If, as seems probable, the book is intended for neurosurgeons, then it is difficult to find any major fault. Little attempt has been made to write for the paediatrician to whom the early presentation of neurosurgical conditions will often have several non-neurosurgical explanations. Similarly the paediatric neurosurgeon working mainly in a children’s hospital where he will be faced with those more obscure clinical problems about which the paediatricians consult him, will wish for more help concerning other paediatric diseases which may be confused with those dealt with in this book; for example the last chapter entitled 'Differential Diagnosis' is simply a list, without comment, of a wide range of childhood diseases. A description of the mimicry of intracranial tumours in some of these conditions would have been far more helpful.

This beautifully produced volume is nevertheless a valuable product of its distinguished publishers.

**Inherited Disorders of Sulphur Metabolism.**

Any publication of the proceedings of meetings of the Society for the Study of Inborn Errors of Metabolism is worthy of serious consideration. This Society is British in origin but now has an international membership including some of the foremost paediatric biochemists and biochemically orientated paediatricians in the world. The present publication is the proceedings of their July 1970 Symposium on the subject forming the title of this book. With individual authors being in virtually every case the acknowledged expert in their field, and the book appearing less than a year after the congress, it represents a most useful up-to-date account of these disorders, together with some interesting glimpses into the future. Not only are the biochemical lesions of cystinuria and cystinosis, of homocystinuria and cystathioninuria dealt with, but appropriately to the present time, considerable attention is given to the treatment of these conditions, particularly homocystinuria.

In addition to the more comprehensive treatment of these four classical disorders of sulphur metabolism, useful chapters are included on analytical techniques, and on methionine metabolism and methioninaemia. The value of the book is enhanced as individual authors have been encouraged to provide a comprehensive bibliography for their subjects; the drawback that the book carries is its cost which for a small book such as this is excessive.


This book presents a detailed analysis of the mortality and morbidity of 5249 children born with birthweight of less than 2·50 kg in the 'Schopf-Merei' Maternity Hospital in Budapest between 1955 and 1963. Growth and development of 2267 of these infants born between 1958 and 1960 were studied for 3 years and some interesting observations are made. As expected, congenital anomalies, birth trauma, and blood group incompatibilities figured prominently both in the 'early' and 'late' mortality groups, and while the death rate between the ages of 1 and 36 months was still 12% in 1955 this had fallen to 6% by 1963. There was no direct correlation between birthweight and late mortality except in children with birthweight of less than 1 kg. No figures for congenital defects at birth are given, but 8·8% of children surviving the first month of life are found to have abnormalities and despite subsequent deaths their incidence is still 6·9% due to late ascertaining. At 3 years, 1 in 5 children were found to have some defect or another.

The analysis of incremental growth is particularly fascinating. Both boys and girls with low birthweights gain 0·5 kg more than children with normal birthweights in the first year of life. This weight gain is not subsequently maintained and was found to be less than in the normal group for both the second and third years of life. The increase in total body length, chest, and head circumference is also greater in the first year of life of the low birthweight babies than in the normal controls, and the authors conclude that this is probably due to good medical management.

The book is well produced and both tables and diagrams are clear. The nature of the data as well as the detailed statistical analysis does not make for easy reading, and it is a pity that the material is biased by the exclusion of 662 children with serious congenital abnormality, birth injury, and other defects. Occasional errors such as the comparison of the 1 month to 3 year mortality for low birthweight babies with the infant mortality for Hungary do not detract from the value of the work, and it should find a readership among doctors and statisticians interested in the fate of the immature and dysmature children and their growth patterns.