BOOK REVIEWS

Beiträge zur Rheumatologie. Vol. XIII. By H. TICHY and K. SEIDEL, 1969. Pp. 207, 54 figs. Veb Verlag Volk und Gesundheit, Berlin. (D.M. 60.80).

The thirteenth volume of the *Beiträge* covers the proceedings of the meeting of German and Czecho-Slovak rheumatologists in Bad Elster (June 1-3, 1967) and is largely devoted to rheumatoid arthritis in all its aspects. Of the 207 pages, 46 are taken up with the problems of early diagnosis. Several speakers stressed the importance of recognizing the disease as early as possible. Its diagnosis in the first year of illness, it was pointed out, resulted in complete recovery or marked improvement in 70 per cent. of cases, but if the condition was unrecognized until the second year this figure fell to below 30 per cent. However, in spite of much advice and a great display of erudition, the impression left was that, in the absence of joint swelling, early diagnosis depended on the degree of awareness of the clinician.

Serology, now an integral part of rheumatology, takes up 17 pages and includes an interesting survey by N. Svartz (*Stockholm*) which ends with a plea for more study of the rheumatoid factor phenomenon. Other contributors deal with the medical treatment of the disease, physiotherapy, balneotherapy, differential diagnosis, and orthopaedic procedures. The last includes a paper on supracondylar osteotomy for the correction of knee contractures, sometimes combined with synovectomy.

This volume has the usual pleasant format of the *Beiträge* series. It is provided with a table of contents, and an illustrated appendix of photographs, histology, cytology, etc. (but not in colour).

DAVID PREISKEL

Fluorescent Protein Tracing. By R. C. NAIRN. 3rd ed., 1969. Pp. 303, 80 figs. Livingstone, Edinburgh. (£3).

Immunofluorescence has become so essential a part of the microbiological and immunological investigation of disease that diagnostic and hospital laboratories which cannot or do not deploy immunofluorescent techniques are placing an intolerable burden on those that can and do. Prof. R. C. Nairn's book, available since 1962 to guide and advise, now reaches its third, and best, edition, and the reasons for its success are plain to see. Immunofluorescent methods of identification and

localization cover a field which has grown so wide that it embraces protozoa, helminths, fungi, viruses, and rickettsiae, and tissue antigens and antibodies. Yet with the help, in this edition, only of Prof. K. B. Fraser on viruses, Nairn again displays his remarkable gift for putting flesh on the bare bones of technique, and making plain how and where immunofluorescence is most readily and profitably applied in all these different fields. With this experience at his disposal, and this industry as example, even the most reluctant exponent of immunofluorescence must surely take heart, and have a go.

E. J. HOLBOROW

Die Rheumasprechstunde. By WERNER OTTO. 1969. Pp. 158, 34 figs. Fischer Verlag, Jena. (£1 6s. 7d.).

A handy book for use in the doctor's surgery must necessarily be compact and often dogmatic. The first desideratum has been achieved by compressing a mass of information into about 140 pages of text, but the second inevitably lays any author open to accusations of perpetrating sins of omission and sins of commission.

Very sensibly, the book opens with a foreword on rheumatism in general and a classification of rheumatic conditions in particular. It goes on to describe the process of history-taking, the functional assessment of the patient, laboratory investigations, and even the technique of diagnostic puncture of joints. Each disease is then dealt with in detail (beginning with the doyen, rheumatic fever), with comments on aetiology, pathological anatomy, epidemiology, symptomatology, differential diagnosis, and treatment. Photographs, x-ray plates, tables of differential diagnosis, etc., all help to guide the practitioner through a host of difficulties. In this respect, the book largely fulfils the aim of its author. On the other hand, some may wonder why it is still necessary to retain the term "fibrositis" for conditions affecting soft tissues when the popularity of this term in scientific circles has declined with passing years and increasing knowledge; others may be surprised to find that uricosuric agents and allopurinol have no place in the treatment of chronic gout. Such defects will no doubt be rectified in the next edition.

In addition to a table of contents, the book has an index and a small bibliography of German authors.

DAVID PREISKEL