

BOOK REVIEWS—cont.**PRISON SCREW**

L. W. Merrow Smith and J. Harris
Herbert Jenkins 21s.

BOOKS by Prison Officers about their work are very rare and thus the experiences of Mr. Merrow Smith, who in his time has been an outstanding officer at Parkhurst, Principal Officer at Wakefield, Chief Officer at Oxford amongst other places, are to be welcomed. The many stories he has are interesting and often amusing, but it is a pity that most are about Parkhurst and little is said of his time as Principal and Chief Officer, for this would have been of value. He also gives a perceptive account

of prison routine which will be interesting to the lay reader, Mr. Merrow Smith has not however been served well by his collaborator, for the summary of his views and opinions on penal practice do not appear to spring from the detail of his experiences. He claims that the letter of the rules should be strictly adhered to and that he is a man without compassion as far as prisoners are concerned yet the conclusion one draws from the main body of his book is that he has been ready to use his initiative in looking after prisoners and that he is, in the best sense, a wise and compassionate man.

M. SELBY

New Books

The inclusion of a book in this list does not preclude its subsequent review.

INDIA AND ABROAD

Facts and Perspectives, with regard to Social Defence and Child Guidance

This monograph, by Shree R. B. Mishra, Senior Psychologist at the pilot centre for the education of juvenile delinquents at Hazaribagh, Bihar, is a report submitted to the United Nations. Mr. Mishra, who toured the English prisons at the time of the Second United Nations Congress, also made a comprehensive study of conditions in the Scandinavian Countries. His report which includes some shrewd comments on various prisons and hostels, may be borrowed from the Editor.

BLACKFRIARS SETTLEMENT

Annual Report 1960-61 describes the work of the fifty-eight voluntary 'Associates' who each take responsibility for one individual ex-prisoner. They meet him while he is still in prison, try to plan work or accommodation or other

assistance for him, and keep in regular touch, after his discharge. All this, of course, in their spare time. And often in considerable portions of their spare time, for they quickly find that mere attention to material needs is almost valueless. Instead they have really to try to get to know their man, really try to be a friend to him. For it is frequently in this less tangible way that the Associate does most of his good work. Often what the man most needs is someone who is genuinely interested in him, who will take real trouble in helping and listening, and who does not need to think of him as one of a given case-load. Someone who will be patient or even welcoming, who will not condemn him for an occasional lapse, and who will not be irritated if he is slow or inarticulate. And, most of all, someone who will not attempt to impose upon him a false and alien middle-class morality. Mr. David Collett is the Warden and Mr. Alan Markham the Organiser of the Prison After Care Scheme. Copies of the report are available from 44-47 Nelson Square, S.E.1.