this volume and less exciting than the other contributions. It is, however, thoughtful and stimulating, even though it reads like an address at a training college for missionaries and students intending to devote their medical career to the tropics.

Viral Infection in the Foetus and Premature Newborn Infant, by Drs. Eichenwald and Shenefield, is another valuable reference essay, carefully paragraphed to make it easy to follow. It contains an interesting discussion on the viral causation of infantile gastro-enteritis which, however, still leaves one baffled to know, not so much whether, but how frequently viruses are responsible for this condition. But surely they are mistaken in saying, and giving Warkany as reference, that the organogenetic period in man is terminated by the end of the second month of gestation.

The final contribution by Professor Fanconi on the Physiology and the Disturbance of Calcium and Phosphate Metabolism is a really lucid account of the very confusing merry-go-round which results from the interaction of calcium and phosphate absorption, their deposition as mineral and their excretion through the kidneys or gut, all under the influence of parathyroid hormone and vitamin D.

These five reviews are authoritative and lucid and if they remain essentially reviews of the literature and give no great feeling either of original contributions or participating in the very vanguard of the advancing army of medical knowledge, any paediatrician who has read and mastered them will have equipped himself to understand a very wide sector of childhood disease, our knowledge of which has changed so fantastically not only since before the war but even in the past decade. The editor is on the whole to be congratulated in his choice both of subjects and contributors.


The 1961-62 volume of the Year Book maintains the high tradition of previous numbers of the paediatric series. It is a most useful collection of the papers published that year, but almost the best part of the book is the editor’s comments. These are always shrewd and informative. Furthermore, it adds to the interest of each paper to guess the sort of comments which it is likely to receive.

The vast majority of the papers included are from North America, and whether this is because in fact the best and largest quantity of investigatory work is being done there, or whether difficulties in translation limit the editor’s choice, or whether it merely reflects the paradoxical insularity of this large half Continent, may be left to the reader’s prejudice to decide. This reviewer would favour the first alternative, but in any case it is a little disappointing for the European.

Every paediatrician but the most omnivorous and intensive reader of the journals will find something new in the Year Book, and it could be thoroughly recommended as a good buy, were it not for the price in shillings, which is somewhat excessive for the private individual.


This book consists of a collection of articles on a variety of paediatric subjects originally published in the Muenchener Medizinische Wochenschriften. As stated in the preface, the authors aim to present modern knowledge and advances in paediatrics to ‘all doctors engaged in the examination and treatment of sick children’. All 11 contributors have been drawn from the staff of the department of Paediatrics at the University of Würzburg, and the book purposely sets out to put forward and present the views and work of that department. As a result of this, in many instances one has the impression of careful, meticulous reading of the literature rather than of personal experience.

Most subjects chosen have been approached from the point of view of a broad, generalized presenting symptom, e.g. ‘the underweight child’, ‘the overweight child’, ‘the highly strung child’, ‘the yellow child’, and are carefully thought out and arranged, and many excellent graphs, photographs, radiographs as well as concise case histories are used to illustrate various points. However, the attempt to cover too many aspects of each chosen subject and the very wide covering of the world literature makes lengthy reading.

 Principally there is insufficient differentiation between what is and what is not important. Thus thyrotoxicosis and the Waterhouse Friderichsen syndrome are dealt with in half a page, whereas phaeochromocytoma and carcinoid tumour of the appendix respectively merit some two pages each. Some chapters cover a more concise field, e.g. ‘those on cerebral birth trauma’ and on ‘surgical conditions in the newborn’, and these read very much better.

Frequently one is aware of differences between the German and British school of thought. There are descriptions of clinical entities which are no longer recognized here, ‘neuropathy’ and ‘lymphoneuropathy’ are described with distinctive physical signs, and status thymolymphaticus is quoted as an important cause of sudden death. The view is expressed that sedation of restless ‘neuropathic’ infants is reprehensible, and that thumbsucking should not be tolerated. Infants may be protected from ‘dyspepsia’, as infantile gastro-enteritis is still referred to, by the timely introduction of animal and vegetable purées with ‘stool improving properties’. Modern views on the aetiology of gastro-enteritis are not mentioned. The reasons why preparations like carrot soup or apple purée are often beneficial are not clearly presented.

The British reader may turn to this book as an interesting example of present-day German paediatric thinking rather than for gaining postgraduate knowledge.