Book reviews

Modern Trends in Rheumatology—2. Edited by ALAN G. S. HILL. 1971. Pp. 376 112 figs. Butterworths, London. (£6).

This book maintains the high standard of the previous volume in this series and should be read, cover to cover, by every specialist in the field. It consists of twenty largely unconnected review papers dealing with a diversity of subjects of current interest, and most of them are very well presented and readable. The only obvious omission is a detailed discussion of the current state of immunology in relation to the connective tissue diseases, in which it continues to hold such a central place. It is true that various facets of this problem were discussed in the first book, but a good deal has happened since then, particularly with regard to cell-mediated immunity.

Two excellent papers are those on 'Corticosteroid-induced suppression of the cerebro-hypothalamo-pituitary-adrenal axis' by G. Nuki and W. Wilson Downie and 'Immuno-suppressive drugs in rheumatoid arthritis' by H. L. F. Currey. Both are succinct but very comprehensive and will be standard reference articles on these subjects for some time. As might be anticipated, the bioengineering group from Leeds is well represented with three chapters. Some of the work will by now be familiar to many readers of the book, but the subject is an important one and it is no doubt good for us to remind ourselves about Coulomb resistance, Newtonian fluid, and the rest. We are spared an excess of mathematical equations and the theoretical considerations underlying the application of joint prostheses are of great interest. Elsewhere in the book are three useful chapters on the clinical aspects of surgery in arthritis.

Of localized interest are a down-to-earth chapter on 'The Rheumatoid Foot' by A. St. J. Dixon and one on 'Rheumatoid Arthritis of the Cervical Spine' by J. Ball and J. Sharp. The last two authors appear to be less insistent than formerly on surgery being undertaken in all patients with rheumatoid subluxation attended by neurological complications, a view with which many will agree as experience with this problem accumulates. In chapters of wider application, J. A. Boyle and J. E. Seegmiller review selected aspects of purine metabolism and J. J. R. Duthie discusses 'Infection in the Aetiology of Rheumatoid Arthritis'. Both these, of course, are rapidly-changing subjects and already, by the time of writing, one wishes Professor Duthie had given us more than six lines on the question of mycoplasma infection. Incidentally, the late D. V. Davies and A. J. Palfrey, in their discussion of normal and rheumatoid synovial membrane, come to the percipient conclusion that ultramicroscopic evidence does not support the idea of an

infective element, of either viral or bacterial type, in the causation of rheumatoid arthritis.

Dr. Sanford Meyerowitz was invited to grasp the prickly nettle of 'The Continuing Investigation of Psycho-social Variables in Rheumatoid Arthritis' and does not entirely get away with it. Of the three psychological hypotheses he discusses, there is very little to be said for psychological traits being associated with either disease specificity or disease onset; but we do know a little more about the disease course hypothesis—that identifiable psychological responses in patients with rheumatoid arthritis influence the course of the illness—than Dr. Meyerowitz implies. As he himself complains, there is a polarization of belief and interest here.

J. T. SCOTT

Physiopathologie des maladies des os et des articulations (Physiopathology of Diseases of Bones and Joints). By A. RYCKEWAERT. 1970. Pp. 1016, 309 figs. Baillière et Fils, Paris. (Frs 206).

This is a book which could well, with a few reservations, be translated into English, and a beneficent National Health Service might then consider giving a copy to all rheumatologists. There is no word in English which quite translates the term 'Physiopathology'—what it means in practice is a textbook of both the rare and the common diseases which turn up in a rheumatology clinic together with illustrative histology, morbid anatomy, and x rays, but not forgetting the treatment of individual conditions where this ties in with the disease process. The result is a very useful Encyclopaedia of Rheumatology in just over a thousand pages, very well referenced although mainly to French and American authors. It is curious how both for French and English rheumatologists the Channel is a greater gap than the Atlantic. The illustrations are excellent, and are drawn in the main from the collection of Professor de Sèze. One of the chapters I would have rewritten for an English language edition would be that on the anatomy and physiology of the connective tissue. This is very much the received opinion with the cells and other constituents described morphologically though this is much less meaningful than the new knowledge about their function and their ability to differentiate. Similarly, concerning polymyalgia rheumatica, the author repeats the statement that it last from 1 to 4 years, even though Bagratuni has shown that it may go on for at least 14 years before steroids and it certainly continues to show such durations

in some patients receiving steroids. I liked especially the reviews of hypercalcaemia and of the common bone diseases and also the chapters on the nerve compression syndromes and particularly the painful conditions of the shoulder. Senile haemorrhagic shoulder is described here, although not in any of the other three English language textbooks. Capsulitis of the shoulder is vividly illustrated by diagrams and comparison of normal and abnormal arthrograms. The book is strong on infective arthritis (34 pages) but weak on Still's disease (4 pages)

which it deals with mainly by listing the clinical manifestations. This is out of tune with the rest of the book, particularly as there is much to say about the way in which inflammatory arthritis in childhood is modified by growth and by the thickness of articular and epiphyseal cartilage, etc. This is another chapter which I should like to see rewritten in any English translation.

Bearing in mind that this is the work of a single author, it is a considerable achievement and something of a *tour de force*.

A. ST. J. DIXON

Notes

VII European Rheumatology Congress

Brighton, June 1971

Abstract Handbook

All abstracts accepted for this Congress (each in two languages, some with added graphic data) are now published as a bound volume at a price of £2 per copy.

Copies are available from: British Branch of the European League against Rheumatism, c/o The Arthritis and Rheumatism Council, 8-10 Charing Cross Road, London, WC2H 0HN

IV International Osteological Symposium

Prague, September 28 to 30, 1972

The symposium will be organized by the Czechoslovak Rheumatological and Medical Societies as a pre-symposium of the III Czechoslovak Congress on Rheumatology.

The special topics for discussion are Osteoporosis,

Osteodystrophy, and Non-tumourous Osteolysis. Free papers are also invited

For further information please write to the General Secretary, Stanislav Havelka, M.D., Praha 2, Sokolská 31, Czechoslovakia.

Alessandro Robecchi

International Prize for Rheumatology

The Robecchi International Foundation, established to honour the memory of Professor Alessandro Robecchi, former president of the International League against Rheumatism, will award an International Prize to be competed for every 4 years, in clinical, biological, experimental, or social research. Work published or accepted for publication during the 4 years preceding the award will be eligible for consideration. The value of the prize (minimum £500) will be fixed at the time of the award.

The prize will normally be presented during the Congress of the European League, but will be given for the first time at the International Meeting which is to be held at Aix-les-Bains in June, 1972.

The work should be written in English, French, German, Italian, or Spanish. If the original is in another language, it should be accompanied by a complete

translation into one of the five official languages. Eight copies should be submitted at least 6 months before the date of the award. Entries for the first award should be sent in before January 1, 1972.

The jury will consist of seven members: the president of the International Ligue, the president of the European Ligue, Mme Prof. N. Svartz, Prof. F. Coste, Prof. C. B. Ballabio, Dr. R. H. Freyberg, and Dr. G. D. Kersley, and the prize will be awarded by an absolute majority decision. If no entry is judged worthy, the prize will not be awarded. The successful candidate must publish his work within 6 months, if this has not been already done, and the prize will be given only after publication.

All enquiries and correspondence should be sent to Prof. Vittorio Daneo, Direttore del Centro di Reumatologia, Ospedale Maggiore di San Giovanni Battista - Corso Bramante n. 88 - 10126 Torino (Italy).