BOOK REVIEWS

Die Sauna. Geschichte-Grundlagen ihrer Wirkung. Anwendung sur Prophylaxe und Therapie. Mit Anhang über Bau und Betrieb der Sauna. By V. R. Ott. 1948. Benno Schwabe and Co. Basle. Pp. 224: 29 illustrations. Price 15 fr.

The Finnish Sauna is a form of bath with supposed panacean properties in which hot air, steam, hot water, flagellation, hot and cold douche, etc., play a role. It seems primitive in design, consisting of a room in which is a stone oven and tiers of benches for patients. There is a chimney for coal fuel, none for wood. Electrical heat may be used. The vapour charge of the air varies and the temperature may reach 80° C. or more. Bursts of steam are let off now and then from water poured on the hot stones. The process dates, with variations, from the Roman bath. Finland seems to have been the chief country of maintenance and of evolution into the present form. There it has been used for many ills, and systematically for restoration of energy after laborious work. Switzerland and Germany now make much use of it.

Dr. Ott introduced this sweat bath into the thermal station at Zürich in 1941. He now gives a faithful account of his experience with it and details of its action on the various organs and systems. The nervous (autonomic), circulatory, and renal systems are markedly stimulated by the bath and react favourably in the many forms of rheumatism, in affections of bone, muscle, and joints, in catarrh, and in various infections. Contra-indications are few, and include uncompensated heart affections, severe hypertension, pulmonary tuberculosis, and severe nephritis. The great improvement observed in the defences and resistance of the organism as a result of its use are mediated by changes of tone produced in the autonomic system. Immunity from the ill effects of climatic change is also set up by it.

The immediate changes produced in the blood and circulation are distinctive; blood sugar and sedimentation rate are increased, alkali reserve is diminished in most cases. The blood picture shows significant changes. Heart rate and blood pressure are raised, and also the body temperature. Installation methods are described.

D. T. BARRY.

Diseases of the Joints and Rheumatism. By Kenneth Stone. 1947. William Heinemann. London. Pp. 362. Illustrated, with 16 coloured plates. Price 30s. net.

Until recent years there has been a dearth of textbooks on the subject of rheumatism, and this one differs from the others in treating the subject from the physiological and pathological angles. It is more suited to the post-graduate, reading for higher qualifications, or for the specialist as a book of reference, than for the student.

The first chapter, on "classification", is in the nature

of an essay on classification in general, and at the same time it epitomizes the various views of rheumatism from Hippocrates down to the present day. Perhaps it would have been better if this chapter had been at the end of the book, for the author does not state clearly which classification he recommends, and also, during the rest of the book, he does not adhere to the classification he details.

The chapters on the general anatomy and physiology of joints, and how to examine joints, are excellent, and the one on chronic strain of ligaments contains a valuable chart illustrating defective posture in children. He is on firm ground when he describes the pathology of the various lesions, and his dismissal of the allergic reaction in favour of a virus infection as the causative agent in rheumatoid arthritis is worthy of respect.

The historical references are very interesting and show that the author has made an exhaustive study of classical and continental—particularly French—literature.

The chapter on diseases of the spine is comprehensive, and the frequency with which tuberculosis of the spine is mistaken for arthritis of rheumatic origin is rightly stressed. The description of how to examine the spine is useful, but the diagram, showing different normal movements, is difficult to follow.

Throughout the book, the treatments described follow conventional lines, but there are notable omissions of useful therapeutic measures, such as blood transfusion and insulin in rheumatoid arthritis, or bismuth injections as an alternative to gold therapy. No doubt Dr. Stone was wise to omit all mention of intra-articular injections in osteo-arthritis, as the value of this treatment is still *sub judice*. (Incidentally, the diagram showing aspiration of a knee joint seems to be somewhat elementary to include in a book of this calibre.)

The second part of the book is devoted entirely to muscular rheumatism and fibrositis, and the theory is advanced that rheumatic myalgia is the result of vagatonia, which is influenced by infective, toxic, endocrine, and emotional agents. Reasoned arguments and details of experiments substantiate this theory. More research on these lines might be profitable.

The chapter on fibrositis is incomplete, for there is no reference to the work of Copeman and Ackerman, or to that of Gibson, Kersley, and Desmarais; but there is an adequate précis of the work of Lewis and Kellgren on somatic pain.

In the last few pages the author courageously enters the sciatica controversy, and links the name of Cotugno with this symptom complex, finally allying Cotugno's "nervous sciatica" with the disc syndrome.

The book is well printed on excellent paper, and copiously illustrated, and the reproductions—particularly of the photomicrographs—are beyond criticism.

W. YEOMAN.