BOOK REVIEW

Arthritis and Allied Conditions. A Textbook of Rheumatology. Edited by Joseph Lee Hollander. 6th ed., 1960. Pp. 1306. Kimpton, London. (150s.)

The sixth edition of this well-established textbook, originally based on Comroe's "Arthritis", has been largely re-written and nineteen new chapters have been added. The contributors include many of the leading authorities in the sphere of rheumatic diseases in North America and the volume is packed with up-to-date expert views in this field.

Dr. John Lansbury has a new chapter on methods of evaluating rheumatoid arthritis. This is a most important subject in view of the many clinical trials of anti-rheumatic drugs which are now being carried out. The author has given a clear summary of the present position, pointing out many inadequacies in the methods in use at the present time. He gives stimulating ideas for improvement in techniques though the reviewer doubts whether morning stiffness can yet be measured.

Dr. E. P. Engleman has an excellent chapter on the basic treatment of rheumatoid arthritis, pointing out the necessity for systemic, emotional, and articular rest with good advice on analgesics and diet.

Dr. J. J. Bunim has contributed a first-class review of the chemistry, physiology, and metabolic effects of corticosteroids, and has included the new work on the cortisol-binding protein transcortin as well as the latest views on absorption and distribution of steroids and of the metabolic fate and excretion of these substances. This is one of the outstanding chapters in the book. He also has an excellent chapter on the use of synthetic corticosteroids in rheumatoid arthritis, including the clinical considerations, limitations, and adverse effects with most helpful advice on individual steroid preparations.

Dr. Hollander himself, from his large experience, has written most wisely on the value of intra-articular steroid therapy with helpful diagrams and photographs showing methods of injection for various joints. He deals sensibly with the recent reports that "Charcot's arthropathy" may occur after this treatment, pointing out that it is a possibility and that careful radiological supervision is necessary. In his very large series the incidence of this complication is a fraction of 1 per cent.

Dr. Wallace Graham has a wise chapter on the relation-

ship of infection to rheumatoid arthritis, pointing out the absence of any controlled observations as to the validity of this theory; yet, as he says, "As long as the cause of rheumatoid arthritis is unknown, the possible role of as yet unknown infectious agents remains a possibility."

The diffuse connective tissue diseases, systemic lupus erythematosus, polyarteritis, and dermatomyositis are superbly covered by Dr. L. E. Shulman and Dr. Harvey, with clear descriptions of the clinical and pathological features. They point out that the introduction of corticotrophin and cortisone provided the first significant advance in the management of patients with systemic lupus erythematosus, but that the basic disease process is not fundamentally altered by these drugs. They observe that the relationship between polyarteritis and rheumatoid arthritis is not yet clearly understood. They discuss at length the role of peripheral neuritis in polyarteritis and in rheumatoid arthritis treated with steroids and quote the opinion of Sokoloff and Bunim, that "Polyarteritis in rheumatoid arthritis may be interpreted as an exaggerated form of rheumatoid arthritis rather than an independent finding."

There is an excellent chapter on gout and the newer uricosuric agents by Dr. C. J. Smyth, who points out the curious paradoxical effect of salicylates which in small doses raise the serum uric acid level yet in very large doses cause uricosuria.

The one disappointing section of this textbook is that on degenerative joint disease. Admittedly there is not nearly so much clinical or pathological research being undertaken in this field as in rheumatoid arthritis or the diffuse connective tissue diseases, but out of 1,280 pages only about fifty are devoted to the very common condition of osteoarthritis. Phenylbutazone, which is used so widely, is covered in only a few lines of the text.

Dr. Joseph Hollander and his team of contributing editors are to be heartily congratulated on the new edition of this magnificent volume. The book has grown in size owing to the increasing interest of the whole medical profession and to the increasing amount of research which is being carried out. No physician or surgeon with an interest in this large group of common diseases can afford to be without this book.

OSWALD SAVAGE.

BRITISH COUNCIL

The following is a resumé of a paper given by Prof. Nestorov and Dr. Sachkov, of the Academy of Medical Sciences of Moscow, entitled "An Elaboration of a Special Method for the Diagnosis of Rheumatic Fever and the Degree of its Activity".

The most important deficiency of the known methods for the diagnosis of rheumatic fever is their non-specificity.

When considering rheumatic fever and other collagen diseases as auto-immune diseases, in the pathogenesis of which streptococcal infection plays the main part, we