

GIRLS GROWING UP, by B. Delarge and D. Emin. *Geoffrey Chapman*, London, Dublin, Melbourne. Girls' Book 7s. 6d., Parents' Book 5s.

The purpose of this two-part work, for girls of eight to fourteen years, is to help them, through their parents, to understand the emotional as well as the physical aspects of growth towards womanhood. The Parents' Book gives general guidance on the mother's role in this education, and instruction on how she may use the Girls' Book with her daughter so that information is given gradually and accepted happily. The Girls' Book is written in a simple and friendly style, with plenty of clear diagrams and some charming photographs; although the information is absorbed most cohesively if one starts at the beginning and reads through to the end, the authors have somehow cleverly catered for the child who will skip through the diagrams first and then read the bits that interest her.

I recently put both books on trial with some seventy middle-class girls aged eleven to twelve, as part of a course in their school on Family Life Education. The mothers—and the regrettable few fathers interested—found the Parents' Book helpful and reassuring; but they were more enthusiastic for the Girls' Book and some felt the former to be of marginal value compared with the latter. They appreciated the diagrams as being more attractive than the somewhat crude simplifications of medical illustrations often thoughtlessly used in books for children. They liked the photographs of family life and young people growing up, because they re-enact the familiar and secure, and reinforce an expectation of security in the child's future. And they particularly liked the textual theme of affection, responsibility, and consideration for others. The girls in the classroom welcomed the book and turned to it repeatedly.

Yet some mothers found both books a little wanting. Despite the good sense of the Parents' Book, a few still needed help with describing and discussing sexual intercourse with their daughters. The Girls' Book provides diagrams in preparation for this subject, and the text is simple and clear but leaves many details to the parents. Since in our generation discussion of the marriage-act is dreaded—and often in the

end avoided—by many otherwise very competent parents, one would have liked more practical help in the Parents' Book. Then again, a few parents felt their answers to the commoner but often disconcerting questions of their daughters on related subjects, like 'What is a virgin?', to be clumsy and tense. A section in the Parents' Book giving specific children's questions and model answers might have overcome both difficulties.

A further need was revealed by the comments of a few mothers, who found the homely photographs and the theme of human love and understanding painful rather than helpful. They felt that a girl in a broken or breaking home, or where there had been a recent death especially of a parent, would be hurt by the present contrast rather than encouraged to build her own future on the ideal pattern presented. This need is rarely met in books of this kind, yet if one is guided by current divorce and family statistics, it must be common enough to warrant attention. If something like one in ten homes face a serious difficulty at some time—or permanently—a small section on sex education in this context would surely enhance enormously the use of the Parents' Book.

All but a handful of the parents were Christian (about half of these were Catholics), yet only one parent complained of the lack of explicitly religious teaching in both books, while many parents seemed relieved at what one mother called 'the lack of piety'. This is no doubt a comment on the quality, hitherto, of overtly religious teaching on sex education; or perhaps it is a criticism of the way in which many books overload the factual material with spiritual ideas. *Girls Growing Up* is to be commended for leaving to parents and teachers the job of clothing the factual bones with a philosophy suitable for each child.

Despite its minor failings, this work is the best treatment of its subject I have yet come across, and extremely good value for its low price.

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LUTHER AS SEEN BY CATHOLICS, by Richard Stauffer. *Lutterworth Press*, London, 1967. 83 pp. 12s. 6d.

THE THESES WERE NOT POSTED, by Erwin Iserloh. *Geoffrey Chapman*, London, 1968. 116 pp. 25s.

Historical studies are of no mean significance in contributing towards the development of the ecumenical movement. Although from the historical point of view, what people *thought*

happened is often just as important as what actually did, it is still necessary to establish the facts of the case in so far as this is possible. On the more theological level, of course, many of