

BOOK REVIEWS—cont.

Mr. Sillitoe himself neither asks nor attempts to answer such questions as these. He merely draws his portrait without special pleading or any kind of tendentiousness; and leaves us to draw our own conclusions.

I should add that the title-story on which, for obvious reasons, I have concentrated here, constitutes but one third of a book which is consistently readable and contains eight other stories on more or less related themes.

G. HAWKINS.

YOURS BY CHOICE

Jean Rowe
Mills & Boon Ltd. 1960. pp.148. 15s. 0d.

"A GUIDE for adoptive parents", is the sub-title of this book. If, like Josephine Baker, the famous coloured singer, you have just adopted your eleventh child you will not need to read it. If you are about to adopt a child or are just beginning to think about adoption, you should regard 15s. 0d. as part of the expenses; buy the book and read it. It is very readable. Miss Rowe writes in an easy, straightforward manner and does not generalise. She answers all the questions which adoptive parents should ask and she puts a number of very practical questions to prospective adopters: for example, "Have you taken the trouble to find out whether you really like having children about the house when they are naughty as well as when they are good?"

The legal adoption of children is still something rather new in our society, Miss Rowe reminds us. The first Adoption Law was passed in 1926. In some continental countries there is as yet

no provision for legal adoption. In this country there are far more people wanting to adopt babies than there are babies for adoption. The process can be lengthy, difficult and disappointing. The author deals with the reasons why people want to adopt children, the alternatives to adoption, qualifications for adoption and the legal requirements very clearly. She tells you just how to set about the business and what to expect. Her chapter on questions of heredity is frank and helpful. There are practical hints on bringing your child home, the ways in which adopted children may require special handling and telling about adoption.

Without any touch of whimsy Miss Rowe describes most skilfully how babies, small children and adolescents feel about adoption. Dr. D. W. Winnicott has said: "Adoptive parents have a need to be aware of what child development is about, much more so than parents who are caring for their own children". Miss Rowe has contrived to put into her book a great deal of sound, practical advice and insight into a child's needs which will make it of value to parents of children, adopted or their own. The final chapter on adopted children in adolescence is full of understanding and should be of value to anyone working with young people.

This book fills a gap. It is not a text book for social workers but a guide book; well written and attractively produced. It will be of use to those who have to advise people about adoption as well as to those who are about to adopt or who, like the reviewer, are learning what it means to be an adoptive parent.

DERMOT GRUBB