

however, like to make a final point. No such survey of homes and their residents can be complete without also a medical and psychiatric assessment in greater detail than the broad classifications used in this report. With this proviso, the study is a most useful one.

Mother and child health. Delivering the services.

CICELY D. WILLIAMS & DERRICK B. JELLIFFE.
Pp. 164 + ix. Oxford: O.U.P. Price: £2.20.

There can be few Europeans who have a greater experience of tropical paediatrics than the joint authors of this book: and the book points the lessons of their experience. It is, however, 'not intended to be an inclusive textbook nor to give details of programmes or clinical management' but 'rather to present a point of view and a practical philosophy'. What interest, other than as travellers' tales, can such experience possibly have for European maternal and child health services?

At first sight there may appear to be little that the health problems facing the Yoruba and the Liverpoolian mother have in common. It is the major achievement of this book that, out of the experience of the tropics, it throws new light on many of the problems we face ourselves in organising medical care.

Themes run through the book. The worldwide importance of intelligently defining local health needs, of establishing priorities, and (often) of simplifying health care. "Until recently it was assumed that 'teaching hospital' medicine was the only worthwhile goal. Developments all over the world clearly show that adaptive services, aimed to identify and help those most at risk, to simplify health care and to train and supervise auxiliaries are vital." The necessity to match skills to needs thus constantly emerges.

Medicine is set firmly in its social context. 'Medical care exists not merely to treat disease but to look after man in his environment'. Practice must be adapted to its social setting—must understand the inbuilt attitudes and values of those it serves. Here the expatriate worker is at an advantage—for it is easier to notice the 'peculiar' customs and behaviour of an alien society than to see one's own presuppositions. (He is forced, also, to realise that charity of itself solves few problems of any size—that while it may be comfortable for the donor it is often degrading to the recipient, and is not so effective as the intelligent harnessing of local resources—some lessons for the welfare state here).

Medical care is a unity; there are no valid lines to be drawn between 'preventive' and 'curative' services. Where, for administrative convenience, such lines are drawn they have a habit of producing gaps, inadequacies, and overlap. Medical care is a

unity with other social activity—it cannot be divorced from issues of population control, environment, and food production: the temptation to 'oversell' it at the expense of these must be resisted. Medical care is a unity in that it must be concerned with the whole person not simply his disease.

The implications of such themes for medical education extend right across the board. Are we, in the western world, really providing the most relevant patterns of education for nurses, health visitors, midwives, social workers, and auxiliary health workers of all sorts? Are we educating the embryo physician to see a bit further than the blood sugar level or the end of the microscope? The answer inevitably is often 'No': and experience derived from less highly developed countries has much to teach us in the refashioning of priorities.

One is left with the conviction that to spend some time working in the tropics as a preparation for practice in this country is perhaps not as crazy as it looks at first sight. And left, too, with the hope that this book will be read widely.

Treatment and care in mental illness (1971).

Edited by EDITH RUDINGER. Pp. 168. London: Consumers' Association. Price: 75p.

This paperback is written for the layman. The foreword states the intention of counteracting the fear of mental illness and the shunning of the mentally ill by describing what is known of the subject.

This it does admirably, avoiding unnecessary technical terms and giving a great deal of factual information about agencies helping the mentally ill and their families. It gives clear descriptions of most psychiatric illnesses, and the various forms of treatment available are discussed without evident bias. The chapters are anonymous, but much has obviously been written or inspired by a sound psychiatrist. The sections on old age and on drug dependence are particularly good.

Few criticisms need be made. No mention is made of the fact that the Marriage Guidance Council is a voluntary body, though that status is correctly awarded to Alcoholics Anonymous and the Samaritans. An amusing misprint occurs on p. 67, where increasing age is said to bring with it an increasing realisation of ones own *morality*. On p. 162 psychoanalysis is said to occupy five sessions a week of an hour each: in most analyses it is 50 minutes.

All in all, this is a safe and excellent book to put into the hands of an intelligent patient or those of his family who may have the responsibility and anxiety of his care.