

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

reader. The material includes the physiological approach to perception, the sociological approach to roles, and the existentialist approach to the phenomenon of madness.

Although the book is entitled, *Psychology in Medicine*, we are shown the links between psychology and psychiatry, rather than between psychology and general medicine, which the title promises. The general practitioner reader, in particular, knows how important the contribution of psychological understanding is to all the illnesses, whether the presentation is predominantly physical, psychological, or social.

The authors have, however, covered a large number of psychological concepts which underlie different categories of psychiatric treatment. For this reason the book may have a place on the general practitioners' bookshelf as a means of access to more detailed information about aspects of psychology in medicine which the doctor may wish to pursue.

The battle against heart disease. P. E. BALDRY, M.B., B.S., M.R.C.P. 1971. Pp x-190. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Price: £3.00.

The public's interest in heart disease and in particular in the surgery of the heart is very great, and understandably so, for near miracles have been performed on it during recent years. Dr Baldry in this book shows how over more than a thousand years, man has groped for solutions to one problem after another and how every advance is based on knowledge which has gone before. The account which he gives cannot help being fascinating, but he has displayed considerable skill in collating the sequence of events into a consecutive narrative which is easy to read and understandable to anyone interested in the growth of knowledge. Laymen with a nodding acquaintance of biology and doctors in all fields should get enjoyment from this book. Medical historians will find something here worth considering but may regret the absence of references. It is in dealing with the recent past that Dr Baldry is at his best, and it is here that references would have been most useful.

The syndrome of coronary thrombosis was not mentioned in the textbooks of the twenties and was not then taught in the medical school of Edinburgh University; yet it had been recognised many years before. Why was this? Dr Baldry states the facts. He shows that coronary thrombosis has been rapidly increasing as a cause of death during recent years but is unable to give a satisfactory answer to the problem of its comparative neglect. Contrast the advances in surgery of the heart. Tentative approaches were made before the first world war, but surgical advances had to wait on the advances in the art of anaesthesia which only came in the late forties.

Since then the progress has been almost breath-

taking. Is it that the surgeon has an inborn flair for publicity which the physician lacks?

Short pen-portraits of those who contributed to the study of the heart are included and these are often, with advantage, illustrated in the margins of the book. There are one or two small slips. The process of vulcanizing rubber was discovered by Thomas Hancock and Charles Mackintosh in this country and by Charles Goodyear in America in 1820, and not by Goodyear alone in 1844. The date is important as the benefit to science and to our creature comforts which flowed from the discovery are incalculable. William Hunter died in 1783 and so could not have written anything material in 1785; this may be a printer's error but no others were noticed in this handsomely produced and tastefully illustrated book. The publishers are to be congratulated on keeping the price within reasonable bounds.

Health and sickness: the choice of treatment.

WADSWORTH, M. E. J., B.A., M.Phil., BUTTERFIELD, W. J. H., O.B.E., M.A., D.M., F.R.C.P. & BLANEY, R., M.D., D.P.H., 1971. First edition, p. 114. London: Tavistock Publications. Price: £2.00.

The results of a survey of a sample of just over 2,000 people who live in two London boroughs around Guy's Hospital are reported. Information about their complaints over the previous 14 days and their means of dealing with these were elicited.

While accepting the peculiarities of the sample used in the survey, particularly those of "an old and well established working class area", useful comments are made about modern problems of medical practice. It was interesting to read of the large amount of ill health that was not reported to the medical services but reassuring that 69 per cent of the sample felt that their health was good or perfect. The amount of self-medication was also examined in detail.

A book of this nature draws the attention of doctors to the great gaps in our knowledge about what occurs in patients' minds before presenting symptoms, and sometimes diagnoses to their doctors. Many questions are raised and suggestions made as to future lines of research, much of which could well involve general practitioners. For those who are interested in the natural history of disease this is essential reading.

A colour atlas of oro-facial diseases. L. W. KAY, F.D.S., R.C.S., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., and R. HASKELL, M.R.C.P., F.D.S., R.C.S. 1971, London: Wolfe Medical Books. Price: £3.25.

General practitioners are not always at their best when confronted with disorders inside the mouth. These difficulties stem partly from