical reviews and some articles healthily sceptical of the band-wagon status of community psychiatry—but no factual appraisal of this area. The book can be recommended as representative of a valuable approach to mental illness and a good source of articles that have appeared in journals which are often hard to consult in this country.

H. Merskey

Depression—a Christian's experience

(Falcon Booklet, 1s. 6d.)

THIS BOOKLET demonstrates yet again that there are many variants of each kind of mental illness. The author describes the common error of well-wishers who, invariably, exhort the mentally sick to 'pull themselves together'—a basic and

tragic impossibility for a depressed person, Christian and non-Christian alike.

As its title implies, the booklet dwells rather heavily on the religious ramifications and one inevitably feels the religious prejudices of the author's Christian associates.

The narrative again confirms the great need for quiet and sympathy, but also stresses the universally held religious view of the love of God for Christians and, in so doing, perhaps fails to stress that much secular loving care is readily available from non-Christians.

Naturally, the religious theme colours the book and—although doubtless a true record of the author's experiences—something is lost by this narrowing of one's circle of friends at a time of mental illness.

All in all, a booklet worth reading as a record of experiences, but perhaps missing the great need for more literature on guidance for depressed people; guidance for those who may not have the advantage of a Faith to hold fast to during the blackest suicidal feelings which are common to all sufferers of the more acute forms of this distressing malady.

R. J. Little

Language and social work

by Noel Timms

(Routledge & Kegan Paul, 16s.)

THE LATEST volume in the excellent 'Library of Social Work' is a notable addition to the series. Noel Timms, in his usual clear and incisive manner, examines common statements about social casework and illustrates with apt quotations. He draws his examples chiefly from within the field, allowing social workers to speak for themselves, and thus exposes the vulnerability of the definitions and descriptions in general use. 'Key terms such as "acceptance", "self-determination" and so on, and the literature of social work seem concerned to repeat (rather than articulate) a particular verbal tradition'. Disarmingly he writes that his sceptical tone is 'more respectful to the activity of social work than opti-

mistic statements about the nature of social work'. The experienced social worker will find this book salutary, but as an introduction to the student in training, it is strong medicine.

One of the difficulties in studying social casework is that it represents so many different kinds of activity. Attempts are made to differentiate the generic and specific elements and to distinguish the nature of casework. Is it 'a kind of therapy, a sort of friendship or an applied science'? Well-known teachers of social work have set out their concepts, as applied in casework, and Mr. Timms gives a

commentary on Helen Perlman's 'Problem-solving process'. Her teaching is generally acknowledged to be clear, coherent and practical but this author questions the basic assumptions on which her structure is built.

In the early days when social work was struggling to establish its identity, there was a reaction Victorian idea of enlightened friendship as described in some of the Charity Organisation Society's documents and in the novels of the period. This book boldly calls a chapter 'The social worker as friend or therapist'. In spite of current sneers at 'do-gooders', there

are signs of a swing back to the realisation of an aspect of friendship (see Halmos). The chapter discusses what has been derived from psychoanalysis for use in some casework.

Now that training in social work is being widely developed and the content of the social services as well as their structure is under consideration, it behoves all concerned to question assumptions, define clearly, and use language and analogy with the strictest care. Noel Timms' latest book is a stimulus towards this process and attacks the dangers of complacency.

Robina S. Addis

BRIEFS

The cross of lassitude

by Joan Colebrook
(André Deutsch, 30s.)

FIVE PORTRAITS of American delinquent girls as they range back and forth between prison cells and hospital rooms, bedrooms and street corners. They are shown as victims of a rapidly changing and hostile society on the outside and a rigidly restricting 'correctional' system which intensifies their fantasies. The author followed the lives and misfortunes of these girls for four years and has created a vivid picture of their existence and the culture which creates them as well as digging deep enough to turn each girl into a clearly defined individual.

Recent developments in affective disorders

Ed. by Coppen and Walk
(Headley Bros., 25s.)

THIS IS the second of the Royal Medico-Psychological Association's special publications—based on a course of lectures held in the Spring of 1967. It represents an up-to-date review of the most promising and fruitful areas of research in the field. All the authors have made important contributions to the topics which they review and were asked to discuss the subject with

the non-expert in mind. Contributors include Peter Sainsbury, J. L. Gibbons, Felix Post, Gerald Woolfson and K. Rawnsley.

The families of schizophrenic patients

by E. M. Goldberg
(Nat. Inst. for Social Work Training, 5s.)

A SEPARATE publication of the section which appeared in *New Aspects of the Mental Health Services*, published last year. It has been extracted complete to make it widely available to social workers and doctors to enable them to cope more easily with the problems created by having a schizophrenic as a member of the family.

Psychiatric emergencies and the law

by F. E. Kenyon
(John Wright, 30s.)

THIS IS the first large-scale attempt to assess the impact of the Mental Health Act (1959) on the legal procedures of admission to a psychiatric hospital and on the type of patient admitted. Particular attention is paid to those patients detained compulsorily and to those making up special sub-groups with individual problems of management and treatment. A comprehensive study of admissions to a busy London observation unit, comparing data from before and after the Act, enables the author to examine the changing characteristics of the

mentally disordered patient. Dr. Kenyon discusses the adequacy of the existing social and legal management of the mentally disordered, with proposals for possible improvement in their emergency care and treatment.

The captive wife

by Hannah Gavron
(Pelican, 5s.)

SUBTITLED 'Conflicts of housebound mothers', this is a sociological study of the clash of values which faces most emancipated women. The study describes the social and historical background of the captive wife, draws conclusions from the survey and discusses possible routes of escape.

Marital breakdown

by J. Dominionian
(Pelican, 4s.)

AN UNBIASED attempt by a psychiatrist to bring together all the viewpoints and attitudes expressed when a marriage collapses. Dr. Dominionian is a lucid and entertaining writer who makes no inspired guesses and is dubious about 'ready-made' solutions. He asks how we select our partners and discusses the factors which may be held responsible for marriage break-up — sex, money, housing, parents and families, mental illness, the inability to give and take emotionally, age at marriage and pre-marital pregnancy. →