

BOOK REVIEWS

Simple Splinting. The Use of Light Splints and Related Conservative Therapy in Joint Diseases.

By JEROME ROTSTEIN (1965). Pp. 126. Saunders, Philadelphia and London. (£2 5s).

This book opens with a chapter on the history of the treatment of arthritis which makes fascinating reading and provides a valuable background to the principles of treatment described in the following pages. A conservative therapeutic regimen for the rheumatoid patient is outlined in Chapter II. This is followed by a chapter on the anatomy and classification of joints. The main section describes in detail the techniques employed in the manufacture of splints. This is profusely illustrated with excellent photographs showing each stage in the process. The next chapter describes the materials used and the accessory apparatus required. Finally an outline is given of the pharmacological treatment of rheumatoid arthritis.

There will be general agreement with the approach to treatment described and with the emphasis placed on the value of splints in the conservative care of the joints in rheumatoid arthritis.

This small volume contains a wealth of information of immediate practical value in organizing the day-to-day management of the rheumatoid patient. It will be of particular interest to those not yet familiar with the techniques of splint-making and the wide variety of materials now available. The commercial sources of splinting material given in this book are American, but the majority are readily available in Great Britain. J. J. R. DUTHIE

Physical Examination of the Joints. By WILLIAM P. BEETHAM, HOWARD F. POLLEY, CHARLES H. SLOCUMB, and WALT F. WEAVER. Pp. 198. Saunders, Philadelphia and London.

An up-to-date English language manual on how to examine the spine and joints is much needed, and this book should appeal to many readers for their own use or for helping to train others in the techniques of rheumatology. It is careful, competent, and comprehensive, all the principal signs of joint and spine disease are covered, and the techniques of eliciting these are included.

Nevertheless, to read this book leaves one with a vague sense of boredom and dissatisfaction, though it is difficult at first to see why.

The answer, of course, becomes immediately obvious as soon as one compares this book with such a classic of physical diagnosis as Hamilton Bailey's "Physical Signs in General Surgery". Both are essentially "how to" books, but Hamilton Bailey's text is cut to a minimum, and every word is made to tell alongside copious action photographs, line drawings, and diagrams. In the present volume on the other hand, the illustrations mainly comprise photographs of clinical conditions which depend on their captions to explain what they are. There are not nearly enough drawings and action photographs, and the whole is weighted with slabs of stodgy text.

The too-literal reader is warned against trying to follow the instructions for the adduction test on the knee which might find him had up for attempted assault, or even worse. The patient is to be examined supine, and the observer is to examine from the patient's right side, he is enjoined to stabilize the medial aspect of the patient's femur with his knee whilst he adducts the patient's tibia by pulling the distal leg inwards. Clearly, this could lead to some nasty misunderstandings.

ALLAN ST. J. DIXON

Beiträge zur Rheumatologie, Vol 9. Edited by H. TICHY (1965). Pp. 178, 83 figs, 67 tables. Veb Volk und Gesundheit, Berlin. (36 DM).

Prof. Tichy and his collaborators have always striven to develop physical and laboratory methods for the diagnosis and assessment of the rheumatic diseases. In Volume 2 Tichy and Warmbt described the thermo-electric measurement of skin temperature in one hundred cases, and came to the conclusion that its diagnostic value was strictly limited. With the considerable improvement in apparatus which has taken place in the intervening 4 years, it has been possible to measure heat flow in an extremity for 20 minutes, by means of the consensual reaction, and to record it graphically. Attention is also devoted to intramuscular pressure (in mm. H₂O) in health and disease. Finally, there is a detailed description of the waters of the Lauta Hot Spring, near Marienberg, and their physiological effects.

The emphasis of Vol. 9 is on balneotherapy, each chapter having its own list of references in a modified Harvard notation. DAVID PREISKEL