Mineral Metabolism. An Advanced Treatise. Edited by C. L. COMAR, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York; and Felix BRONNER, Hospital for Special Surgery, Cornell Medical Center, New York, New York. With ten other contributors. Volume I. Principles, Processes and Systems. Part B. $9\frac{1}{2} \times 6\frac{1}{2}$ in. Pp. xvi+538, with 26 figures, many diagrams, and 17 tables. Index. 1961. New York and London: Academic Press Inc., Publishers. Price 103s. 6d.

This is one part of the first volume of a two-volume treatise on Mineral Metabolism. It contains contributions by international authorities, most of them working in the United States, but some writing from places as far apart as New Zealand and Denmark. The six chapters deal with the hormonal control of calcium, phosphorus, iodine, iron, sulphur, magnesium, sodium, potassium, chloride and water metabolism; with the minerals in non-osseous connective tissues; with the metabolism and homeostatic function of bone; with the dental aspects of the structure and metabolism of mineralised tissues, and with interrelationships with enzymes.

It is clear that this work has been projected on a grand scale. Mineral metabolism is observed in its widest sense, and minerals are taken to include elements as dissimilar as calcium and sulphur. Such a broad sweep is both a weakness and a strength. A weakness because this volume alone (and how much more would this not be true of the entire work?) ranges over a field far wider than is normally encompassed by any single individual. Mineral metabolism is not a recognised speciality, either in clinical surgery or in fundamental research. Inevitably, therefore, there will be much that is of little or no interest to any particular reader, and the links connecting the different chapters and parts sometimes appear extremely tenuous. Moreover, individual chapters sometimes cover such a wide field as to be beyond the scope of a single writer, and are therefore of unequal value. On the other hand, one cannot but admire the vision of the editors in bringing together workers from such different fields and assembling so beautifully such a mass of heterogeneous information. One must also agree that the watertight compartments in which scientific knowledge is pursued are inherently undesirable, and that a work like the present one may do something to break them down.

From the point of view of readers of this journal, it is the chapter on the Metabolism and Homeostatic Function of Bone by Bauer, Carlsson and Lindquist which will attract the greatest interest, and in this chapter it is those parts dealing with the behaviour of bone-seeking isotopes and the determination of accretion rate which will be most useful. This triumvirate has long led the field in the use of radioisotopes for measurement of bone formation rate, but their work has appeared piecemeal in a variety of journals, and their reputation has been based as much upon their personal appearance at scientific meetings as upon their publications. Their contribution to this book brings together in an impressive manner their data on the behaviour of bone-seeking isotopes, and states their case for the validity of their determination of accretion rate. If some people are not altogether convinced that the accretion rate determined by this method is exactly the same as the true rate of new bone formation, this does not in any way detract from the importance of the work of Bauer and his colleagues nor from the value of their chapter in this book.—B. E. C. NORDIN.

Principles for First Aid for the Injured. By H. PROCTOR, M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S.E., Orthopaedic Surgeon, Birmingham Accident Hospital; and P. S. LONDON, M.B.E., M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S., Surgeon, Birmingham Accident Hospital. With a Foreword by H. S. TAYLOR-YOUNG, F.R.C.S., Surgeon-in-Chief, St John Ambulance Brigade; and F. C. HILTON-SERGEANT, C.B., C.B.E., M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., Medical Adviser to the British Red Cross Society. 9×6 in. Pp. xiii+244, with many figures and tables. Index. 1962. London: Butterworth & Co. (Publishers) Ltd. Price 35s.

This is a first-aid book with a difference. Throughout, the emphasis is upon a proper understanding of injuries and their subsequent management, and in this respect the book is excellent. It is clearly written from experience drawn from the vast clinical material available at the Birmingham Accident Hospital. The authors pay tribute to the late Mr Ruscoe Clarke who first conceived the idea of such a work but was never able to do more than sketch its outline before his untimely death.

Inevitably there are criticisms. Firstly, if this is a book which is to be used by the "First-aider" more details of actual treatment should be included, e.g., techniques of bandaging and splinting. The summaries at the end of each section are useful in this respect, but are rather inclined to assume that this is already known by the reader. Secondly, some of the discussion on the theory of the injuries is much too detailed for the unqualified person doing first aid. A more dogmatic and concise description is indicated. The section on shock is a good example of a rambling text which could have been reduced without detriment. Lastly, a number of the illustrations, particularly the photographs and radiographs,