Book reviews

Trauma and Cancer: Pathology for the Lawyer. By R. H. Rigdon. Pp. xii + 218; \$14.00. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas. 1975.

There is a constant need for the presentation of certain aspects of pathology to lawyers. The present work is an attempt to assist the law in its concern for the relationship of trauma and cancer. As we know, the law is less concerned with a dispassionate search for truth than in vindicating or refuting a claimant's assertion. One does not end up with an open verdict in this species of legal wrangle.

The opening words of Chapter 1 are 'In an attempt to establish scientific proof it is necessary for one to be familiar with the basic principles underlying medicine (Rigdon, 1955)'. Scientific proof of what? Why scientific? What are the basic principles underlying medicine? The reader is never told. The author proceeds, 'Trauma is the result of force' and 'Force is the amount of energy necessary to change a fixed object'. It would take something smarter than an old sea lawyer to see the connexion between these (dubious) statements and the consideration of inflammation and pneumoconiosis which follows. The author manages it by confusing the terms 'trauma' and 'injury'. The whole book is presented in such a way that the lawyer can find support for *any* assertion of the relationship of trauma and cancer.

It is not recommended reading for pathologists and it will not enlighten lawyers.

A. LEVENE

Human Histology. An Introduction to the Study of Histopathology, 3rd edition. By Dugald L. Gardner and the late T. C. Dodds. (Pp xi + 432; illustrated; £15.50 cased, £11.50 paper.) Edinburgh, London, New York: Churchill Livingstone. 1976.

This is a clear, concise, and beautifully produced book. It could be argued that no matter how well presented, the material is still too much for the average undergraduate. This may well be so as histology forms but a small part of the basic medical sciences course, and this is a substantial volume. The text, however, is kept to

essentials and the dough of facts is leavened by 444 line diagrams, half-tone illustrations, and colour blocks. These vary from good to excellent and often complement the text rather than merely illustrate it. In addition to chapters on cell structure, tissues, and organs, there is also an appendix on common artefacts and a useful list of suggestions for further reading.

As the senior author rightly states, there is no clearcut borderline between normality and disease and, as a consequence, processes such as inflammation, repair, and neoplasia are kept within sight and the associations between morphology and function are properly emphasised. I have enjoyed leafing through this book and benefited from it. I would recommend it not only to undergraduate and postgraduate students but also to practising histopathologists, especially if they have any teaching responsibilities, and there must be few of us nowadays who do not.

Many will welcome this new edition which has been thoroughly brought up to date. The price, especially of the soft-back version, is low by today's standards for such a wealth of illustrative material.

P. P. ANTHONY

Clinical Toxicology of Commercial Products. Acute Poisoning, 4th edition. By Robert E. Gosselin, Harold C. Hodge, Roger P. Smith, and Marion N. Gleason. (Pp. xi + 1783; \$54.00.) Baltimore: Williams and Wilkins. 1976.

'The purpose of this book is to assist the physician in dealing quickly and effectively with acute chemical poisonings arising through misuse of commercial products. The book provides (a) a list of trade name products together with their ingredients, (b) addresses and telephone numbers of companies . . . (c) sample formulas of many types of products with an estimate of the toxicity of each formula, (d) toxicological information . . . (e) recommendations for treatment . . .'

In fact it sets out to provide a complete 'poisons service' for both medicines and non-medical products.

Unfortunately, quite apart from the magnitude of the task, any reference book that usefully covers chemical products on the market can be only approximately

valid for its country of origin. This book is particularly inadequate on medicines and must be criticised for this despite the disarming quotation from Dr Johnson that appears above the Preface: 'In this work, when it shall be found that much is omitted, let it not be forgotten that much likewise is performed'.

As far as medicines are concerned, the enquirer will find that the inclusion of trade names in the appropriate section is erratic; for example, he will find Lanoxin, but not Largactil, although there is an extensive account of chlorpromazine in the 'Therapeutics Index'. Neither nitrazepam (Mogadon) nor methyldopa (Aldomet) were discoverable by this reviewer, though they may be somewhere in the book for it is necessary to learn how to use the special sections with their different-coloured page edging; but there are five pages on nitrate.

The list of synthetic drugs is quite inadequate (172 entries), especially when it is noted that this includes 28 barbiturates and 11 antihistamines with a few not very helpful lines on each.

The medical browser will find fascinating pieces of knowledge he would not be likely to discover elsewhere, eg, volatile oil of mustard is included in some model airplane cements to deter glue sniffers.

A list of trade names and formulae of non-medicinal products will be valuable in any emergency department, especially with an indication of their toxicity for man as is given here. This list is quite fascinating.

It includes Acme Dog and Cat Repellent (non-toxic to man), TPC Livestock Smear (toxic), Martin's Udder Ointment (toxic), Gets-It (corn remedy) (non-toxic), Rub-a-Dub Laundry Marking Pen (non-toxic), Stanley's Crow Repellent (toxic), and many more. But inevitably these are USA trade names and any such list must be inadequate outside its country of origin, and the list of manufacturers' addresses and telephone numbers is, of course, national.

This is an American book for American conditions. In this country a telephone call to one of the seven Poisons Information Services (telephone numbers are given in the British National Formulary) will be more useful.

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