BOOK REVIEWS

Beiträge zur Rheumatologie. Vol. 11. Edited by H. TICHY and K. SEIDEL. 1967. Pp. 180, 9 illus. VEB Verlag and Volk Gesundheit, Berlin. (38s.)

The XIth volume of the Beiträge contains a symposium on the diagnosis and treatment of early ankylosing spondylitis. This symposium marks the 550th anniversary of the foundation of the higher faculty of medicine in the Karl-Marx University, Leipzig (*sic*). It opens with the usual but nevertheless interesting historical survey and ends with a discussion largely devoted to the problem of calcification in the spinal column.

Two more papers help to complete the 80 pages of this volume. One of these, from Bad Elster, deals with the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis by mud baths. The criteria for objective assessment are carefully tabulated and seem to be impressive; so, too, are the results. It is suggested that a period of 6 weeks is required to obtain a good result. It is therefore tempting to speculate on the effect of a 6-week period of physical and mental rest on a case of rheumatoid arthritis (*sans mud*). However, mud and massage are so inseparable in Spa treatment that the following lines, written by Rupert Brooke in another context, seem not inappropriate:

Whose intricate fingers beat and glide
In felt bewildering harmonies
Of trembling touch; and music is
The exquisite knocking of the blood.
Space is no more, under the mud.

The last paper covers the vexed question of the "septic focus"—in this case, dental sepsis in rheumatoid arthritis. Arguments, statistics, and case-histories fly thick and fast, but in the final analysis it may be accepted that the arthritic does not benefit from retaining his dental sepsis and may, not infrequently, be better off without it.

As in previous volumes, print, paper, and photographs are excellent. No index is provided, but there is a table of contents and each paper is followed by the relevant bibliography. The "Beiträge" have a character of their own and the XIth volume is a worthy companion to its predecessors.

DAVID PREISKEL

Surgery of Rheumatoid Arthritis. By LEONARD MARMOR. 1967. Pp. 261, 274 illus. Kimpton, London (112s. 6d.)

To-day's upsurge of interest in the surgical management of rheumatoid arthritis assures a welcome to any book which will guide surgeons and physicians through the formidable complexities of this field. Dr. Marmor's book, largely a treatise on surgical technique, opens with three short chapters about the disease in general and its medical and surgical management. It is to be hoped that no clinician will accept this as sufficient to equip him for the task of caring for a disease so varied in its problems and complications. Condensation has shorn the American Rheumatism Association diagnostic criteria of their essential complement of excluding factors, and a Table detailing the ARA nomenclature and classification of arthritis and rheumatism is irrelevant when differential diagnosis is hardly discussed.

The author is at his best in describing surgical technique. Descriptions of operative methods for individual joints are proceeded in each case by a useful review of surgical anatomy. Quality has been somewhat sacrificed to quantity in the illustrations. Though the anatomical pictures, mainly culled from Gray's "Anatomy", and the line drawings are clear, many photographs and radiographs are so lacking in clarity as to offer little contribution and one radiograph of the neck is upside-down. The value of early synovectomy is stressed, but it is an oversimplification to present this operation as an alternative to prolonged treatment with corticosteroids.

Dr. Marmor cannot be blamed for the paucity of his information about the outcome of individual operations in the long term, since so few data exist. He presents strikingly good figures of synovectomy of the knee, with all of 34 patients freed from pain and all but one from swelling. But only ten of these had been observed for more than one year after operation. The reader of this generally optimistic account should remind himself that technical success in the short term is not enough and that