Book reviews

Beiträge zur Rheumatologie. Vol. 15. Edited by H. TICHY and K. SEIDEL. 1970. Pp. 247, 64 figs. Veb Verlag Volk und Gesundheit, Berlin (81·50 MDN)

The 15th volume of the *Beiträge*, edited with such great skill by Prof. Hans Tichy, who founded them in 1958, also contains his obituary. Prof. Tichy, who died in January, 1970, at the age of 82, attained international fame for his serological work on the rheumatic diseases. Together with Dr. Kurt Seidel, he wrote the preface to the present volume in April, 1969, and devoted its contents to rheumatic fever in all its manifestations.

Treatment and prophylaxis occupy about one-quarter of the 246 pages on familiar and unexceptionable lines. Another 26 pages cover rheumatic fever in children, the change in prognosis in recent years and the influence of treatment on it, the rehabilitation of invalids, and the prevention of relapses. By far the most interesting portion, comprising more than half the volume, is that dealing with chorea and rheumatic encephalopathy. An impressive array of electroencephalograms is used to support the thesis that encephalopathy is present in the early stages of the disease in 81 per cent. of cases. All parts of the brain may be affected. While there is no difference in incidence between males and females in the early stages, females predominate in the later stages. There is a statistical correlation between encephalopathy, which can be distinct from chorea, and carditis. So impressed are the authors with the effect of rheumatic fever on brain tissue that a plea is made for consideration of this aetiology in ill-defined cerebral disturbances in young people and adults.

The 15th volume, like its predecessors, is distinguished by the excellence of its paper, format, and print. Each chapter is accompanied by an extensive international bibliography.

DAVID PREISKEL

Self Aids. By W. M. DAVIS. 1970. Pp. 84, figures. The Thistle Foundation, Edinburgh (30p)

Dressing and household aids can prove invaluable in helping the severely handicapped arthritic patient to become as independent as possible in his daily life.

This booklet describes those aids which have been found of value in Edinburgh and should prove a most useful handbook for patients and their relatives.

Aids must be simple, practical, and readily obtainable,

and those in this booklet fulfil these criteria. The line drawings are excellent and one approves the way in which the author has given the price of each article and where it can be obtained.

E. B. D. HAMILTON

Macroglobulins provoking Haemagglutination in Rheumatoid Arthritis and Other Diseases. By NANNA SVARTZ. 1971. Pp. 105, 60 figs. Almqvist and Wiksell, Stockholm. (Sw. kr. 45)

Reading this book is like listening to a series of lectures about the story of rheumatoid factor (RF) as it unfolded in the King Gustav V Research Institute, Stockholm. What happened elsewhere receives rather less attention and sometimes none at all. Inevitably some of it is water under the bridge. It starts with an account of early forays in the clinical application of tests for RF using cells sensitized with rabbit amboceptor. Surprisingly tests using human γ globulin or globulin fragments have apparently never been used. The next three chapters take us through experiments which resulted, *inter alia*, in the isolation and characterization of RF as an IgM. These are followed by a very interesting account of the isolation and properties of 7S subunits of RF which retain the ability to agglutinate sensitized sheep cells. Presumably this is a recent study as there is no reference to it having been published elsewhere. The final chapter deals at length with the production of RF in rats by injection of *Diplostreptococcus agalactiae*. The claim that arthritis is also induced does not seem to the reviewer to be convincingly supported by the photomicrographs; and the question of contaminating γ globulins in experiments of this kind is not discussed.

Judged either as a historical treatise or as a scientific account of RF the book is neither sufficiently critical nor comprehensive. Nevertheless, this record of the numerous contributions of the Stockholm group in the RF field stretching as it does over a period of 20-odd years makes interesting reading. The author's obvious heuristic pleasure in it all comes through vividly and may partly account for what seems to be an undue preoccupation with priorities; it certainly gives the book an individual style.

J. BALL

PITMAN MEDICAL regret that, in their advertisement in the July issue, 'Introduction to Clinical Rheumatology', edited by R. M. MASON and H. L. F. CURREY, was advertised with an incorrect price. It is, in fact, the first edition and costs £3.50 net.