and the title describes the contents perfectly. Certain subjects are avoided, like hypertensive disease, as the authors state that this is often now related more to nephrology and endocrinology than to cardiology; therapy is also largely omitted. This approach seems reasonable, as both are covered elsewhere, and it is not the aim of the book to be comprehensive.

It is divided into 15 sections, each of which deals with important features of heart disease. For example, there are sections on symptoms, signs, electrocardiograms (ECGs), and pressure recordings throughout. The reader is assumed to know nothing, so that all the basics are covered, but the text soon progresses to the more advanced and up-to-date information, with plenty of references at the end of each section.

For the doctor not in its specialty this book would seem ideal. Cardiology plays such an important role in medical practice, and it is often difficult to keep abreast of changes in branches of medicine other than one's own. In the past 20 years modern cardiology has emerged as a scientific discipline, and with the techniques available like echocardiography and angiography it is mandatory for the physician at least to understand the principles, if not all the technical details; this is what Dr Davies and Dr Nelson set out to teach. There are one or two minor criticisms as to the quality of the reproduction of ECG tracings, but these are quibbles. The book is excellent and should be recommended particularly to doctors in a field such as rheumatic disease. It is a pity there are not more books as readable as this one in other branches of medicine.

E. N. COOMES


This compilation of 50 cases has been used to illustrate the development of the diagnoses, treatment, complications, and prognoses of a variety of rheumatological presentations in childhood. The material is based on a multiple choice question format for which the answers and discussion are placed close to the relevant question and for which an adequate bibliography is given. The problems of this format are demonstrated. In particular, the author's wish to deal encyclopaedically with the differential diagnosis and with the investigations that are undertaken, has led to the inclusion of many rarities, though some idea of their relevant importance is given. This type of format is much easier to use where well-defined organic disease or syndromes are involved but unfortunately does not lend itself to the often ill-defined but very important problems encountered in practice.

This is not an introductory textbook. It is designed to be read after having acquired a working knowledge of the subjects being discussed when one can evaluate the relative incidence and importance of the conditions.

For a person with a working knowledge of the subject it is a very valuable exercise to compare one's own reaction to the problems stated and the answers given, which the author has had the courage to commit to print. The title in many ways does not do justice to the value of the discussions or of the clear illustrations. The discussion contains considerable practical and homely advice, well presented in a manner not found in the more stereotyped classical textbook descriptions.

In brief, if one has had the opportunity to read and practise paediatric rheumatology, I am sure that much benefit can be obtained from reading this book, particularly since it can be tackled in short, case-by-case episodes. Though it is not a cheap book, the condensed style allows considerable information to be packed into the 380 pages.

P. J. L. HOLT


The first 3 editions of this book were written by Dr Bernard Comroe between 1940 and 1944 when the study of rheumatology as a scientific medical discipline was still in its infancy. The work immediately achieved recognition as an authoritative comprehensive textbook and went from strength to strength, while the subsequent 5 editions were produced under the brilliant direction of Dr Joseph Lee Hollander during the years 1949 to 1972. The ninth edition has been undertaken by Dr Daniel McCarty, already closely associated with the book as contributor and associate editor.

To invite and collect (all by their deadlines 'plus or minus 2 standard deviations') chapters from no fewer than 87 distinguished North American contributors is an extraordinary achievement. The book is correspondingly large, well produced, abundantly illustrated and tabulated, and by today's standards very reasonably priced.

A section of introductory chapters is followed by a new section of 15 chapters on the scientific basis for the study of the rheumatic diseases. The timing of the book's publication fortunately allows critical modern reviews of such subjects as immune complex deposition, immunoglobulins, the structure and function of the major histocompatibility complex, and the role in disease of monocytes and macrophages. A further new section is devoted to clinical pharmacology of the antirheumatic drugs. The remaining 8 sections discuss the various rheumatic diseases on a systematic basis. All are of a high standard and immensely informative: praxis of the grandmasters.

To avoid overlap (and disagreement) between all these contributions must have been a major editorial task. Dr McCarty has largely succeeded, though the radiographs, for example, of osteoarthritis in the chapter on that subject are similar to those in a previous chapter on radiology of rheumatic diseases. Again, exercise treatment is discussed both in the chapter on the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis and in the subsequent

The title suggests an important theme, of interest and relevance to rheumatological investigators and practitioners, but further acquaintance is disappointing. The book is about criteria, their measurement and evaluation, and so as a reviewer I must be similarly disciplined.

Content. Variety may be the spice of life, but even kings have died from a surfeit. The book consists of contributions, mainly brief, from some 53 participants, and, like many concert programmes, it is divided into three sections. The overture (8 movements, mean length 8.75 pp) supposedly deals with standardisation of clinical, therapeutic, and radiological criteria. I am reminded of the complaint by Falstaff's gaoler, how can so vast a subject be dealt with in so confined a space. Rather unusually, the symphony, 'Laboratory Investigation', comes next (14 movements, mean 10.9 with a large standard error because one, on histocompatibility typing, extends to 32 pp). Unfortunately the clarion call of the oboe to get everyone else in tune, a very lucid exposition of the aims of standardisation by Irene Batty, was not placed at the beginning. Overall the treatment is very variable in depth, although the reference lists tend to be good. The concentration on research procedures is likely to remind many of their dislike of the 'moderns'. I hardly dare call it the concerto, but the coda, numerical evaluation (9 movements, mean 10.1), is anticlimactic. It recalls a meeting of the Oxford Group, everyone sitting around the bath recounting their (sinful) experiences.

Uses. Books are to be read or consulted. Other applications (e.g., as missiles or as a means to prestige or profit) are not my immediate concern. I read for pleasure or enlightenment; this book catered to neither. As a reference work it is in hazard of evanescence—the fields covered are either fast moving or depressingly static.

Limitations. One wonders whether this presentation had a conductor. More important, though, is the way fundamental difficulties are not identified. The key question is surely that rheumatic diseases lack a hallmark, a uniquely defining feature. Standardisation of individual procedures, though meritorious in itself, may nevertheless contribute little to reproducible diagnostic assignment, where questions of necessity and sufficiency loom large. One particular point: a contributor suggested that different purposes call for different sets of criteria, whereas the reality is more likely to rest with differences in the weighting attached to individual features.

In conclusion, standardisation is part of the discipline essential for scientific endeavour, but to individualists like doctors it is unfortunately not an attractive proposition, and I doubt whether this book will persuade the sceptical to conform.

J. T. SCOTT


Nursing Rheumatic Disease is possibly a misleading title, for although the book is divided into 12 chapters only 2 of them really concentrate on the nursing care of the rheumatoid patient, and these are written in a fragmented fashion with no clear aims shown. The other chapters explain further diseases in the rheumatology field. Explanations of their investigations, diagnosis, and drug therapy are well written and informative, with good illustrations, but lacking in nursing information. Illustrations of medical nursing are poor and incorrectly labelled. More use could have been made of diagrams—for example, good as opposed to bad positioning of the rheumatoid arthritic patient in bed, pictures of aids and splinting. Initially emphasis is put on the psychological care of the patient, but this is not dealt with in depth. The book will therefore leave nurses still wondering how to advise the patients with their working and home environment problems.

This book may be useful for explanations of the diseases and their medical management on a specialist ward for all grades of nurses, or as a library reference book, but not for individual purchasers.

C. S. CHESSON


This volume is the carefully edited proceedings of an international symposium held at Guy's Hospital, London, in November 1978. It was published expeditiously in June 1979 and provides an up-to-date and stimulating account of present ideas on one of the most important aspects of this ubiquitous disease. Twenty-five participants contribute critical reviews, giving a