The Ruminations of an Orthopaedic Surgeon. By George PERKINS, M.C., M.Ch., F.R.C.S. 19×13 cm. Pp. vii+188, with 95 figures. Index. 1970. London: Butterworth & Co (Publishers) Ltd. Price £1.50.

This superb and well illustrated collection of short essays on many facets of orthopaedic surgery proves to be fascinating, witty, instructive, thought-provoking and (on occasion) totally outrageous. The heading under which each essay is placed will vary with the individual reader. In the preface the author states that "these snippets are intended to be taken, like brandy, in sips", and there is no doubt that the bottle is of a noble vintage which should be sampled by every orthopaedic surgeon.

As Thackeray said, "There has rarely been offered at so reasonable a price, a volume containing so much cause for rejoicing and so little for regret, so much of good and so little of harm".—R. C. F. CATTERALL.

Birth Defects. Original Article Series. Volume V, No. 3. The First Conference on The Clinical Delineation of Birth Defects. Part III, Limb Malformations. Held at The Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland, May 20–25, 1968. Edited by Daniel BERGSMAN, M.D.; Associate Editors, Victor A. MCKUSICK, M.D., Judith G. HALL, M.D., Charles I. SCOTT, M.D.; Assistant Editor, Fremont R. ABLIN; and Art and Production Director, Hal L. CHILDS. 27×22 cm. Pp. 234, with many figures and tables. Index. 1969. New York: The National Foundation—The March of Dimes. Agents for the United Kingdom—Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone. Price £7.

Several papers in this well produced book are devoted to the important aspect of classification of congenital limb malformations but the differing views expressed are confusing and terms such as "peromelia" and "ectromelia", which are widely used, are of little value. Freire-Maia brings a large amount of data regarding etiology and genetic counselling into focus.

There is an excellent chapter by Milton Alter on dermatoglyphics in which he draws attention to the increasing number of birth defects associated with unusual dermatoglyphics. The majority of these abnormalities are chromosomal aberrations and this is an excellent discussion on the uses and limitations of dermatoglyphics in diagnosis.

A large part of the book, and the part which is probably of greatest value to the orthopaedic surgeon, is the synopsis of hand malformations with particular emphasis on genetic factors by Temtamy and McKusick. Much of this paper is based on a Ph.D. thesis by Temtamy and the framework of the presentation is an original and valuable classification. This is the most practical classification in the entire book, and of particular value to a surgeon who may have to decide on operation is the section on radial defects. There has been a great increase in the incidence of this condition over the past few years, and it is one of the commonest features attributed to thalidomide, but the authors stress the association of radial defects with other conditions, such as Fanconi's pancytopenia, thrombocytopenia, the Holt-Oram syndrome and the trisomy-18 syndrome.

The remainder of the book is taken up with a well documented and well illustrated report of unusual, and sometimes previously unreported, syndromes.

This book would be a welcome addition to the bookshelf of any surgeon who is interested in the genetics of orthopaedic disease and, in particular, for those surgeons who hold clinics for congenital limb abnormalities or hand clinics.—D. W. LAMB.

Birth Defects. Original Article Series. Volume V, No. 4. The First Conference on The Clinical Delineation of Birth Defects. Part IV, Skeletal Dysplasias. Held at The Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland, May 20–25, 1968. Edited by Daniel BERGSMAN, M.D.; Scientific Editors, Victor A. MCKUSICK, M.D., John P. DORST, M.D., Charles I. SCOTT, M.D.; Assistant Editor, Marjorie W. LORBER; and Art and Production Director, Hal L. CHILDS. 27×22 cm. Pp. 396, with many figures and tables. Index. 1969. New York: The National Foundation—The March of Dimes. Agents for the United Kingdom—Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. Price £11.50.

These dysplasias are rare or very rare indeed, with the result that the ordinary practising orthopaedic surgeon sees only an occasional patient in his working lifetime, and must therefore rely for his knowledge on the experience and researches of the few whose expertise attracts such patients from a very wide area. It is these experts from all over the world who have for the first time met together to discuss their work. This book lets us all share a little of their knowledge otherwise only to be found scattered through a host of scientific journals.