

Church to be made a more truly accepting fellowship. The biblical, theological and ethical material is examined in very much more detail than in *Homosexual Relationships*, and even those who find the argument not fully convincing and the conclusions unacceptable will still find this book a very useful guide to the literature and the present state of the discussion of this much controverted issue in the Christian Church.

Neither of these works represents a position which is likely to command general agreement at present in the Church of England or any other of the main-line denominations in Britain. They are early salvos in a debate which is bound to take some time and has not yet got much beyond some clarification of the issues and a little modification of entrenched positions.

DUNCAN B FORRESTER

Soldier Without a Rifle

David Stafford Clark
Collins £5.95

This book seemed initially aⁿ unusual choice for review by the *Journal of medical ethics*. Further reading however, proved this to be in error. The psychiatrist in a fringe professional role is well portrayed. It reminded me very much of an acquaintance who consulted me one day about some personal difficulties and said that he had come to see me, as a friend who happens to be a psychiatrist.

The book takes us into the lives of four people intimately. There is little background on any of them prior to adulthood and the vignettes of interpersonal episodes. The complexities of these are amply shown with great skill in dialogue and descriptive detail. The scene is also well set, like the scenery for a play, the author gives us a glimpse of the life of a bomber squadron and its philosophy and also the post-war world.

The central character, Mike Rudge, is an illustration of a man who is insecure in himself and yet highly attracted to others. He rationalises his situation almost convincingly. The psychiatrist sums up this rather brilliantly 'he's like a sincere phil-anthropist who has overdrawn his account at the bank. He's compounded the error by opening a new account on credit of course, at another bank'. This follows the central character finding that he

cannot carry on with two love affairs, one with his wife and the other with the tragic female of the book. The psychiatrist's flash of insight and his humanity in trying to help yet not having any brilliant or convincing solutions is very real to life. What is just as real and recognisable are Saru (Jean) and Janet, the two women involved with Rudge, the psychiatrist and his wife. All have their personalities illuminated and come across so well that we are left in no doubt as to why they either survive or succumb.

My feeling at the end was one of sadness. The book did not even venture to look at the meaning in all the interpersonal upheaval the characters went through. It failed to look at the meaning in the deaths which we are left with. I also thought of the psychiatrist and the forlorn love-sick South African who conclude the book is lacking in overview quite desperately. I and others might consider this to be a spiritual one.

Having said the above this is a book worth reading though at £5.95 it is rather expensive. I would say it's a 'must', if the publishers can venture into a cheaper edition in paperback. Otherwise, discounting the price, it's well worth buying and I enjoyed the opportunity to review it.

JOHN V BASSON

Beyond separation: Further studies of children in hospital

Edited by David Hall and Margaret Stacey, Routledge and Kegan Paul. £6.50

Places which provide institutional care for child patients also supply a setting for the themes of medical sociology in microcosm. Here are different professional groups, each imbued with their own ideologies and intent upon their special purposes, busily negotiating a semblance of order within a complex organisation. We are used to the problems arising from differing perspectives of patients and staff, the imbalance of power, the lack of information, the prevailing uncertainty. Such settings, it has truly been said, are 'cradled in anxiety'.

The metaphor is peculiarly apt when applied to children. The very word patient derives from suffering, but there is an extra poignancy attached to the vulnerability of the very young when they are led into

the doctors' domain. Although we, as rational adults and sometime parents, may have convinced ourselves that the treatment is 'for their own good' things must look and feel very different to the child victims. It is in this area of medical activity that we, on their behalf, have to rely most completely on the physician's ethical code. Without absolute trust in the operator's integrity paediatric surgery would constitute appalling ritual assault and we should see all kinds of minor medical or nursing procedures as unjustifiable afflictions.

We very much need, therefore, to believe that all is well with children in hospital, and, indeed, the notable clinical successes of paediatrics encourage our confidence. Moreover, the outlook at this end of the age span is so predominantly hopeful that it is easy to ignore the details of transient individual unhappiness. The contributors to this book have not flinched from addressing a disturbing subject, in careful detail, with varying research strategies. They report on ways of predicting children's responses to brief hospitalisation; they manage to uncover the meaning of what is being done to them for young patients in an orthopaedic ward; they reveal how staff in a long stay unit may escape from their own personal feelings by denying emotion and replicating Goffman's total institution; they see how repeated episodes of illness fit into the pattern of a child's short life and how parents, play leaders and others may take the painful edge off these experiences and maintain some continuing link with the lively world beyond the walls. Margaret Stacey, who was the original inspiration of this admirable work, which was then reported in *Hospitals, Children and their Families*, has put its main objective frankly and plainly, 'Our central concern is that unnecessary suffering should not be caused to children in the course of treating an ailment'. All the contributors to this volume have kept this aim in mind without its preventing them from carrying the study of the hospitalised child far beyond the simple concept of separation from mother. The topics are wide, the age range extends to adolescence and the many criticisms of current practice which it contains are balanced by wise recommendations for improvement.

UNA MACLEAN