patients with only 6 deaths, 4 of these deaths occurring in the 66 children who were treated in their first year of life, and all these 4 in the early part of the series. Ehrenpreis compares his 6% death rate with a death rate varying from 20% to 43% in four other series reported by distinguished paediatric surgeons. The care with which he searches for an explanation of this difference is a measure of his modesty. The year of treatment (with regard to the experience of the surgeons concerned), the age of the patients, the extent of the aganglionic segment, enterocolitis, and bowel perforation do not vary sufficiently in the series to explain the difference in the mortality rates. External factors as distinct from the inherent factors are sought and it is shown that the vast majority of deaths in all the series except his own occurred before definitive operation. It is suggested that the blame lies not on management in a paediatric centre but on inadequacy of treatment before reaching that centre. The early transfer of infants with symptoms and signs of intestinal obstruction to centres adequately equipped for the diagnostic and therapeutic management of such children is strongly recommended.

His personal approach to the management of the disease is simple but effective. Diagnosis is made on clinical and radiological grounds; there is no great hurry because the child is going to be conservatively treated. Only in exceptional cases is a rectal biopsy performed. Treatment by intestinal washouts with saline solution is given as often as is needed, perhaps every second or third day. The mother is taught the technique of colonic washout and the child allowed home. In a very small number preliminary colostomy is performed. A definitive procedure is carried out fairly early and frequently at the first admission.

This is a valuable book for the specialist surgeon in its wide review of the subject and extensive bibliography, and for many others in its simply worded clear outline of the pathophysiology of the condition. The reading is easy and the illustrations good.

The Psychiatric Disorders of Childhood. 2nd Edition. By C. R. SHAW and A. R. LUCAS. (Pp. x + 499. £4.50.) London: Butterworths.

There is as yet no very satisfactory shorter textbook on child psychiatry, so that one reviews this relatively new American volume with special interest. What comes across immediately is the individual work style and sense of dedication of the authors—refreshing in an age of so many faceless compilations. Regrettably it is too idiosyncratic for other than the postgraduate in psychiatric training. Much is made of using a humorous approach to the young patient, which may be fine for the experienced clinician, but potentially disastrous for the beginner. There is *something* in the assertion that physical examination seldom contributes much to assessment, but not much.

'Childhood schizophrenia' is the term used to cover psychosis and autism, but neither the nomenclature nor its implications will commend itself to many British readers. Also it seems odd in such a chapter to find no references to the work of Ansell in Sweden, Creak in the U.K., or Rimland in the U.S.A. In the discussion of 'school refusal' no mention is made of depression, nor of important 'triggers' such as accidents, physical illness, or bereavement. Among the causes of brain damage there is no reference to hyperbilirubinaemia or hypoglycaemia in infancy.

In the treatment chapter there is no account of day hospital care, psychodrama, or of Ginot's excellent monograph on group therapy. This is, moreover, a child-orientated approach with little awareness of the subtleties of family dynamics in diagnosis or treatment; nor of the contribution to the social worker, except as a history gatherer. The main facts relating to aetiology, clinical procedures, some specific syndromes, and psychopharmacology are presented clearly, and the book is well produced. It can be recommended to the specialist department in child psychiatry as a useful addition to the library, but neither to the paediatrician nor to the medical student.