

'hopeless, ridiculous, and utterly untenable position': 'wanting to believe it will be for ever'. Though her solution may be uninviting, her diagnosis of the modern predicament is astute: 'we ask too much of marriage and not getting it we despair too quickly and break it off'.

What then can be done? Dr Dominian recommends more research on marriage, divorce and its impact on children, the extension of competent counselling services for those seeking help with marriage problems, and the training of professional social workers concerned entirely with marriage to work on behalf of local authorities, courts and voluntary organizations. Finally, he advocates a general education for marriage. It is to be hoped that this preparation may include a more realistic and less introspective approach to the inevitable frustration and disappointment. In the field of prevention, as distinct from therapy, it might in the long run prove more profitable to attempt to change the climate of the day rather than to concentrate exclusively on the inponderables of human relations.

Dr Dominian's own views are balanced and enlightened. He sees some form of effective and mutually acceptable birth regulation as essential, but adds the salutary reminder that birth control is not a universal panacea for psychological difficulties. On the subject of

divorce, he considers the legal concept of matrimonial offence no longer compatible with the essence of marriage, which he defines as 'a commitment to a physical, emotional, social and spiritual relationship'. Of the meaning of sexual intercourse in marriage, he writes: 'The current pre-occupation with sexual gratification and the previous obsession with procreation have tended to distract attention from one of the principal features of the act, which is the powerful reassurance it gives to the couple at all times but particularly during special periods of need, that each wants and is prepared to accept the other unconditionally. This is an unconditional acceptance which is not in evidence elsewhere in life, except in the early and unspoiled relationship between the baby and its mother.'

Although a limitation in one sense, Dr Dominian's overriding concern with psychological problems, coupled with his wide experience and very real compassion for the suffering occasioned by marital breakdown, makes this little book of the greatest value to all those doctors, social workers or priests who seek to help unhappy couples to prove that

ruin'd love, when it is built anew,
Grows fairer than at first, more
strong, far greater.

LIONEL AND ZOE HERSOV

MARRIAGE UNDER STRESS: A Comparative Study of Marriage Conciliation, by Gerald Sanctuary, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, 1968. 197 pp. 35s.

But for the sub-title one might expect this book to provide an analysis either of factors, social and psychological, contributing to marital tension, or of the processes of conciliation work. Instead it is an account of the provision of marriage counselling services by voluntary and statutory agencies in Great Britain and in a number of other western countries. The growth of these services, which in many instances has gone on alongside legislative changes making it easier to obtain a divorce, may be seen as reflecting the wish of society to preserve the family as the important unit of social life.

The author, the National Secretary of the National Marriage Guidance Council, describes its development since 1938, when a small group of professional people, concerned about the increase in the divorce rate following the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1937, formed a working committee to see how the problems could be tackled. Mr Sanctuary is at his most lively when describing the early days of the

venture, when 'many of the public, and certainly the national press, were sceptical to the point of scorn'. He includes an account of the recruitment, selection and training of voluntary counsellors, and points out the emphasis within the organization on developing skills for the work. Some of the description of day-to-day administration of Centres is repetitive and unnecessarily detailed. There is also an outline of the work of other British agencies, including the probation service, the Catholic Marriage Advisory Council, and the Family Discussion Bureau.

The British pattern of providing marriage counselling services through voluntary workers in special agencies substantially financed by government funds is followed with variations in some other countries, particularly Australia and New Zealand. In Scandinavia, conciliation services are closely linked with the judicial system; for example, couples seeking a divorce in Norway are required, before a divorce is

granted, to meet with an appointed counsellor to consider the possibility of remaining together. As the author makes clear, such a requirement may become little more than a formality—after a brief interview the counsellor may issue a certificate that the couple has been seen but that there is no hope of repairing the marriage, and the divorce proceeds.

Some of the most interesting material comes from the United States, where a variety of provisions exist, ranging from marriage counsellors, members of an accredited professional organization, in private practice, to conciliation courts, which in some states function alongside divorce courts. The conciliation courts, and family courts in other states, offer a service to couples at the point of marriage breakdown to help them resolve the differences between them or, if reconciliation is impossible, to settle problems concerning the welfare of their children or financial arrangements.

If the Divorce Reform Bill now before Parliament eventually becomes law, this country will see a fundamental change in the approach to the legal termination of a marriage. The only ground for the granting of a divorce will be the 'irretrievable breakdown' of the marriage. Whatever amendments are made to the Bill, it seems probable that its enactment will lead to a rise in the number of petitions for divorce. The clause relating to possibilities of

reconciliation is very limited. There is, and will continue to be, a need for more effective and widespread services to offer help with marriage difficulties, to which couples may turn when things first go wrong. Mr Sanctuary makes the point that attempts at conciliation under duress are unlikely to be fruitful; at least one partner must have some motivation towards continuing the marriage. But, even at the point of seeking divorce, many husbands and wives must have mixed feelings, and a few may hope to avoid the final step. Some of the services described in this book may suggest ways in which skilled help may be made available at the moment when it is most likely to be used.

In describing the work of the Family Discussion Bureau, the author states, incorrectly, that clients pay no fee. In fact, unlike other agencies, the Bureau charges a fee for each interview with the partners, because it is seen as a valuable feature of the work that people be asked to 'invest' in the preservation of their marriage. This is not an unimportant detail, since it has implications for the provision of fee-paying services on a wide scale. If people are to be encouraged to seek help earlier with marriage difficulties, it may be that the greater variety of services the better, and an approach to 'marriage-menders' for professional services may be one feature of a new pattern.

LORETTO LYNCH

PASTORAL COUNSELLING FOR THE DEVIANT GIRL, by Margaret Moran, R.G.S. *Geoffrey Chapman*, London, 1968. 156 pp. 25s.

In his foreword to this book, Fr Sean O' Riordan writes of 'weak, baffled, lonely girls . . . who have never known the constructive human experience of being loved'. It is these girls, whose behaviour may lead to their placement in a training establishment of some kind, who are, for the purposes of this book, defined as 'deviant', indicating, as the author says, 'various degrees of maladjustment, delinquency or psycho-social distress'. Whatever one thinks of the use of this label, teachers, social workers and others who encounter will recognize the difficulties of this group of girls.

Sr. Margaret Moran has written this book for the guidance of Sisters, engaged in work with disturbed girls, who have no formal training in casework methods. She outlines the essential skills of counselling, and considers their application in the work undertaken by religious, particularly in residential settings. The first three chapters of the book are devoted

to an account of the development of counselling, its relation to methods of guidance and psychotherapy, a consideration of the religious psychology of the disturbed adolescent, and a theoretical exposition of the dynamics of the counselling relationship. The author draws on literature from several disciplines and refers to work in many fields; the extracts quoted are not always the most apt, and some complicated ideas are so over-simplified as to be almost meaningless. For readers without knowledge of the disciplines the material might be presented in a more coherent fashion.

The fourth chapter, 'The Pastoral Dimension in Counselling Deviant Girls', is, to a lay social worker anyway, the most valuable. Sr. Margaret refers to the themes of Vatican II, and stresses the need for the counsellor to base the practice of her skills on a true Christian perception of the other and her needs. The goal of casework may be described as an