BOOK REVIEW

Rheumatic Diseases. By Eugene F. Traut. 1952. Pp. 942. Mosby, St. Louis, U.S.A.

The preface of this book on rheumatic diseases explains that so wide a subject cannot be a "compilation of the discoveries of the author", but must "attempt to assemble material accepted as factual by current authorities". "It must also contain controversial subject matter."

We are promised that currently-used treatment will be "considered critically and even with the prejudice born of personal experience". This promise is redeemed frequently throughout the book.

The author presents an uncompromising condemnation of gold as a therapeutic agent in the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis. He feels that the heyday of chrysotherapy has passed, that enthusiasm for its exhibition is waning, and that it is questionable whether its use is worthy of extensive consideration. Emphasizing the toxic reactions he says:

"In general the less gold given the less the likelihood of poisoning. (This could be reduced to nil by abstaining from gold)."

The "prejudice born of personal experience" which makes the author discountenance gold so whole-heartedly would seem to be at work again in his considered support of the value of vaccine therapy. Certain it is that, were he presenting material "accepted as factual by current authorities", those authorities would subscribe overwhelmingly to the opinion that the heyday of vaccine therapy had passed, that enthusiasm for its exhibition had already waned, and that it was questionable whether its use was worthy of extensive consideration.

Throughout the book, interesting clinical experiences are cited in support of this or that contention, but nowadays clinical impressions require to be supported by concrete observations and "factual findings".

There are interesting chapters on "Symptoms, Findings and Diagnosis of Joint Disease" and on "Rheumatic Diseases of the Back"—to mention only two. There is an unusual chapter on joint deformity in immobilized extremities secondary to neurological disturbance or "fixation apparatus". Selected contributors present special chapters on the psychological factors in rheumatoid arthritis, the collagen diseases, the skin, ocular manifestations, roentgen therapy, the prevention of deformity, and the surgery of arthritis. The section on "Histopathology of Muscle in Rheumatoid Arthritis and Other Diseases" has been written by the author in collaboration with a colleague.

The large number of acknowledgements tends to mask the fact that the author would seem to have contributed 754 pages of the text out of a total of 896 pages (and will no doubt have been responsible for most of the 46 pages of an excellent index). It is obvious that he has contributed much more to the book which bears his name than is often the case in this type of publication.

He has attempted to arrange the book so that the aetiology of joint diseases *as a whole* is dealt with in one section. Similarly, the general symptoms and general treatment of joint diseases are presented in separate sections. In these sections attention is called to the special features or requirements for specific conditions where they differ from the general principles laid down. The object of this was to avoid repetition, but despite this laudable object (and how tiresome the repetition of so many of these modern "edited" books can be), there is still a good deal of reiteration throughout the book—some of it inevitable.

The book is well produced with many good illustrations and charts, and the printing is excellent.

J. W. T. PATTERSON.

FIRST CHAIR OF RHEUMATOLOGY IN BRAZIL

A professorship in rheumatology has been founded at the Post-Graduate School of Medicine of the University of Brazil. Dr. Jacques Houli has been elected as the

first professor, and the first regular course will be held during 1954.

BRITISH RHEUMATIC ASSOCIATION

The sixth Annual General Meeting was held on October 27, 1953, under the chairmanship of the Rt. Hon. Tom Williams, M.P. Reports were presented of a year's useful work in promoting the welfare of rheumatic

sufferers and assisting the disabled to find occupation and employment. Further particulars of the society and its work may be had from the Secretary, 11 Beaumont Street, London, W.1.