

CLINICAL RHEUMATOLOGY

Klinische Rheumatologie: Pathogenese, Symptomatologie, Diagnostik und Therapie der Rheumaerkrankungen. By Werner Moll. Foreword by Dr. S. de Séze. (Pp. 454+xii; illustrated. Sw. Fr. 79.) Basle, New York: S. Karger, 1957.

This book on clinical rheumatology is bigger than it sounds, since approximately half the text is printed in very small type. Such a device for making a large book seem of reasonable size does not make it more readable. After struggling through the small print one can find a substantial amount of information laid out in a very systematic manner, but it is not especially up to date. For example, in discussing the treatment of gout, "benemid" (probenecid) is dismissed in nine lines as a new American remedy, and the important uricosuric analogues of phenylbutazone are not mentioned; and in the chapter on rheumatoid arthritis the rheumatoid serum factor gets one page of small print. At the back of the book there are 166 illustrations, but nearly half of these consist of photographs and radiographs of the hands of patients with early rheumatoid arthritis, which all look alike, and there is no indication that the author has been selective in the material he presents. For those who read German with ease the most informative chapter is probably the one on disk disorders.

J. H. KELLGREN.

DIGITALIS

Digitalis. Compiled and edited by E. Grey Dimond, M.D. (Pp. 255+xiv; illustrated. 52s. 6d.) Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1957.

This book reports the proceedings of a conference on digitalis held at the University of Kansas Medical School. The contributions range over a wide field, and the book concludes with a verbatim account of a panel discussion in which the major contributors took part. Many of the papers repeat information which is readily available elsewhere, but some break new ground. Thus the fate of digitoxin has been studied by Friedman using a sensitive method of assay on the embryonic duck heart, and also by Okita using radioactive digitoxin. The results are in good agreement, and refute the previously accepted view that this glycoside is selectively concentrated in cardiac tissue and is stored in the extravascular fluid. Lown, in an interesting article dealing with the relationship between digitalis and potassium, produces good evidence that diuresis may potentiate the effect of digitalis by producing potassium depletion. Intravenous calcium is said to be of value in restoring normal rhythm to the digitalized heart during cardiac operations. Pharmacologists and cardiologists will find much to interest them in this book. Many important aspects of digitalis therapy—as, for example, its relationship to treatment by quinidine—are, however, not mentioned, and it by no means gives a comprehensive account of the drug. Nevertheless, it is stimulating to read about the advances made by specialists in this field, and it is great tribute to the importance of digitalis as a remedy that it can continue to occupy the attention of both pharmacologists and clinicians nearly 200 years after Withering's dramatic discovery.

E. J. WAYNE.

HYPOPHYSECTOMY

Hypophysectomy. Edited by O. H. Pearson, M.D., F.A.C.P. (Pp. 154+xi. 37s. 6d.) Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1957.

This monograph contains some 16 papers on various aspects of hypophysectomy, which were delivered at the Sloan Kettering Institute in New York in March, 1956, together with the subsequent discussions from the floor. With the exception of one paper on surgical hypophysectomy in diabetes, the various papers are all concerned mainly with pituitary ablation or destruction in metastatic breast cancer, there being general agreement that the procedure is of little value in other malignant conditions. The four opening

papers deal with the techniques and early results of surgical removal, and as they all favour the frontal approach there is inevitably some recapitulation. The concluding papers deal with destruction of the pituitary by radiation using methods ranging from the intrasellar implantation of radon and yttrium⁹⁰ seeds to the use of the betatron-produced electron beam. The intermediate papers are concerned with the various endocrine and biochemical changes that follow pituitary destruction and with problems of endocrine replacement. The individual papers are all short, the number of cases with which each is concerned is small, and the follow-up period rarely exceeds two years. Consequently the various observations and conclusions arrived at are only tentative. It is interesting that none of the participants appear to have evolved a method which guarantees complete pituitary destruction, either by surgery or by radiation, while several of them concede that a remission of the malignant tissue can occur even although the pituitary destruction is incomplete. Again, there seems to be no single endocrine or biochemical test which post-operatively can indicate with absolute confidence that the pituitary has been completely destroyed. For these reasons, while the monograph will be of interest to those directly engaged in the treatment of intractable breast cancer or in studying pituitary dysfunction, it must be regarded as a progress report rather than an authoritative survey.

MURRAY A. FALCONER.

THE ACUTE ABDOMEN

The Early Diagnosis of the Acute Abdomen. By Sir Zachary Cope, B.A., M.D., M.S.(Lond.), F.R.C.S.(Eng.). Eleventh edition. (Pp. 188; illustrated. 18s.) London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1957.

The eleventh edition of Sir Zachary Cope's clinical treatise is a worthy successor to its predecessors. The whole book has been revised and there are several important additions. Dissecting aneurysm and leaking aneurysms are now included, and jejunal diverticulitis and volvulus of the stomach make a new appearance too. The special problem of the acute abdomen in the tropics is well covered, and a new and original chapter is included to assist the general practitioner to come to a precise diagnosis when faced with a case of acute abdominal disease. In this chapter there are a number of very helpful practical hints. It is perhaps carping to mention that the acute abdominal presentations of polyarteritis nodosa and of porphyria, sometimes very puzzling, are not included.

IAN AIRD.

The two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the birth of Linnaeus was commemorated in Haarlem on May 23, 1957, and the addresses delivered on that occasion have now been published as Communication No. 103 from the National Museum for the History of Science, Leyden. They comprise a welcoming speech by Professor H. J. Lam; "Linnaeus in Holland," by Professor H. Engel; "Linnaeus and Medicine," by Professor G. A. Lindeboom; and an epilogue by Professor Lam.

An account of the *National Voluntary Health Associations in Canada* has been published by the Health League of Canada (111, Avenue Road, Toronto). It summarizes their objectives, their existing organization, and how they are financed. Professional organizations are excluded, but a report is included from each voluntary association having as its objective the attack on some particular disease or group of diseases.

The *BBC Handbook 1958* contains information on the administration of the Corporation, its history and publications. Statistics are provided from listener-research reports on both sound and television programmes. There are notes on programmes sent out to both home and overseas listeners. Members of the special advisory councils and committees are listed and details of last year's balance sheet are given. This useful reference book can be obtained from the British Broadcasting Corporation, London, W.1, price 5s.