**BOOKS**

**The community's children**  
*Edited by Jessie Parfit*  
(Longmans, 15s.)

One needs to emphasise straight away - as the authors emphasise straight away - the audience for whom this book is designed; i.e. 'the ordinary thoughtful person', the local councillor, the committee member, 'energetic and public-spirited people'. It is, therefore, an introduction to the child care service; and it's quite nicely done, in a sober, thoughtful and conservative sort of way, and this is not surprising when one considers the list of sober, thoughtful and conservative people who wrote it. The panel of writers decided to put the emphasis somewhat on the residential care of children (which is fair enough, as this is the part that committee members usually see); and these sections are admirably child-centred and thus, by implication, draw attention to the needs of the staff. There is also, however, a galloping survey of foster-home care, the work of the Child Care Officer (sketchy), special school placement (euphoric) and preventive work. Nothing about adoption. An excellent short section on immigrant children.

The trouble with a whizz round the field such as this is that one so easily falls either into an idealistic description or into an unwise generalisation. With more space, I would debate some of these faults, which do appear here; but let me quote just one. 'A systematic and determined attack upon the problems of homelessness could, in a very short time, result in a dramatic reduction in the numbers of children living in public care.' Is this true? I doubt it very much. The statistics quoted at the end of the book don't support the proposition either. I think that when the housing shortage is finally overcome, then will stand revealed the full extent of the matrimonial battlefield, obscured now by parents who can plead: 'It's not us - it's the housing shortage.' In fact, the end of the housing shortage may present the case-work services with their greatest challenge yet.

In sum, then: this book is handy, useful, painstaking, conservative but really a bit uninspired.  
*John Stroud*

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**Community as doctor**  
*by Robert Rapaport*  
(Social Science Paperbacks, 25s.)

This is a very welcome re-issue in paperback form of a study first published in 1960 of the work of the Henderson Hospital for patients with personality disorders. Dr. Rapaport and his associates made a critical examination for four years of the working of this pioneer unit and tried to make some assessment of its results. It was an immensely difficult task and the conclusions inevitably tend to be in less practical and specific forms than many people would wish.

Nevertheless, this analysis of the therapeutic community in action makes essential reading for those in the mental health professions and for others who are concerned with the relationships between people and institutions. It is only disappointing that so little of real importance on this subject seems to have been written since Dr. Rapaport's book first appeared.

*Stephen Hughes*

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**Human sexuality**  
*by James McCary*  
(Van Nostrand, 68s.)

Written by the Professor of Psychology at the University of Houston, Texas, this is a comprehensive primer of the subject, which is at least as good as any other one on the market. According to the cover, the author's sex education class has a capacity enrolment every year, and a photograph from the Houston Chronicle shows this taking place in something like the Albert Hall. (Now, the unsuccessful applicants can simply read the book.)

Professor McCary is more up to date than most of his competitors in including the results of the Johnson and Masters research at Washington on human sexual response. On the whole, he avoids the coyness which is all too likely to creep into books on this subject, though like most American academic authors, his orientation is irrevocably middle-class. The section on sex and the law is fortunately not applicable to this subject.

Though designed primarily for students, this work could be read by any intelligent young person and Schofield's investigation a couple of years ago showed what enormous reservoirs of ignorance remain to be enlightened in that group. But in addition, there are plenty of older people — both professional and lay — whose understanding would be deepened by the clearly expressed material in this book. The section on contraception includes the information that the Pill is now available for American dogs.

*Hugh Freeman*

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**Pain—psychological and psychiatric aspects**  
*by H. Merskey and F. G. Spear*  
(Bailliere, Tindall & Cassell, 40s.)

How important is pain as a topic for psychiatrists? A cursory glance at the index of a psychiatric journal suggests that it is of little interest, and yet as the authors of this monograph point out, pain cannot be defined other than as a psychological event and one, moreover, which occurs in 53% of psychiatric out-patients. We can no longer pretend that pain is a concern only for 'proper doctors'.