Canadian Arthritis and Rheumatism Society, Handbooks for Patients, 1952.

(1) What you should know about Arthritis. Pp. 12. (10 *cts.*)

(2) Rheumatoid Arthritis. Pp. 24, 11 illus. (20 *cts.*)

In the first pamphlet the general problem of arthritis and rheumatism is discussed sensibly and in sufficient detail to cover many of the points which will be raised by the patients and their relatives. It is pointed out that rheumatoid arthritis is a disease of the whole body and not only of the joints, and that treatment consists of a carefully balanced programme of rest combined with exercise and may include more specialized types of treatment such as gold salts, cortisone, and orthopaedic measures. There are excellent short descriptions of ankylosing spondylitis, osteo-arthritis, fibrositis, and rheumatic fever, which are encouraging rather than depressing, but face the facts with reality.

A general chapter points out certain features of the rheumatic group of diseases which are important for the patient to know: That correct diagnosis is the key to successful treatment; that generalizations with regard to the rheumatic group of diseases are dangerous; that different treatment is necessary for each type of rheumatic disease; that there is no evidence that any special form of food or diet cures any of this group of diseases; that many kinds of rheumatism never disable; and that although cortisone and ACTH have not proved so easy to use or so successful as was hoped at first, they have opened up new avenues for research.

The second pamphlet deals with rheumatoid arthritis alone and in more detail, giving advice and encouragement as well as practical points in treatment and explaining the reason for some of the measures undertaken. There is an excellent chapter on the need for adequate rest, the best positions of the body during rest to prevent deformity, and simple methods of applying heat, and a section on therapeutic exercises from which the physician can pick the ones required. More specific measures such as gold and hormone treatment are described, with reasons why they form only part of the whole regime and an explanation of some of the dangers which may necessitate their being stopped.

There is also a small illustrated section on self-help devices, including valuable gadgets for putting on socks and shoes, simple eating utensils for deformed hands, and other measures to help the arthritic overcome his disabilities.

These pamphlets were designed by the Canadian Arthritis and Rheumatism Society particularly for patients with rheumatic disease in Canada but they could be used with benefit throughout the English-speaking world. In a few pages they give sensible and encouraging advice and are a model of the type of written instruction, which may be handed out by the doctor to the patient.

OSWALD SAVAGE.

Arthritis and Rheumatism—The Patient's Guide to Treatment. By David E. Rodger and G. M. Miller.

1952. Pp. 72, 52 illus. Burns and MacEachern, Toronto.

This small book has received the approval of the Canadian Arthritis and Rheumatism Society whose

objects and organization are listed as its third part. As the foreword states, its aim is to help the patient understand his disease and to give simple advice on treatment, particularly to those who may be isolated from medical help for long periods in a Canadian winter. The first two parts are by the doctor and the physiotherapist and it is difficult to say which is the better. The doctor gives sensible short descriptions of the commoner rheumatic diseases, and his comments on the drugs used in treatment are in line with modern concepts except for his pessimism about the value of gold salts. Diet, climate, physiotherapy, and the approach of the patient to his disease are treated with sagacity. In the physiotherapist's story her aspect of the various conditions is well stated though non-articular rheumatism is dismissed in only a few lines. Practical advice on such subjects as clothing, footwear, crutches, posture, and simple methods of applying heat are excellent. A series of exercises is well described, many with illustrations, but their application might have been clarified if the rheumatic conditions in which they are particularly appropriate had been named.

The authors are to be congratulated on producing a book full of wisdom and with good encouraging advice which may be read with advantage by many patients suffering from rheumatic disease and also by doctors and physiotherapists.

OSWALD SAVAGE.

The Merck Index. Sixth edition, 1952. Pp. 1169. Merck and Co., Inc., Rahway, N.J., U.S.A. (\$7.50 thumb index edition \$8.)

This work needs no introduction to those engaged in research problems with a chemical background. From its first appearance in 1889 its usefulness was assured, and each successive edition has grown in size in proportion with the ever-widening fields of chemistry. That it should reach its sixth edition is proof of its popularity and the soundness of its contents, and the demand for the present edition has already been so great as to necessitate a second printing of 25,000 copies.

The work has been completely revised and now contains more than 8,000 descriptions of individual substances, more than 2,000 structural formulae, and about 20,000 names of chemicals and drugs alphabetically arranged and cross-indexed. New features include a table of standard buffers for the calibration of pH measurements; a table of radioactive isotopes giving their half lives and type of radiation; and a table of names in current medical use for radioactive elements and components.

Each main entry indicates the preferred chemical name, other chemical names, common or popular names, generic and trade names. Trade-mark listing is as complete as possible and thoroughly cross-indexed.

A new section contains more than 300 organic "Name" reactions with original and review references, together with a description and structural representation of each reaction. There is an up-to-date periodic table, a table of international atomic weights, and close on 150 pages of appendices on such subjects as coal-tar colours, thermometric equivalents, anti-freeze mixtures,