

Obstetrics in general practice. Specially commissioned articles from the *British Medical Journal*. 1966. British Medical Association. London. Pp. 180. Price 30s.

This is a collection of 18 articles, revised since their first publication in the *British Medical Journal* in 1964, designed to give a practical account of obstetrics in the home or general-practitioner hospital. In preparing their contributions the specialist authors were asked to collaborate with a general practitioner, three of whom are listed as co-authors, the help of 16 others being acknowledged. Only five of the 18 have been compiled without general-practitioner aid.

In a book by many authors from a variety of obstetric centres (Birmingham and Edinburgh are notable exceptions) there are sure to be differences of opinion and emphasis; it is none the worse for that. For instance Chester, given the task of choosing equipment for domiciliary work, includes Hamilton's book for rupturing the forewaters, with Gelder's amniotomy forceps as an alternative. Sheffield, however, advises the general practitioner never to carry out surgical induction or even strip the membranes in the home. Sheffield would permit him to give castor oil for induction but this is anathema to Bristol. Newcastle has a foot in both camps, seeing no intrinsic reason against home induction but advising that it be done in hospital. Dublin favours dealing with occipito-posterior cases in the home rather than by emergency admission while Bangor regards a mere past history of toxæmia as a reason for consultation with a specialist. Liverpool cannot visualize microscopical and cultural examination of the urine unless the patient is admitted to hospital, and manages to have two minds of its own five pages apart (seven days as originally published), seeing no place for the home treatment of albuminuria at any stage of pregnancy and giving a routine for the domiciliary treatment of pyelonephritis.

Clearly there is room for manoeuvre in obstetrics. The general practitioner, knowing his own capabilities, the home background, the patient's wishes and the standard of attention available at local specialist and general-practitioner hospitals can select what is best suited to the needs of the individual patient. This book is a valuable guide to modern obstetrics which will help him to make an appropriate choice. It achieves its aim of being practical and covers the ground adequately without going into too much detail in matters which will not be his concern. He may not regard every word of it as gospel but he will be a better obstetrician for having read it, a task which he will find agreeable and stimulating, the more so because of its variation of style and outlook from chapter to chapter.

EXACTA, medical reference tables and data for the medical and nursing profession. Compiled and edited by IAN REID ENTWISTLE. Birkenhead. Pictorettes Ltd. Price 5s. 6d.

This booklet 6½ inches by 3½ inches contains 28 pages of tables useful to doctors and nurses. It is up to date, and easy to handle. Once the way round it has been learnt it will make a handy reference book, but it has no contents page or index.