Joint Disease. All the Arthropathies. By E. C. HUSKISSON and F. DUDLEY HART. 1973. Pp. 152. Wright, Bristol (£3.25).

In the words of the authors, this is a reference book which is not intended for reading, but for consultation when information is required. It is written in note form and covers the arthropathies under about 150 titles. Each is then subdivided under definition, incidence, joints affected, symptoms, signs, course, associations, radiological and laboratory tests, treatment, and variants; a few phrases being written on each. The term arthropathy is not defined, but seems to include the majority of conditions which are associated with deformity or pain in or near a joint. It is, therefore, surprising that tennis elbow, the carpal tunnel syndrome, and neuralgic amyotrophy are all classified as arthropathies, whereas cervical and lumbar spondylosis are only briefly mentioned under osteoarthritis, although hypophosphataemic spondylopathy and ankylosing vertebral hyperostosis are given separate sections. The space allotted to each disease varies from a few lines for uncommon conditions to three pages for rheumatoid arthritis. At least one reference is given to each condition, but it is a pity that titles of articles are not given. This is a surprising omission, because each condition is described on a separate page and there are many blank half pages which could have been used not only for the titles but for further references, which would have greatly increased the value of this book.

The authors have compiled useful information about arthropathies occurring in association with a wide range of conditions, including virus and tropical diseases, and the sections on incidence, complications, and associations are particularly helpful. The brevity of the style becomes misleading, however, in some of the sections on treatment. It is doubtful whether a rheumatologist would refer to this book for guidance on treatment, and other clinicians with little knowledge of the subject would have difficulty in managing an individual case from the available information, particularly where treatment is complicated, as in rheumatoid arthritis. For instance, no mention is made of systemic steroid treatment, unless it is concealed in the cryptic term 'immuno-suppressive' drugs, sandwiched in between penicillamine and chloroquine, and the phrase 'synovectomy, if all else fails' is capable of misinterpretation. The authors may have strong views about the use of steroids in rheumatoid arthritis, but since these substances are so widely used, they should not be ignored. It is stated that temporal arteritis and polymyalgia rheumatica are probably different manifestations of the same pathological process, and that 50 per cent of patients with polymyalgia rheumatica have giant cell arteritis. For the treatment of polymyalgia rheumatica 7.5 to 15 mg. prednisolone daily is recommended, but 40 mg. daily is suggested for temporal arteritis. This appears to be illogical and the authors are doubtless aware of this inconsistency. The statement that 'steroids have no effect on the arterial changes of pulseless disease' is not correct if the authors are referring to their use in the early stages. In other sections it is sometimes not clear whether the treatment refers to the joint disease or to the associated disorder.

These examples demonstrate the limitations of this type of book, particularly in the section on treatment.

Although the authors have defined the purpose of the book, it is not entirely clear for whom it is written. The rheumatologist may find it a helpful addition to his shelf which is likely to contain other standard works. I am less certain whether other clinicians will find this book useful and I still wish that those empty spaces had been filled with references.

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L'Actualité rhumatologique 1972. Présentée au praticien. By les médecins du Centre Viggo Petersen under the direction of S. DE SÈZE, A. RYCKEWAERT, M. F. KAHN, and A-P. PELTIER. 1973. Pp. 354. 56 figs. Expansion Scientifique Française, Paris (Fr.frs 97.50).

This is the 'ninth annual volume of information' published in French under the title 'Rheumatological Current Affairs'; because it is aimed principally at the general practitioner the contents fall midway between the British 'Reports on the Rheumatic Diseases' (Arthritis and Rheumatism Council) and 'Modern Trends in Rheumatology' (Hill, 1971). To produce such a volume annually, on time, in that the present one published in 1973, and containing 350 pages of concise information surveys the views of 1972, is no mean feat. The individual chapters produced by the medical staff of the Centre Viggo Petersen, Paris, are commendably short and to the point.

The scope covered is wide, ranging from 'Adult Still's disease' to 'Inequality in length of the lower limbs', and from 'The oedema of rheumatoid arthritis' to 'How should one treat osteogenic sarcomata?'. An important section entitled 'On the boundaries of rheumatology' comprises five chapters on diabetic neuropathy, Pancoast tumours, etc., which are frequent sources of confusion. A balance has been achieved between the scientific, clinical and therapeutic aspects of rheumatology.

A striking feature of this volume is that it is essentially practical in outlook and thus relevant to those who are not engaged in full-time rheumatology. Most of the chapter headings illustrate the practical nature of the book: there are articles on 'Hallux valgus', 'Low back pain', 'Gold nephropathy', and 'Has ACTH a place in rheumatology?'.

Inevitably one can find points to criticise, but they are remarkably few. Is 'pseudo-peri-arthritis' of the shoulder, due to paralysis of the trapezius sufficiently common to be emphasized by its inclusion, especially since the authors in their specialized unit have only encountered twelve cases in the last 15 years? a similar criticism could be levelled at the inclusion of 'Aseptic necrosis of the talus' but these are comparatively unimportant queries.

This is a useful and well produced paper-back book written entirely in French. One is left wondering whether or not a similar work should be produced in English.

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