Perspectives and Horizons in Microbiology, edited by SELMAN A. WAKSMAN. Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, N.J., 1955, 220 pp., $ 3.50.

On 7th June 1954 a distinguished company of microbiologists gathered at Rutgers University New Jersey for the dedication of a new Institute of Microbiology. The foundation of the Institute owes almost everything to the distinguished work of its first director (Dr. SELMAN A. WAKSMAN) on streptomycin. In Dr. WAKSMAN's own words "This Institute will devote its efforts to the study of the smallest forms of life, the microbes, wherever they are found and no matter what their activities may be". This broad interest is reflected in the Symposium which accompanied the dedication and of which this book forms the printed record. Thirteen eminent and active workers drawn from various fields of microbiology discoursed under three main headings: the microbe as a living system, metabolism of microorganisms, and microorganisms and higher forms of life.

As was fitting for the occasion many speakers were concerned with the challenge of unsolved problems rather than with reciting past or present achievements; the latter were used mainly to emphasize hopeful methods of approach or what VAN NIEL terms "break through" discoveries. In a rapidly growing science it is a good thing to stop occasionally and try to re-focus the real objectives—it is only too easy to be dazzled, if not misled, by impressive detailed advances in limited fields. In this perception of true perspectives the Symposium succeeds admirably. The inclusions of "horizons" in the title is not so fortunate, nor does it reflect the contributions. Horizons continually retreat before one and their pursuit (like that of the rainbow's end) may stimulate rosy speculation of what lies forever beyond our view rather than a proper attention to shaping a course towards our ultimate port.

For reasons springing from their biological properties, microbes have become popular tools for research in other fields—biochemistry, genetics and so on. Another thread running through many contributions is a plea, sometimes rightly passionate, for more consideration of the life of the organism itself.

If any microbiologist should be short of a problem he will find a wide selection set out in this book; he need not be discouraged by the thought that the eminent writers have not solved them already—there are too many. But if he has read this book he will at least start out in the right frame of mind.

D. D. WOODS (Oxford)

Aspects du métabolisme des stéroïdes hormonaux, par GREGORY PINCUS, *Actualités biochimiques*, Editions Desoer, Liège, et Masson et Cie., Paris 1955, 108 pp. avec 23 figures et 37 tableaux, 1000 francs.

Ce livre, préfacé par R. COURRIER et J. ROCHE, représente le texte de six conférences prononcées par G. PINCUS au Collège de France; ces conférences constituent les six chapitres du présent ouvrage: I. Les corticostéroïdes surrénaux et leur biosynthèse *in vitro*, II. La genèse des corticostéroïdes (rôle de l'ACTH), III. La corticostéroïdogenèse chez l'homme, IV. La biogenèse des hormones sexuelles, V. Aspects fonctionnels du métabolisme des stéroïdes: les hormones sexuelles, VI. Vieillissement et sénescence. Appendice: Sur la parthénogenèse de l'oeuf de Lapin. Bibliographie de 157 références.

Mise au point très intéressante contenant en grande partie les résultats expérimentaux du laboratoire de l'auteur même; cet ouvrage sera lu avec profit par tous ceux qui s'intéressent aux problèmes si actuels posés par le métabolisme des stéroïdes hormonaux.

E. LEDERER (Paris)