references, many to publications as late as 1985.

New to this edition is a chapter on the genetics of epilepsy which provides useful information, though the inclusion of an account of what every schoolboy (or girl) knows about Mendelian inheritance seems inappropriate. Also new is a section on epilepsy and mental handicap by John Corbett.

Other chapters deal with the problems of classification, epidemiology, investigations, medical and surgical treatment, neuropsychiatry, social aspects, and epilepsy in developing countries.

A Textbook of Epilepsy is by far the most comprehensive and up to date account of epilepsy currently available. Every doctor who regularly cares for people with epilepsy should have it available for easy and frequent reference.

D P ADDY
CONSULTANT PAEDIATRICIAN
Dudley Road Hospital,
Birmingham

aetiological arguments. There is a very useful and extensive list of 1057 references.

Unfortunately the style is rather ponderous and the occasional reader will find himself confused by the breadth of some of the sections. Part of the problem resides in the poor quality of certain passages, which may relate to the translation from the author's Dutch, but which lack a crispness necessary in such a difficult text.

There is little critical review of the suggested format for examination or testing, or of the literature base which is used to support and expand the text. This didactic approach to so many aspects of neurology does little to encourage me to explore neurobehavioural concepts further, although as a reference text, for exploration of unfamiliar neurological territory, I have found it useful. Much more a library book than one to have on one's bookcase at home.

N MARLOW
LECTURER IN CHILD HEALTH
Royal Liverpool Children's Hospital,
Alder Hey, Liverpool

Pediatric Behavioural Neurology. Volume 1: Clinical Principles. By C Njikiktjen. Pp 395: 130 Dutch guilders hardback. Suyi Publicaties, 1988. (Distributed by Nedbook Int, PO Box 3113, 1003 AC Amsterdam, The Netherlands.) ISBN 90-72008-02-2.

Traditionally, paediatric neurology and developmental medicine have concentrated on motor and sensory function with principles developed from adult function and dysfunction. Recent moves towards the interpretation of paediatric problems in terms of neural organisation and behavioural concepts are the subject of this single author text. Psychiatric and psychological concepts sit alongside neuroanatomy and physiology in a text aimed at a wide readership: paediatric therapists, psychologists, and neurologists. Most aspects of paediatric neurology are covered, and to some extent reinterpreted, in varying amounts of detail. A proposed and lengthy neuropsychological examination is outlined, followed by an appraisal of aetiological considerations. The final bulk of the book comprises consideration of various neurobehavioural disorders. The author is less successful with conventional neurology than with his interpretation of higher cerebral functions, such as memory and learning, and I remain unconvinced by some of his

Pediatric Neurosurgery. Theoretical Principles and Art of Surgical Techniques. By AJ Raimondi. With contributions by BA Ishak and ZL Noah. Pp 526: DM 780 hardback. Springer-Verlag, 1987. ISBN 3-540-96408-8.

Is it just nostalgia that makes us think that ours is not an age of great medical personalities? Articles are written in a deadpan style designed to give them that extra coating of veracity, books are sterilised by selecting as many authors as possible and even conferences are likely to attract such numbers that anonymity is the rule rather than the exception. But here is a single author text that exemplifies quite a different, and apparently most unfashionable, approach. Anthony Raimondi, paediatric neurosurgeon for many years in Chicago (although the curious will search in vain for details of his provenance among the title pages of this volume), has written a magnificently personal book that could well be subtitled 'How I perform paediatric neurosurgery'.

It starts with close to 200 pages devoted to the basic technical details of the subjects before spending another 100 pages on tumours alone. These might be tedious even for a beginner were it not for the

quality of the illustrations and the startling operative photographs that illuminate the text on almost every page.

If the personality of the author is so exposed in a book then our reaction to what is written will be determined by our personal responses to what the words reveal. Here there is no doubt that one feels in the company of a friend and as with all friendships there are some things to admire and others with which one fervently disagrees. Yet the friendship between author and reader is preserved by recognising that quality of heart whose strengths can survive the most passionate of arguments. And with this volume there is no doubt that (at least to this reviewer's way of thinking, Raimondi's heart is in the right place.

Raimondi demonstrates a brisk disregard for fashion. He suggests, for example, that there are some craniopharyngiomas that cannot be entirely removed (and in whom it would be folly to try). As for untethering the spinal cord, he argues that in some of the dysraphic states the scarring that follows surgery may well produce as much tethering as there was before the operation—a view with which his Chicago colleagues are unlikely to concur.

But is it necessary to have such a book? Do we even need paediatric neurosurgeons? The answer from a country where such a creature as a whole time paediatric surgeon is non-existent (or rather, extinct) would seem to be no, but that is merely to accept our status as a third world nation when advances in health care are being discussed. For the infant (nowadays often premature), the toddler, and the young child all neurosurgical procedures deserve the attention of a specialist, while for children of any age there are some conditions, particularly those related to abnormalities of development, that are seen so rarely in adult practice that they should surely be dealt with by those for whom exclusivity of practice has allowed a wide experience to be gained. At the very least, paediatric neurosurgical cases should be looked after in a paediatric environment, a situation that still does not exist for some units within these islands.

Of course, there should be paediatric neurosurgeons and for them all I recommend this book. For the beginner, the friendly presentation of technical detail will puff away the mystique that always hovers around the neurosurgical world and allow experience to be gained in safety. For those who are already experienced, there is plenty here with which to agree and with