Book reviews

D'Aix en Savoye à Aixilia: pour les curieux et curistes d'Aix-les-Bains. By F. FRANÇON, 1972. Pp. 130, 17 figs. Éditions Trévoux, ain, France

Many will have happy memories of the International Congress des Maladies Rheumatismales at Aix in June, 1972, where both Dr. François Françon and Dr. Jacques Forestier, doyens of French Rheumatology, played an active part. In this small book Dr. Françon presents reminiscences of his own, and of his father and grandfather, all of whom practised with conspicuous success at Aix-les-Bains, and who are now succeeded in turn by Dr. Françon's son Jean.

Dr. Françon describes vividly some of the many personalities who have visited Aix-les-Bains and have taken 'the cure', among them Balzac, Lamartine, Maupassant, Verlaine, Queen Victoria, and Dom Pedron, the Emperor of Brazil.

Dr. Françon paints a convincing and charming picture of these celebrities and of their annual sojourn at Aix-les-Bains. He points out that these were the private patients of the past, the predecessors of those sent by the Sécurité Sociale—the French National Health Service. Today 90 per cent. of those who are treated at Aix are paid for by the State. He discusses the benefit they received from their treatment and briefly notes that taking the waters is *sans risques iatrogènes*, suggesting that 'the cure' at Aix may well be less dangerous than swallowing some of the pills that we are accustomed to prescribe for our rheumatic patients.

FRANCIS BACH

An Introduction to Clinical Rheumatology. By WILLIAM CARSON DICK. 1972. Pp. 186, 42 figs. Livingstone, Edinburgh (£1.25)

This is a paper-back type of book in size and production. The author indicates that it is based on lectures designed for undergraduate medical students, and postgraduate practitioners, and the majority of chapters, indeed, read like short talks. These are well set out and illustrated by simply drawn diagrams which are clear and easy to follow. A very wide range of topics is well covered, although at times, to simplify the subject, statements are made that are not entirely accurate or that would benefit from amplification. In particular more advice on history taking, joint examination and recording, and the diagnosis and

management of the commoner osteoarthritic and soft tissue syndromes would have been useful. The major weakness is a complete absence of references so that, although many very rare causes of joint symptoms are mentioned, it would be necessary to search elsewhere for further reading on these topics. Thus, while useful in stimulating interest and in exposing the student to the width of the subject, this book is unlikely to replace other standard works, and notably Mason and Currey's book which carries the same title.

B. M. ANSELL

The Arthritis Handbook: A Patient's Manual of Arthritis, Rheumatism and Gout. By DARRELL CRAIN. 1972. Pp. 220, 25 diagrams, 15 figs (which are also diagrams). Arlington Books, London (£2.25)

The American edition of this book, first published 13 years ago, carried the title 'Help for Ten Million'. It was reminiscent of the heretical slogan of the Jehovah's Witnesses 'Millions now living will never die', but was apparently less successful in attracting attention, so that this time a more orthodox approach has been used. The opening sentences reveal that the plant is still firmly rooted in good American soil. 'Congratulations, arthritics, on your medical ancestry. Your disease is no Johnny-come-lately in the realm of medicine.' The roots go deep into American dirt, apart from the style, in that the proprietary forms of aspirin will be unfamiliar to Common Marketers, the value of climate is discussed in terms of U.S. geography, the dose of colchicine is nostalgically given in grains, and patients injure their fingers by catching baseballs instead of cricket balls.

The book is written for patients, who are to be advised by their doctors which parts are relevant (the dust-cover says). There are three sections, one on gout, another on the rest of the rheumatic disorders, and the third on diets, exercises, and aids. Gout commands 33 per cent. of the attention devoted to the rest of the diseases put together—a disproportion like that allotted by Lord Cohen in his lectures to us at Liverpool, which was fully justified (in our minds) by a question on it in the final examinations.

The reader is presented with a strange mixture of elementary medicine and patient instruction. And the medicine isn't so elementary—the hypothesis of rheumatoid inflammation is illustrated and discussed in terms of