polymers. Nevertheless, plastics are organic chemicals and many of the agents used in their production are potentially harmful to cellular activity. Thus it is important that those using plastic materials should have a knowledge of polymers and access to the qualitative composition of these industrial products.

This book will be valuable for those who are developing new methods of treatment which involve the use of polymers in contact with the body, for those who are concerned with the development of standards and the specification of devices, and for those in the plastics industry who may be called upon to advise on or supply materials for various medical purposes.—John T. Scales.


This symposium concerned with the present status of inherited disorders of brain and muscle is quite fascinating, indeed difficult to put down. Despite its advanced biochemistry and reference to many enzymes unfamiliar to orthopaedic surgeons, the various contributors express themselves well and with clarity for those of us who are laymen in these complex fields.

What it details is the rapid elucidation of the many inherited myopathies and neuropathies. Orthopaedic surgeons dealing in children’s diseases will see these from time to time in association with their paediatric and neurological colleagues or more rarely presenting at their own out-patients.

What is happening is that the many genetic diseases already known to us as being biochemically defined. Each gene controls one enzyme and by alteration, overproduction or altered destruction several inherited diseases can occur in relation to each of the many enzymes. The consequence is that the number of such diseases recognised is increasing rapidly and in the next decade or so we will see a dramatic delineation of the many errors in the extremely complicated enzyme relationships that occur in neuromuscular activity. When these are understood much will be clarified in these mysterious diseases. No doubt some will be treatable and others will be recognised in potential parents by alterations of the serum enzyme levels and it may be possible to avoid the birth of children with such diseases.

Though a far cry from everyday orthopaedics this is a wonderful look into the future for those who are interested in what one aspect of medicine will look like in years to come.—J. I. P. James.


This book can be recommended to those who want a comprehensive guide to the literature on this subject and a summary of 1854 articles and other published work. Dr Gruber sums up this vast amount of work in little more than a score of pages, in the course of which he eliminates from practicable application nearly all the substances that have been used at one time or another to replace blood. He also reminds his readers that much of what has been established for laboratory animals may be entirely irrelevant for sick and injured human beings. The two translators have done their job well but there are a few spelling mistakes.—P. S. London.


“Clinical diagnosis is the essential preliminary to correct treatment. It is for the clinician to decide how much further investigation is needed. Too much investigation presents almost as many dangers as too little.”

With these points in mind the author commences with sections on history taking and the general examination of a patient. The chapters which follow on common forms of arthritis, the shoulder, peripheral nerves and the knee are good. Backache is considered in detail. The author regrettably did not live to see his book published, which may explain why the reproduction of radiographs is uneven throughout the book. Figure 31 is upside down and in Figure 50 the right upper limb is flail, not the left. The tests and aids to diagnostic assessment should prove useful to junior orthopaedic staff for whom the book has been written, but the price may be beyond them.—J. Piggot.