patient, the presence of concomitant medical disease, season of the year, duration of hospitalization, seniority of the surgeon, and the type of suture material were not found to be significant factors. The author is less certain about the use of antibacterial agents, especially topical bacitracin, in preventing infection.

Most of the infections occurred in patients undergoing lumbar disc protrusion surgery. Surprisingly the author recommends excision and packing, and healing by secondary intention as the optimum method of treatment in these cases.

No details are given regarding the ventilation of their operating theatres, but reference is made to the use in other hospitals of 'laminar' ventilation (better named 'unidirectional flow ventilation'), which has superseded ordinary plenum systems. There is no mention of the order of the infected operation case in the operating list, or the day of the week, or the apparent source of the infection. Nor are we told if the infections appeared sporadically or as an 'epidemic'. There is scanty reference to bacteriological aspects and this is a notable fault of this otherwise valuable study, which includes a useful survey of the literature on the subject of post-operative wound infections in general, and in neurosurgery in particular.

P. HARRIS

BAYER-SYMPOSIUM II: NEW ASPECTS OF STORAGE AND RELEASE MECHANISMS OF CATECHOLAMINES Edited by H. J. Schumann and G. Kroneberg. (Pp. 301; DM. 48.) Springer: Berlin. 1970.

Book versions of symposia have, deservedly, gained a dubious reputation in recent years. Many are no more than ill-edited, overwordy collections of papers sold at an inflated price. This book, which comprises the papers given at a Bayer Symposium in October 1969 is, on the contrary, a model of what should be done. The concept that catecholamines are taken up as the intact molecule into the neurones which released them originated some 10 years ago; uptake into extraneuronal cells is an even newer idea. The rate of development has been extraordinarily rapid, reflecting the intense interest and, therefore, the number of workers engaged in the field. The interest stems not only from the important theoretical ideas involved but also from the widespread implications in clinical medicine. For example, the mode of action of many drugs used as antihypertensives involves uptake into the adrenergic neurone.

The present volume fills the need to bring workers up to date with these rapid recent developments in a compact, carefully edited series of papers. The contributors have been selected both as representatives of the most rapidly developing aspects of the field and for their individual authority. A short, edited account of the discussion following each paper provides a valuable counterpoint to the authors' thesis, underlining the areas still in dispute and posing the questions for tomorrow's research.

The book is well produced, including the electron-micrograph and coloured histochemical plates; and finally, the price is reasonable.

This is a volume which can be wholeheartedly recommended to every medical and biological science library

and to a much wider readership of individual medical and biological scientists, including senior undergraduate students.

J. S. GILLESPIE

PEDIATRIC NEUROLOGY By Ingrid Gamstorp. (Pp. xiii + 394; illustrated; £9.00.) Butterworths: London. 1970. We have recently reviewed a number of books on paediatric neurology, reflecting the growth in status of this specialty in other countries and which will surely follow in Great Britain. Dr. Gamstorp is well known for her work on disorders of muscle. She is one of the distinguished few to have a disease named after her. It is, therefore, natural that the chapters on peripheral nerve and muscle are superb. The book is clinically orientated, being arranged according to the dominant symptom, such as convulsions, mental retardation, ataxia, involuntary movements, headache, etc., or in categories such as abnormal growth of the head, malformations, etc. There is a wide coverage but a book of this size cannot devote space to detailed description or review of controversial material. Indeed, the dogmatic approach, so satisfactory for the beginner, may be less acceptable to the experienced neurologist with a difficult paediatric problem. For instance, the presentation of the neurological complications of infections and immunizations is too brief. The most worrying problem for the neurologist with limited paediatric experience is the progressive neurological and mental deterioration, including necrotizing encephalopathy, but the descriptions are too short to be helpful. On the other hand, the examination of the newborn and older children and the use of ancillary methods of investigation are excellent.

The production is very good, well printed and with unusually good illustrations, some in colour. The book is assured of a welcome.

J. A. SIMPSON

HANDBOOK OF CLINICAL NEUROLOGY: Leucodystrophies and poliodystrophies. Edited by P. J. Vinken and G. W. Bruyn. Volume 10. (Pp. 699; illustrated; £23.30) North - Holland: Amsterdam. 1971.

'Today, there exists an extraordinary confusion with respect to the diagnostic implications of the term amaurotic familial idiocy and its subtypes, classified either eponymically or by the age of onset.' Thus Wolfgang Zeman introduces his chapter in Volume 10 of the *Handbook of Clinical Neurology*. This observation might justifiably be extended to all the conditions described in this volume devoted to the leucodystrophies and poliodystrophies. Even the original title '*leucodystrophies and lipidoses*' was considered to be inexact and was consequently changed during its preparation.

Most neurologists have a passing familiarity with these diseases and perhaps feel in view of their rarity and the absence of active treatment that this is all that is required or is justifiable. Furthermore, individual experience shows that standard classifications are either imprecise or too exclusive. One result has been a deplorable tendency to make qualified or hybrid diagnoses, adding to the difficulties of understanding and bringing the classifications into further disrepute.