arranged logically, and is considerably enhanced by clear and attractive line drawings by W. Brennan. The reader is not plunged into a mass of detail on individual aids but asked first, Is a hoist really necessary? While few doctors will require detailed knowledge of individual hoists, slings, and accessories, most working with patients with mobility problems would find this chapter a highly readable source of information on transferring and on toileting difficulties and their solution. This information obviously derives from Miss Tarling's experience in the Disabled Living Foundation and the Newcastle Aids Centre, and indicates the value of aids centres. Such advice is not easily obtainable elsewhere. The book deals with the use of hoists in virtually every situation, in hospital, at home, at work, and in transit. It should be available in all departments of rehabilitation, to all who are concerned with the ordering of hoists, and all who must use them, in which case its use should be reinforced by practical training.

M. A. CHAMBERLAIN


'The field of rheumatology', write the 4 highly distinguished editors, 'has come of age. . . . The time has now come for a major new textbook in rheumatology.' Striving for an authoritative, comprehensive reference book, they have indeed produced a massive work, the single volume measuring 11 1/2 inches by 9 inches by 3 inches and weighing nearly 12 lb. No fewer than 124 contributors have written its 2054 pages, made up of 24 major sections divided into 123 chapters. The first 4 sections are general—Scientific Basis of Rheumatology; General Approach to the Patient; Diagnostic Tests; Clinical Pharmacology. Sections 5 to 21 describe the various rheumatological entities. The last 3 sections deal with Medical Orthopaedics, Rehabilitation, and Reconstructive Surgery.

Beyond any doubt we must congratulate the editors on the successful completion of their immense task of design, compilation, and integration, no less than the publishers on the production of a book of very good quality indeed. By present-day standards the price is not excessive.

The disadvantages of the book, from which its sheer size in no way protects it, perhaps the reverse, are those inherent in any multi-author work. Pursuit of a single entity involves consulting different sections. Thus an overall view of gout will necessitate reading Chapter 21 (Purine and Deoxypurine Metabolism), Chapter 33 (Approach to the Patient with Hyperuricaemia), Chapter 38 (Synovial Fluid Analysis), Chapter 39 (Diagnostic Radiology), Chapter 50 (Nonsteroidal Antirheumatic Drugs), Chapter 56 (Antipyrinicaemic Drugs), Chapter 57 (Colchicine), and Chapter 86 (Gout and Related Disorders of Purine Metabolism). Examples of overlap are not difficult to find, and indeed the editors declare their belief that some repetition is appropriate and necessary. Minor inconsistencies and omissions are also hardly avoidable. For example, an inquiry into Kashin-Beck disease will reveal on p. 346 that it is due to toxicity by the fungus Fusarium sporotrichella but on p. 1542 that it is secondary to iron intake in drinking water. The reader will search in vain for an account of osteonecrosis as a not uncommon complication of systemic lupus erythematous; it is not mentioned in the chapters on SLE and its management, while it has only a brief mention (though with a reference) in the chapter on osteonecrosis.

It all depends on whether you care for textbooks, big ones in particular. Some will value the book highly as the culmination of reference books in the field of rheumatic diseases. Others may be less enthusiastic, regarding it as a kind of literary dinosaur. Still, dinosaurs were pretty successful in their day, dominating the earth for 140 million years, which gives plenty of time for future editions.

J. T. SCOTT


Very substantial advances have been made in understanding the physiology and pharmacology of prostaglandins in the last 10 years. The clinical significance of many of the findings remains uncertain but vigorously suggestive, and is discussed at numerous symposia. The present volume is the proceedings of such a symposium held in Paris in September 1979.

The chapters on arachidonate metabolism and granulomatous inflammation, on prostaglandins and the synovial membrane, and on synthetase inhibitors as therapeutic agents are those most likely to be of interest to rheumatologists. However, a more recent account of anti-inflammatory drugs and arachidonic acid metabolism was given at the Wembley conference on Clinical Pharmacology, held in August 1980, and has already appeared in print, so the present volume is not the most up-to-date account available. Most of the book is concerned with cardiovascular disturbances, renal function and disturbances of pregnancy and childbirth, and gastrointestinal and pulmonary function. It will appeal to those with very broad interests or with special involvement with prostaglandin synthesis, and the information it contains will probably be largely superseded in a few years.

M. WEATHERALL


As a medical student recently completing my time on a rheumatology firm I found this book to be of tremendous value in succinctly describing the diseases seen in the clinics and on the wards. The chapters on the examination of joints and laboratory investigations are indispensable for the undergraduate and in this respect could be better placed at the beginning.
Prostaglandin Synthetase Inhibitors

M. Weatherall

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