Recent Advances in Myology Proceedings of Third International Congress on Muscle Diseases, Newcastle upon Tyne 15-21 September 1974. Edited by W. G. Bradley, D. Gardner-Medwin, and J. N. Walton. (Pp. 578; illustrated; \$74.96/Dfl 180.) Excerpta Medica: Amsterdam. 1975.

This volume comprises over 60 papers along with the proceedings of workshop presentations at the Third International Congress on Muscle Diseases in 1974. The congress had been designed to focus attention on the outstanding problems in neuromuscular diseases, to record the recent advances in knowledge and in techniques of investigation, and to air many of the current controversies on the aetiology of the muscular dystrophies and other neuromuscular disorders. The volume contains the combined opinions of many of the foremost researchers in this field and, as befits a condition whose aetiology has eluded all investigators, particular prominence is given to presentations dealing with the aetiology of the muscular dystrophies. As might have been expected, the controversies remain unresolved, but the student of neuromuscular diseases will find arguments for and against the various hypotheses succinctly stated and discussed.

There are sections dealing with the biochemistry, histochemistry, mechanism of myogenesis, the current state of research in myositis, myotonia, myasthenia gravis, and the spinal muscular atrophies. The amount of scientific data is impressive, and the work reported is both stimulating and at times provocative. The student of neuromuscular diseases will find this volume invaluable in summarising the most up-to-date research in that field, and should not be surprised to learn that the light is not yet visible at the end of the tunnel leading to an understanding of the cause of neuromuscular diseases. Perhaps someone has pointed the way.

This book can be thoroughly recommended.

J. P. BALLANTYNE

3rd Symposium on Neuromuscular Disorders Edited by Zdenek Nesvadba. (Pp. 284; illustrated; price not stated.) Balnea: Praha. 1976.

Although 2½ years have passed since this symposium was held in Prague, the book will undoubtedly be useful to all those interested in neuromuscular

disease. There are many distinguished contributors from Europe and Northern America, and the volume contains information sometimes not readily available in the current literature and occasionally unreported elsewhere. The topics covered include physiology, pathology and morphology of muscle, muscle spindles, epidemiology and genetics of muscle disorders, and there are special sections on spinal muscular atrophy and the myotonic disorders. Printed in paperback on dull, restful paper, in a size to fit the pocket, it does justice to the majority of the illustrations, only a proportion of electron micrographs being inadequately reproduced.

There are useful maps of the innervation zone of many human muscles, which may tempt some to make motor-point biopsies in unusual (and diagnostically useful) sites. Muscle specialists will wish to possess or at least consult this volume.

D. G. F. HARRIMAN

Monographs on Anesthesiology 3. Muscle Relaxants By R. L. Katz. (Pp. 401; illustrated; \$49.95.) Excerpta Medica: Amsterdam. 1975.

This book is the third in a series of monographs on anaesthesiology edited by Dr. Katz who is renowned in this subject. As one would expect, most of the contributors are American anaesthesiologists and pharmacologists. All are experts in the field of neuromuscular transmission and inevitably there is overlap; a different viewpoint is useful and adds to the quality of the contents.

The book is directed towards anaesthetists and covers the physiology and pharmacology of neuromuscular blockers and anticholinesterases; it includes at least two separate accounts of the uptake, distribution, and excretion of these drugs. Anaesthetists will be especially interested in the chapters on clinical considerations in the use of muscle relaxants and on their interaction with volatile anaesthetic agents as well as their special use in obstetrics and paediatrics. Neurologists also may find interest in the chapter on the use of electromyography for evaluation of the response to muscle relaxants. Dr. Francis Foldes writes an excellent account of myasthenia gravis which

includes the care of the myasthenic surgical patient and the management of emergencies.

Errors and misprints are all too common even for a first edition. The bibliography in each chapter is extensive which makes it a very useful reference book but at a cost of £20 most people will think carefully these days before buying it.

JOHN BARKER

Topics in Therapeutics 2 Edited by Paul Turner. (Pp. 227; £6.00.) Pitman Medical: Tunbridge Wells. 1976.

Topics in Therapeutics 2 contains the proceedings of a conference held at the Royal College of Physicians of London in November 1975. The clinical subjects are grouped under four headings—infectious diseases, malignant disease, neurological disorders, and psychiatric disorders—and there is a section devoted to the controversy surrounding prescription by brand or generic names. These short and clearly written accounts should bring us up to date in subjects outside our immediate speciality. By reference to the section on neurology, one may judge the relevance and topicality of the material selected by the editor. Parkinsonism, abnormal movements and spasticity, anticonvulsants, migraine—very little here that will be unfamiliar to the practising neurologist, yet there can be few who would wish to modify these well-presented reviews. In the Goulstonian lecture on oral anticoagulants Professor Breckenridge assesses the various trials upon which our attitudes are based and defines new criteria for subsequent drug trials.

This is a commendably up-to-date and orthodox view of selected therapeutic topics. For day-to-day use it is made less valuable by the absence of an index.

I. T. DRAPER

Growth and Development of the Brain Nutritional, Genetic and Environmental Factors Edited by M. A. B. Brazier. (Pp. 399; illustrated; \$28.50.) Raven Press: New York. 1975.

The International Brain Research Organisation has recently sponsored symposia on neurosciences in addition to organising brain 'workshops' in developing countries. The first of these