I find their style too ‘American’, too near the cartoon for my liking, but it would be interesting to hear the views of a group of mothers who use the book.

The only real regret is that such a useful book has not yet come out as a ‘paperback’ at a cost within the reach of every family.


This latest edition of Professor Ellis’s textbook appears only four years after the previous one, and is completely up to date. The work has not the size of the massive compilations more usual nowadays, but it has the advantage of being written by one man and so has a uniformity of outlook which makes for easy study. The book is written with immense erudition; the reader will find almost every paediatric symptom and syndrome mentioned, and there is an extensive index which makes reference simple. The print is big and clear, the illustrations are profuse, several in colour; and many of them are very striking. As befits its author, whose Chair is of Child Life and Health, the chapters on Social and Environmental Factors in Disease, Constitutional Factors in Disease, and Disorders of Growth and Development, are quite outstanding. Great stress is rightly laid on prenatal and neonatal paediatrics which takes up over one-third of the book.

Such defects as the book has, are the shadows of its virtues. Its format is large, and because of the good art paper used, it is heavy and uncomfortable to hold. So much has been crammed into a volume of medium size that many references are necessarily sketchy in the extreme—so much so that one wonders whether pruning might not have been advantageous. Professor Ellis is acutely aware of the immense variety, both in health and disease, shown by his young subjects, so that ‘is likely to’ and ‘in most cases’ have spoiled the sparkle of his style. His use of ‘outwith’ sent me to a (Scottish) dictionary: I do not know whether ‘calorie’ for ‘Calorie’ is a similar Edinburgh usage.

The book is extremely good value, and the student who masters it will have a complete framework in which to file his future experiences.


In this neat little monograph Dr. Apley deals with the problem of what he would like to have called ‘little belly-achers’ by applying, as best he can, the scientific method to the study of a loosely defined and certainly many-headed monster of a syndrome by objectively comparing his own material with control groups of children; he has managed to keep us informed and entertained. But he has achieved much more; for as, one by one, he matched each aspect of the syndrome against his controls, and tested various hypotheses of causation in the cold light of validity, he gradually abandoned his own bias towards ‘organic causes (and organic cures) . . .’ and has come to believe that, except for a very small proportion with frank organic disease, children with the periodic syndrome have emotional tension as a constant background, and that, for the most part, the pains are abolished or greatly relieved with the kind of informal psychology that can be applied in a paediatric clinic.

Amongst many other things Dr. Apley tells us that as against control groups those with the abdominal pain syndrome have other troubles like headaches, vomiting and travel sickness; that the E.E.G.s are normal in 74% of both groups and epileptiform slightly more often in those without than those with the syndrome; that drugs like phenobarbitone, sodium citrate, phenytoin, troxidone, oblivon as well as ‘old-fashioned mixtures’ might seem effective, but that their effects are variable, unpredictable and often transient; that less than 8% of his cases have any organic findings responsible for the condition and that one in 10 is considered to need referring to a psychiatric colleague for advice and treatment and that these are usually easy to recognize and always come from families showing evidence of marked anxiety states. All these and many other similar statements are backed up with appropriate figures.

Dr. Apley’s style is dextrous and persuasive; those who find his conclusions difficult to subscribe to, or have picked up lazy ways with phenobarbitone and slick reassurance should first read this delightful and easy little book of 82 pages and then return, chastened, to out-patient clinics to find a new interest in an old and troublesome condition.


This pocket book covers the whole range of medicinal treatment during childhood excellently. It makes disconnected reading so it has been tried by use for three months in a children’s department and has been found practical and reliable; one minor misprint and a few omissions of preparations used idiosyncratically by the reviewer, but no major faults, have turned up.

The introduction deals sensibly with dosage in children and is in itself worth publishing. The major part of the book deals with a formulary of preparations acting on allergy, on blood, on the cardiovascular system, etc. The list of medications includes proprietary preparations, and is interspersed with pithy warnings and guides to therapy, resembling but by no means copying, the Alternative Edition of the British National Formulary. This book is a marvel of industry as a compilation, but it bears an individual and critical stamp on almost every page, i.e. it is the composition of an author, not of an editor.

The mixture and the tablet are not the only considerations. There are sections on correction of fluid and electrolyte disturbances, poisons and antidotes, milk and milk products, as well as drugs used for the newborn and a Table of preoperative medication. Perhaps Gaubius’ method and Young’s rule for calculating doses might in future be omitted from the appendix, they might deceive the unwary into treating meningitis in