depending on ACTH and the glyco-corticoids inhibits inflammatory response; whereas the other depending on different pituitary principles and the mineralo-corticoids produces it. The type of response depends on "conditioning circumstances", such as heredity, dietary factors, and previous exposure to various pathogens, etc. The endocrine kidney is described in this lecture.

The fifth deals with the effects of overdosage of the prothogistic (DCA, etc.) and antithogistic (corticoid) hormones, and the role of "interhormonal tension" in disease; the antagonism between these two groups of hormones is propounded as a cause of disease. Much of the evidence is based on the production of topical irritation arthritis and its investigation with combinations of hormones, a method the validity of which has been questioned by later workers. The author believes that the diseases of adaptation are due not to hormones alone, nor to any one pathogen alone, but to the development of "pathogenic situations in which many factors participate".

The sixth lecture is largely made up of illustrations from the author's experiments, and the last summarizes his ideas on how the adaptation syndrome functions in the pathogenesis of diseases—in some of which, such as tuberculosis, the cause is known, whereas in others, such as "rheumatism", it is obscure.

This is a new theory of medicine which has been much criticized because so little of it is as yet factual, and because the few facts proved by animal experiment have led to theories so complicated that they are difficult to follow, but the isolation of cortisone and ACTH has focused much medical interest upon it. Professor

Selye has condensed his theories and the known facts supporting them into a very readable small book with excellent diagrams and illustrations. The subject is controversial, but no one is in a position to criticize the ideas without studying at least these few lectures.

O. SAVAGE.

Untoward Reactions of Cortisone and ACTH. By Vincent J. Derbes and Thomas E. Weiss. 1952. Blackwell Scientific Publications, Oxford. Pp. 51. (8s. 6d.)

Knowledge of both the desirable and the undesirable effects of ACTH and cortisone has steadily increased during the last two years, but much has yet to be learned. The authors have performed a most useful task in summarizing the available information regarding the untoward effects which may arise as a result of the administration of either hormone. They present a brief review of the known physiological responses, followed by discussion of disturbances which may arise in relation to the endocrine system, electrolytes, cardiovascular system, musculoskeletal system, skin and mucous membranes, central nervous system, and gastro-intestinal tract.

A useful chapter deals with the use of ACTH and cortisone in infections, brief mention being made of some of the precautions which should be adopted.

In view of the increasing use of these powerful hormones in a wide variety of clinical conditions, this book will prove a welcome contribution to the literature on the subject, although its scope is limited. A useful list of references is given. J. J. R. DUTHIE.

LIGUE EUROPÉENNE CONTRE LE RHUMATISME

STICHTING AMSTERDAMS CENTRUM VOOR RHEUMATIEKBESTRIJDING

The 1951 report from the above department shows the great increase in the work undertaken since its formation in 1925. Between 1938 and 1951 the number of consultations has doubled and three peripheral clinics have been established.

This polyclinic, which was started with the object of treating patients by physical methods, has become a consultation centre working in close liaison with the Municipal Health Service. It is hoped eventually to provide a centre for every 100,000 inhabitants. The report stresses the importance of such departments being easily accessible to patients to assist early diagnosis.

Social hygiene and preventive measures have always been a prominent feature in the Amsterdam Rheumatism Clinic and advice on orthopaedic measures to

prevent deformity are given at an early stage in treatment.

Home treatment for patients too crippled to come to the centre is carried out by a specially-trained district nurse who supervises physiotherapy and gold treatment and the general welfare of the patients. The physician-in-charge in association with an architect has made a survey of the houses in the city of patients undergoing treatment who had complained of damp or draughty dwelling conditions.

Medical staff meetings are held regularly and special lectures have been delivered by members of the staff.

Dr. van Breemen's friends all over the world will be delighted to read of the great progress made by this clinic which he started many years ago and has worked for so hard and so consistently. O.S.