Preface

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The heart and the circulation are constantly being subjected to numerous and varied stresses, to which they adapt by both intrinsic and extrinsic mechanisms, in particular through the intervention of the central and autonomic nervous systems. During the last few years there has been renewed interest in this neural regulation of cardio-circulatory adaptation, the basic elements of which have been known since the middle of the last century. It had therefore become necessary to take stock of our current knowledge and of the relations between progress in physiology and its clinical application.

One particular aspect of cardio-circulatory regulation is orthostatic adaptation. The problem of orthostasis, a phenomenon long-since analysed but then generally disregarded by clinicians, is enjoying a revival of interest thanks to the development of haemodynamic methodology, a better understanding of the regulation of venous return, etc. Although the interest of clinicians and pathophysiologists has, in the last few decades been centred on valvular, myocardial, or coronary disease, it is clear that the problem of circulatory homeostasis cannot be neglected. This is especially true of orthostatic regulation, owing to the physiological interest of the questions and their application in clinical practice, whether it is a matter of ortho-static hypotension, or of the deconditioning effects of immobilisation, or space medicine, or the effect of new drugs, etc. This book therefore has the merit of presenting current concepts in an important field of pathophysiology and of drawing the reader's attention to the fundamental mechanisms of cardio-circulatory regulation, to pathologic disturbances and the means of analysing and of treating them. The old test for ortho-stasis can thus take its place again among the methods of clinical evaluation.

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ation, provided that it is correctly carried out and correctly analysed by modern haemodynamic methods.

The European Society of Cardiology is pleased to have been able to organise this symposium and to have the opportunity of publishing the contributions of such eminent research workers, thanks to the collaboration of SANDOZ, to whom we express our gratitude.