

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Arthritis and Allied Conditions.* By Bernard I. Comroe, M.D. Third Edition, revised and enlarged, pp. 1359. Price 60s. Henry Kimpton.

For a work of this magnitude to have reached a third edition within five years is the best evidence of its value and the place it has gained in the literature of the rheumatic diseases. It has been very thoroughly revised and brought abreast of the most modern knowledge of the conditions dealt with, which comprise every aspect of rheumatology. Many new chapters have been added on recent advances in diagnosis and treatment, embracing further experience with gold therapy, and also with the sulphonamides and penicillin. One of the most valuable of these is an introductory chapter providing a diagnostic digest of the average arthritic problem for the general practitioner, consideration of whose needs is a feature of the whole book. The technique and indications for massage receive special attention, with some excellent illustrations of methods; physiotherapy, occupational therapy, spas, climate, psychogenic factors, and various modes of treatment are fully described and their indications set forth in a clear and attractive manner. The practitioner will find the chapters on the painful shoulder, painful feet, and backache helpful in tackling the many difficulties presenting themselves in everyday practice.

A striking and interesting chapter is that entitled "Mistakes in the Diagnosis and Handling of Patients with Arthritis and Allied Conditions": the author's enumeration of 238 mistakes furnishes serious matter for thought for all concerned with the treatment of rheumatism. It would be interesting to quote from them at length, but more profitable to read the chapter itself. One, however, must be quoted in full on account of its bearing on the work of the Empire Rheumatism Council: "Mistake 63 is the lack of sufficient funds for investigative work and lack of adequate hospital facilities for the care of arthritic patients in this country [the U.S.A.]. There are not more than 200 free beds in the United States for the care of rheumatic patients as contrasted with 100,000 free beds for the care of tuberculous patients, despite the fact that arthritis and

allied conditions are more common than the sum of all tuberculosis, cancer, diabetes and heart disease." While it may be claimed that in Great Britain a much larger number of beds for the arthritic are available, they are far short of what is required if this great problem, which affects so seriously the working capacity of the country, is to be properly dealt with.

This book should find a place on the shelves of all who have to deal with rheumatic diseases, and its careful study will lead the general practitioner to find in his rheumatic patients a source of much interest instead of boredom, as well as adding greatly to his resources in their treatment.

*Arthritis. What can be done about it.* Alfred E. Phelps, M.D. Pp. 90, 6s. Medical Publications, Ltd. London.

This little book is designed as stated on the cover to tell how the patient may co-operate with his doctor to help speed effective treatment. It is written by a physician of wide experience in private practice who has done much work on arthritis, and sets forth in clear and simple language information which cannot fail to be helpful to sufferers from arthritis in its various forms and may even be found practical and instructive by the doctor also. The various factors in causation are clearly explained, with stress on those which are in the power of the patient to influence; but at the same time the author describes in simple terms the part played by infective factors and the more common bacteria believed to be concerned in aetiology. Diet, rest and exercise, the influence of posture, strain, trauma, climate and other factors are discussed. Modern methods of treatment are explained, such as gold and vaccines, though the author wisely says that of all methods of treating arthritis vaccine therapy is the most difficult; the dosage of gold which is mentioned is higher than is necessary, and it should be stressed in any future edition that greater safety lies in smaller doses than were formerly the vogue and the effects are likely to be quite as good. The book can be cordially recommended for the purpose for which it has been written.