BOOK REVIEWS

Le Rhumatisme. Études cliniques, biologiques, et thérapeutiques (3e Série). By F. Coste and 29 other contributors. 1954. Pp. 388, illustrated. Expansion Scientifique Française, Paris. (30s.)

Osbert Sitwell tells us that when writing the *Four Continents* he was tempted to call the book *Voyage round the Inside of My Head*. Professor Coste's books are like voyages round the inside of the Clinique Cochin. The style is both personal and intimate. Original clinical and experimental observations are described and therapeutic results given in detail with case histories and individual charts. To visit Professor Coste's clinic through the pages of these books is a pleasant, stimulating, and instructive experience, though unfortunately one misses the gastronomic and other delights that a sojourn in Paris would provide.

In this third volume Professor Coste and his 29 collaborators discuss five subjects: osteo-arthritis of the hip, gout, viruses in rheumatism, cortisone, and cranial defects.

The classification of osteo-arthritis of the hip into upper, lower, and central lesions is convincingly presented, and one gets the impression that this provides a useful guide to prognosis and management. Benemid is shown to be an effective uricosuric agent in chronic gout, but salicylate therapy is not seriously considered. The Coxsackie viruses and their relationship to epidemic myalgia and other clinical syndromes is fully discussed and the recovery of the virus from human muscle biopsies is reported. Non-specific urethritis is also fully considered. Various therapeutic régimes are discussed in great detail and, though the results are well controlled, in the French sense, by radiological and biochemical studies, no attempt has been made to compare one treatment with another in similar series of cases, so that it is difficult to assess the relative value of the different treatments advocated. Professor Coste's experience is, however, wide and his opinions are authoritative.

J. H. KELLGREN.

Behandlung rheumatologischer Erkrankungen durch Anästhesie. By Egon Fenz. 1955. Pp. 100, 18 illus. *Rheumatismus*, vol. 20. Steinkopf, Darmstadt.

This volume discusses general and local anaesthesia (novocaine) in rheumatic affections, though the indications cited range far outside the field of rheumatology. Much space is taken up by theoretical consideration of the effect of local anaesthesia on muscle tone, muscle wasting, cholinesterase activity, inflammation, etc., but the practical conclusions are based on an experience of 4,116 cases (eight injections each). It is claimed, for instance, that appreciable relief from pain is obtained in cases of ankylosing spondylitis, osteomalacia, and osteoporosis. It is unfortunate that a comprehensive volume

of this kind should be marred by a series of poor line diagrams which offer little help to any prospective operator.

DAVID PREISKEL.

Pelvo-Spondylitis Ossificans. By Ragnar Romanus and Sven Ydén. 1955. Pp. 161, 229 figs. Munksgaard, Copenhagen. (Dan. Kr. 45.)

When studying prostatitis and seminal vesiculitis in 1947, Ragnar Romanus noted that two of his patients also suffered from ankylosing spondylitis. Batson's work on the direct spread of carcinoma cells from the prostate to the region of the sacro-iliac joints made him wonder whether the early localization of ankylosing spondylitis in the sacro-iliac joints was not similarly dependent upon a primary focus (infective) in the prostate. In the following years, he investigated every available male case of ankylosing spondylitis for evidence, past or present, of a genito-urinary infection. He was surprisingly successful in finding such evidence and published his comprehensive thesis on the aetiology of ankylosing spondylitis—with special reference to genito-urinary infection—in 1953. During his study he learned a great deal about the disease, both from the clinical aspect and, with the help of Sven Ydén, from the radiological aspect. In the book under review Ydén and Romanus have set down their accumulated knowledge and add seventy pages of excellent reproductions of interesting x-ray films. What stands out in the book is their contention that the extra-articular bony and connective tissue lesions are at least as important as the lesions of the diarthrodial joints and are just as productive of symptoms. They demonstrate, with x-ray films and histological sections, that the ossification that occurs about the vertebrae may follow erosions and remodelling of the cortical bone in a manner similar to that commonly seen in the tuber ischii. In order to give due emphasis to this extra-articular bony disease of the spine and pelvis they propose a new name "pelvo-spondylitis ossificans". It is an attractive name but it is doubtful whether yet another name for the disease will be accepted unless it results from the discovery of its aetiology.

In discussing the aetiology of the disease, Romanus returns to his thesis that it is caused by an infective agent or toxin that spreads directly *via* the blood stream from an infected prostate or seminal vesicle. The patient inherits a susceptibility to the unknown agent, and the original genital infection may be silent. This subject occupies little space in the book, and sceptics should not let it deter them from studying the wealth of material and the interesting observations that are so well set forth. All doctors interested in ankylosing spondylitis will appreciate this book and it should find a place in the bookshelves of every department of radiology.

H. F. WEST.