range of subjects, and tended to be brief reviews of work published in full elsewhere. This superficiality and lack of originality is really inherent in a symposium of this type and does not reflect on the undoubted distinction of those who spoke.

The reader will be grateful to find so much diverse information compressed into one volume and the good bibliography of each paper will provide a guide to further reading.


This is a record of a symposium on foetal and neonatal medicine held in Bad Schachen, Western Germany, in May 1965. It was attended by 32 paediatricians and obstetricians (all except 2 coming from Western Germany) and they must have worked hard to deliver and discuss 31 communications in 2 days. Subjects were divided into: disturbances of adaptation of the newborn; therapy of asphyxia; prematurity; and neonatal infections.

The first of these was concerned with foetal and placental physiology, with contributions by E. Saling and F. Kubli, obstetricians whose observations on the blood gases and pH of foetal blood samples during labour made the discussion on foetal distress particularly valuable. G. von Muralt reported that maternal-to-foetal bleeding was not uncommon in normal deliveries.

Other subjects discussed included most of those that regularly feature in symposia devoted to neonatal medicine—diabetic pregnancy, respiratory distress syndrome, the use of THAM in the newborn, postnatal hypoglycaemia—subjects that are currently occupying the attention of workers in many centres, and to which these authors were able, here and there, to contribute new, interesting, and occasionally important observations. Therefore, though this symposium seems to have covered quite similar ground to that of other symposia such as the Ciba ‘Somatic Stability of the Newly Born’, held in London in 1961, and the Nutricia ‘Adaptation of the Newborn Infant to Extra-uterine Life’, held in Groningen in 1964, any worker in this discipline with at least a smattering of German will find it well worth his while to scan this account.

The book is admirably produced with many diagrams and adequate references, amongst which the reader ignorant of the German literature will certainly discover some useful papers.


In a sagacious forward Sir Wilfrid Sheldon writes: ‘I found the reading of this book most stimulating, perhaps because it set me thinking and asking myself innumerable questions . . . ’ Compiled not for physical medicine specialists but for paediatricians, surgeons, and general practitioners, it will set them thinking too, and answer some of the important questions that are increasingly being asked about the care of children.

The editor first describes the scope of physical medicine and the aims of treatment, and summarizes the crucial differences between paediatric and adult physical medicine. A fine chapter on growth, by Tanner, is followed by one on ‘Physical Fitness’ which shows not only that more problems of physical development than of organic disease are referred to the physical medicine department, but that the old idea of regimental ‘physical jerks’ is now being superseded. A chapter on posture includes a good description of skeletal growth, muscle tone and balance, and neuromuscular control. After these broad discussions come the more detailed practical sections: orthopaedic disorders including poliomyelitis; cerebral palsy, with a reasoned and wide approach to the problems of the whole child; electrodiagnosis, hypotonia, and ‘the floppy infant’; rheumatic diseases (without acute rheumatism); a useful and well-illustrated chapter on chest disorders; and finally one on convalescence.

It is a welcome sign of the times that a book on ‘physical medicine’ deals with so much more than the narrow physical aspects. Quotations from the chapter on cerebral palsy, as an example, are almost an epitome of modern paediatrics. ‘Cerebral palsy cannot be dealt with as a matter of physical medicine alone . . . in treatment and management the child must be considered as a whole and as part of the family, and not merely as something for which a certain amount of bending and stretching can be prescribed.’ ‘As adolescence approaches, stabilization of the personality becomes of greater importance than stabilization of the trunk and limbs, for it is on the child’s personality that his ultimate adaptation to society will depend.’ If there are still doctors who scribble on a form ‘For physio.’, and leave it at that, they will do well to read what the team of enthusiastic experts who write in this book say so well; and they will discover how broad and how rewarding has become what was once a limited and rather dull form of therapy. Those who try to help the child in every possible way will be grateful to the editor and his colleagues for providing a book, focused not on techniques and minutiae (important though they are), but on principles of diagnosis and treatment, to which they will constantly be referring.


There is little specifically paediatric about the electrocardiography in this book. A considerable portion of this small volume is devoted to a brief account of the general aspects of electrocardiography including recorders and routine interpretation. To a reader quite