fine work of reference will surely go on to future editions. It is a pity that the quality of the contents is not matched by the quality of the cover, for after only a few days of gentle handling much of the title print had worn away.

EDWIN R. BICKERSTAFF

PROGRESS IN THE TREATMENT OF PARKINSONISM D. B. Calne. (Pp. 326; illustrated; \$22.00.) North-Holland: Amsterdam. 1973.

Advances in Neurology, vol. 3, records the proceedings of a meeting on 'Progress in the Treatment of Parkinsonism', held at the Royal Postgraduate Medical School in January 1973. A broad range of topics was covered by speakers invited from many parts of Europe, and the discussions published convey the lively atmosphere of the meeting. Particular attention was given to selective inhibitors of extracerebral decarboxylase, plasma levodopa estimations, cerebrospinal amine metabolites, and the use of selective dopamine receptor stimulating agents. The clinical problems of long-term levodopa therapy, including the 'on-off' effect, were reviewed, as were the biochemical abnormalities in the Parkinsonian brain, animal models of Parkinson's disease, and the mechanisms of drug-induced Parkinsonism. This excellently produced volume can be warmly recommended to all interested in Parkinson's disease and the pharmacology of the extrapyramidal system.

C. D. MARSDEN

ABOUT EPILEPSY By D. Scott. 2nd edn. (Pp. 189; illustrated; £3.45.) Duckworth: London. 1973.

This little book is an updated version of the first edition of 1969 designed 'for those who will encounter epileptic people professionally, such as nurses, social workers and teachers'. Also, it is designed to offer an introductory account of epilepsy for medical students, and information for parents, relatives, and patients. Within a compass of 189 pages this is perhaps an ambitious over-diversification, but in general it meets its aims. The real emphasis of the book appears in the later chapters—namely, the author's plea for a changing social climate for the epileptic patient. He points out the proliferation of committees and recommendations about epilepsy which have appeared in recent years in this country, and laments the paucity of real action. The 'cri de cœur' for more community enlightenment and less personal distaste towards epileptic disability will be echoed by all neurologists. But the implicit hope that there should be a cure for epilepsy ought not to blind the reader into the belief that there ever will be such a cure. It may be, for example, that head injuries are currently creating

more epilepsy than special clinics can control, or even cope with. Dr Scott correctly points out the importance of prevention in this respect.

Interesting chapters are those on epilepsy in children and epilepsy in crime, others on various real problems in the patient's life, his education, his career, his risks of injury, and his life expectancy. The final chapter is a brief but global research review. There is a good general bibliography with over 100 references up to 1972, and an interesting glossary is provided for the non-medical reader with about 120 items from 'abdominal epilepsy' and 'absence' to 'vertigo' and 'white matter'. Creating less impact are the chapters on epilepsy in history and in literature. There are occasional irritating overlaps and repetitions in the book, and one disconcerting point is the repetition that the anti-convulsant drugs appear to have no adverse effects on the developing fetus (p. 142, and again p. 165), followed on p. 166 by the contradictory 'unproved suggestion that some anticonvulsants may lead to abnormalities in the fetus'. This uncertainty can stand correction in the next edition of an otherwise helpful brief compendium of epileptic knowledge and lore.

IAN D. MELVILLE

FORENSIC TOXICOLOGY. Proceedings of a Symposium held at the Chemical Defence Establishment, Porton Down. 29–30 June 1972. Edited by B. Ballantyne. (Pp. 157; illustrated; £4.25.) Wright: Bristol. 1974.

As stated in the preface, the symposium was 'concerned with the immediate and long-term consequences of accidental or deliberate poisoning, the detection of such poisoning, and with the interpretation of the possible significance of demonstrating exogenous substances in biological fluids and tissues'. The main interest of the papers to the non-specialist is in showing the remarkable range of specific biochemical tests now available for identifying poisons. The significance of concentrations in blood and other body tissues is critically assessed for many of the substances discussed.

A number of the topics discussed will not be of great interest to neurologists, but estimation of anti-depressant drugs and drugs of addiction is considered, and there are interesting papers on the necropsy diagnosis of barbiturate poisoning, and the effects of anticholinesterases in man and animals. Lead poisoning is still the commonest notified industrial disease in Great Britain. Problems of the diagnosis of excess absorption of lead and some of the recent anxieties about its significance in mental development during childhood are well reviewed.

PAMELA M. LE QUESNE