The General and Plastic Surgery of the Hand. By Patrick CLARKSON, *M.B.E.*, M.B., B.S.(London), F.R.C.S.(Eng.), Hon. Civilian Consultant Plastic Surgeon to the Queen Alexandra Military Hospital, Millbank, London, and to the Cambridge Military Hospital, Aldershot; and Anthony PELLY, M.B., B.S.(Sydney), B.Sc.(Med.)(Sydney), F.R.C.S.(Eng.), F.R.A.C.S., Late Senior Registrar, Roehampton Plastic Centre (Westminster Hospital Group). With a foreword by Hedley ATKINS, Professor of Surgery in the University of London (Guy's Hospital). 9×6½ in. Pp. xiv+428, with many figures and tables. Index. 1962. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications Ltd. Price 63s.

Any book which the authors describe as a review of current practice and opinion on the whole range of surgery of the hand is bound to be difficult to review. However, sympathy with the reviewer must pass from him to the authors when one reads that it was also their intention to produce "a practical guide to current practice in the basic plastic techniques by which primary wound healing is best obtained in the hand"; and at the same time to produce a book of such a size "which might still let it be a reasonably easy book of reference." It is intended as a practical guide for all young general, plastic or orthopaedic surgeons especially for those concerned with the initial treatment of the injured hand, and there can be no doubt that it is a good book. It is clearly written, well illustrated and sufficiently concise to be of value as a handy book of reference in any Casualty Department. Of course it is dogmatic, but how could it be otherwise in a branch of surgery so alive that opinion and practice are constantly changing?

There are four sections; the first, almost equal in length to all the others, deals with the management of the recently injured hand. The section is characterised by excellent photographs which help to reduce description in the text. For example, no less than thirty small photographs on one page are used to describe the technique of transferring a thenar flap; although they are too small for good detail, one can follow the steps without difficulty. In the remaining sections reconstructive procedures are described in some detail and there are also chapters on other conditions, such as infection, rheumatoid arthritis, tumours and congenital abnormalities.

Any concise book of this sort is open to criticism for the very reason that it is often impossible, and usually undesirable, to give an unbiased account of current thought and yet remain brief and practical. I think it is a measure of the authors' success that there are few sections with which one can find fault. I feel, however, that a valuable opportunity was lost in the allocation of only five pages to rheumatoid arthritis, for this is now an important field for any surgeon interested in the hand and moreover a sphere where guidance would be of great value at a time when new surgical techniques are evolving and few can yet be regarded as standard practice. I shall also be surprised if many will agree with the statement that digital pressure on the flexor retinaculum commonly produces a "trigger phenomenon" of the flexor tendons at the wrist with locking of the fingers in flexion in the carpal tunnel syndrome. The method described for division of the transverse carpal ligament, in which it is approached from below after division of the palmar fascia, seems to offer little advantage over the more usual direct approach. These are all small points of criticism and their relative insignificance serves only to underline the high standard achieved. The authors have accomplished their aim and produced a short, readable and up-to-date account of present practice in hand surgery.—D.R. SWEETNAM.

Theory of Shoulder Mechanism: Descriptive and Applied. By A. K. SAHA, B.Sc., M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S.(Eng.), F.R.C.S.(Edin.), M.Ch.Orth.(L'pool), Professor of Surgery, Nilratan Sircar Medical College; Postgraduate Lecturer in Orthopaedic Surgery, University College of Medicine, Calcutta University; Hunterian Professor, The Royal College of Surgeons of England. With a Foreword by Edward L. COMPERE, M.D. 9¼×6½ in. Pp. xii+107, with 78 figures and 2 charts. Index. 1961. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications Ltd. Price 44s.

This interesting monograph deals with the careful investigations carried out by Professor Saha on shoulder movements, articular surfaces and the contact areas in different positions, and with his valuable contributions on the subject of muscular action, made possible by electromyographic study of all muscles operating on the shoulder over its complex range of movements. The importance of the zero position, when the humerus is aligned with the spine of the scapula, is stressed, an extension of the work of Milch.