Current Topics in Connective Tissue Diseases. Edited by P. J. L. HOLT. 1975. Pp. 197, illustrated. Churchill, Livingstone, London (£6.50)

Dr. Holt has admirably brought together a series of topics which are both currently of great interest to rheumatologists and where progress is occurring. It was Dr. Holt's intention to provide a series of articles which would help 'smooth the transition from today's research to tomorrow's clinical practice'. This is an admirable objective in the tradition of the late Sir Thomas Lewis, and must be applauded in British medicine. In general, Dr. Holt has been successful in his endeavour.

Dr. C. William Castor gives a very readable account of the physiology of the synovial membrane, which is supplemented by nearly 100 references. Dr. Holt himself writes a chapter on the physiology and pathophysiology of articular cartilage. This is extremely easy to read and is beautifully illustrated. The chapter on the biomechanics of joint function by Professor V. Wright and W. Dowson requires a lot of stamina to complete due to the 'heavy' nature of the subject matter, but is nevertheless first class.

The chapter by Dr. G. Loewi on cellular immune mechanisms involved in joint inflammation in rheumatoid arthritis will be welcomed by those who find this topic difficult. Dr. J. N. McCormick, the only Scot, keeps the Saltire flag flying proudly with a superb review on current knowledge of rheumatoid factors. The two Dutch authors, Dr. T. E. W. Feltkamp and J. H. Ten Veen, give an excellent overview of systemic lupus erythematosus, but it would have been interesting to know what these authors thought of the LE cell test. Is it now obsolete when we have available ANF and anti-DNA tests?

For those interested in assessing the results of hand surgery the chapter by Mr. R. A. Dickson and Mr. F. V. Nicolle will provide an admirable source of information on the evaluation of hand function. However, one wonders whether the most important variable in assessing surgical treatment is not in controlling the observations. Dr. M. J. M. Smith's chapter on the mode of action of antirheumatic drugs perhaps is pitched at too low a level, but for those who are interested in a simple review this account would provide a useful *hors d'oeuvres*.

The final chapter on pseudogout by Professor D. J. McCarty provides a strong finish to the book. An illustration or two of the crystals under light and polarized light might have been useful for the practising clinician. From the very varied source of the references it is clear that Professor McCarty does his homework well before putting pen to paper.

The book is attractively produced; the illustrations (over 50 in number and one in colour) are not just an embellishment but a genuine complement to the text; and the price, as books go nowadays, is not unreasonable.

W. WATSON BUCHANAN

Rheumatoid Arthritis. Edited by EDWARD D. HARRIS, JR. 1974. Pp. 216. Medcom Inc. Press, New York (U.S. \$17.95)

An unusual book about rheumatoid arthritis has recently appeared, edited by Ted Harris from the Dartmouth Medical School at Hanover in New England and including among its authors such well-known characters as Eric Radin, Gerald Weissmann, Shaun Ruddy, Carwile

LeRoy, Allen Myers, and Clement Sledge. As in Old England there is a positive practical bedside approach, but this small volume of 216 pages includes a lot of New English background material, with recent references up to 1973, clearly outlining the important problems in this rapidly developing field, defining what we know and what we don't know: the boundaries of knowledge. As such it should be of interest to those numerous people working in this general field, but particularly to newcomers who need a forthright and up-to-date analysis of present concepts and future trends.

E. G. L. BYWATERS

Clinics in Rheumatic Diseases. Vol. 1/No. 1. Rheumatological Manifestations of Systemic Disease. Guest Editor, E. G. L. BYWATERS. April, 1975. Pp. vii + 213, 90 figs, 25 tabs. Saunders, London, Philadelphia, & Toronto (£15 per annum—3 numbers)

With its first number, this new series supervised by an editorial board from the UK, USA, France, and Finland makes a promising start. In his introduction the guest editor, Professor Bywaters, writes that he has chosen from a large number of systemic diseases a few which are either comparatively little known or about which new data have accumulated. Emphasis has been placed on the rheumatological aspects of disease, since these have often been neglected by the speciality concerned. A distinguished international team, authorities on their own subject but in the main also rheumatologists, has scored a notable success in producing an instructive and very readable volume.

Clinicians outside the field of rheumatology will find in these pages information which could otherwise be gleaned only from many disparate sources. Much of this information is as durable as any clinical data in a rapidly shifting scene and the series as a whole should be a worthwhile investment for any library serving a general hospital. Rheumatic manifestations of heritable disorders of connective tissue, of the haemoglobinopathies, haemophilia, endocrine disorders, hyperparathyroidism, haemochromatosis, Wilson's disease, amyloid disease, and abnormalities of lipid metabolism are ably surveyed and generously illustrated. The editor presents a persuasive case for extending the concept of Jaccoud's syndrome, hitherto associated with rheumatic fever, to systemic lupus erythematosus. The volume ends with an admirably concise and lucid account of familial Mediterranean fever.

A minor criticism is that authors striving to be comprehensive have been led from descriptions of well-established and important entities into the literature of the rare and exotic. Readers should be alert for such moves towards collector's items. But this in no way mars a book which shows how alert every physician must be for clues to diagnosis offered by the locomotor system—and how widely a rheumatologist must scan the whole vista of medicine if he is to reach accurate conclusions. Among many revelations are the occurrence of inflammatory phenomena in some hereditary disorders of connective tissue, including Paget's disease, and the successful use of colchicine in familial Mediterranean fever. Expanding interest in abnormalities of lipid metabolism highlights