

Book Reviews

Africa and Oceania, China and Japan. These are useful, wide-ranging surveys which provide the historian of medicine and science with the background to his studies. Unfortunately, at times, however, political and ideological undertones can be detected, as for example Professor Zvorkine's glosses (pp. 1008–1009) and similar commentaries on other chapters. Clearly some of the contributors and commentators are not writing objective history, which of course means that the non-expert, not being able to judge, is likely to be misled.

The historian of medicine and science will be most interested in Parts I and II which contain wide and sweeping surveys. As far as medicine is concerned, the chapter dealing with it ('Man: his health and behaviour', pp. 240–280) is by the late Professor Richard Shryock. It is based on an essay in G. S. Métraux and F. Crouzet, *The nineteenth century world* (1963) which had appeared earlier in *J. World Hist.* Although it is an excellent piece, there have been additions to knowledge and re-interpretations have been made since it was written, but these have not been included. A good deal of the rest of these parts is also somewhat dated.

An equally serious defect which pervades the book is the rarity of references, essential for a treatise that intends to be a work of reference. It seems that UNESCO, under whose auspices the whole series has been produced, was unable to be of assistance in the final stages and the bibliography and two final chapters had to be sacrificed, perhaps an additional feature of political intrusion (see *Science*, 26 November 1976, p. 897).

Another curious feature is the method of editorial comment. Instead of the experts' opinions being used to modify statements in the text which are considered erroneous or distorted, they are gathered at the end of the chapters. This is also probably the result of international authorship, being the only way that the opinions of both writers and editors could be recorded, and it suggests that, at the moment the unbiased multi-national treatise on history cannot be achieved.

However, despite the fact that this work must be used with caution, the publishers should be congratulated on producing well-printed and illustrated volumes which are a credit to British publishing.

WAYLAND D. HAND (editor), *American folk medicine. A symposium*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, University of California Press, 1976, 8vo, pp. viii, 347, illus., £10.35.

The twenty-five papers that comprise this book were presented at a symposium held in December 1973. The authors represent a number of fields and the articles cover a very wide variety of topics. Each is a scholarly contribution with excellent documentation, and the book as a whole is a repository of information, a function it will retain for some time. It will probably be used more for reference purposes than for continuous reading, and in this regard there is a full index. Because of the multi-disciplinary nature of its contents it will be consulted by a large number of individuals. As the editor suggests, it should induce communication and closer contact between investigators from the various fields represented. In addition, it may further encourage the growing popularity of folk medicine, probably a beneficial side-effect as long as modern methods of diagnosis and treatment are not eschewed.