

Book reviews

Madness and civilization. MICHEL FOUCAULT. 1971. Pp. 299+xiv. London: Social Science Paperback. Price: £1.50.

Michel Foucault's now famous book, first published in the abridged English form in 1967, was reviewed in these pages at that time. This new edition, in paperback, now includes a chapter on Passion and Delirium from the original edition.

It is idle to pretend that this is easy reading—much of its content proved too much for this reviewer—but perseverance is rewarded by a new insight into the philosophical concepts of reason, unreason and madness, and the actions and reactions which these have produced in the communities of the 'sane'. The author's style is complicated and rather forbidding, but familiarity breeds understanding, and understanding, leads to much mental stimulation. To those who scorn those sitting birds of enlightenment—potted philosophy, instant wisdom—this work will present an intellectual challenge worthy of their acceptance. Others will avoid it like the plague.

The traveller's health guide. DR ANTHONY C. TURNER. Pp 13+144. 1971. London: Tom Stacey Ltd. Price: 75p.

It is now a common experience for a general practitioner to see a patient in his surgery who, only a day or so before, was in some obscure and exotic part of the globe with an entirely different climate and spectrum of disease. Problems are caused, not so much by the increased volume of travel, but by its speed. This means that diseases contracted abroad are often still in their incubation period when the patient arrives in the UK.

This booklet is written by a senior medical officer of BOAC and BEA who in addition is a lecturer at the London Hospital for Tropical Diseases. It is a mine of detailed information on the medical problems of overseas travel—not only the intricacies of immunization, both mandatory and merely advisable, for various destinations, but also the less often considered problems of acclimatization, circadian rhythm upsets, and hygiene precautions in tropical and subtropical regions.

There are interesting asides on the history of some of the 'tropical' diseases but detail is also given of up to date research so that the reader knows the theoretical basis of the practical advice given.

Although intended for non-medical consumption this work has an obvious place in the general

practitioner's office as, apart from the general advice there are details of the immunization requirements of almost every country on the map and of the distribution of the more important tropical diseases. A minor criticism is that the list of yellow fever inoculation centres in Britain is given with somewhat incomplete addresses and would certainly be more useful if the telephone numbers were also given. Many doctors would not agree with the rather dogmatic advice to take prophylactic 'streptotriad' and 'sylvasun' tablets (the latter for sunburn prevention) but the author does produce reasoned arguments in favour of their use.

One is left with the feeling that there is rather too much detail for the infrequent package tour traveller but it can be strongly recommended to the general practitioner and to the more sophisticated of his patients such as the business or professional man with multiple overseas commitments.

Psychology in medicine. J. E. ORME and F. G. SPEAR, 1971. Pp 218, Paperback, London: Baillière Tindall. Price: £1.80.

This book attempts to put before the reader a brief account of the whole field of academic psychology, and to relate this discipline to the practice of medicine. It is addressed to the general medical reader and to the undergraduate medical student. General practitioners have a particular need for this kind of information in relation both to their work in practice and to their new task as undergraduate and postgraduate teachers. It is disappointing, therefore, not to be able to recommend this book wholeheartedly.

There are several reasons. First, in addressing themselves at one and the same time to both experienced clinicians and medical students, the writers have set themselves an impossible task. The mature clinician has a wealth of personal experience on which to call, and on which the authors might have drawn, in order to demonstrate the application of psychological theory. Secondly, although the authors have undertaken not to be "blandly uncritical", they are at such pains to point out the limitations of all psychological theory, that their eclectic approach is in constant danger of becoming nihilistic. Thirdly, their prejudice against psychoanalysis, shown for example, by the snide remark about the snoring analyst, jars in a text which sets out to give information, rather than to develop an argument.

There are great difficulties in presenting so wide a field as academic psychology to the medical