Book reviews

Atlas of Glomerular Histopathology. PHM Schillings and JH Schuurmans Steekhoven. (Pp vi + 143; 230 figs; Sw Fr 98; \$58.) S Karger. 1980.

This is an 'atlas of glomerular histopathology' offered to the practical pathologist who has neither routine access to electron microscopy and immunofluorescence, nor again time to consult detailed publications of the last few years. Almost all the illustrations are based on the Jones' methenamine silver technique. Departments of pathology in which a wider variety of stains are commonly employed might question the value of so limited a scope. The deliberate avoidance of special stains leads the authors into some rather curious situations. Thus, the studious avoidance of any reference to the use of special stains in the section on amyloidosis is rather surprising. In fact, however, the authors have made some compromises, tempering their passion for silver preparations with a number of good electron micrographs and, indeed, some illustrations of immunofluorescence.

The underlying problem is the cost-effectiveness of the renal biopsy. Many would tend to regard the procedure as no minor one, and to this extent would insist on applying every technique that is available to every renal biopsy. This 'atlas' approaches the opposite extreme. Its neglect of the tubular and vascular and interstitial tissue which compose the bulk of the kidney makes its approach all the more curious.

JC SLOPER

The Signs and Symptoms of Chemical Exposure. J Bradford Block. (Pp viii + 154; \$10.75.) Charles C Thomas. 1980.

Such is the popular and understandable fear of poisoning nowadays, above all occupationally and environmentally, that the practising physician is repeatedly confronted with the question whether a patient's symptoms can be attributable to some or other toxic agent. As the author of this work points out in his preface, to find the answer from the standard works of toxicology is often a bewildering exercise. This little catalogue may well assist in pointing the physician in the right

direction. It is obviously not comprehensive and must be supplemented by the usual diagnostic processes. It can have little appeal for the clinical pathologist.

R GOULDING

Atlas of Diseases of the Breast. Volker Barth. (Pp 198; 294 illustrations; £59.) Year Book Medical Publishers. 1979.

With the wide application of mammography to the study of breast disease a book that brings together the radiological and morphological appearances of a variety of pathological states would be expected to have strong appeal. This atlas, which represents the experience of the author in the application of mammography, thermography, galactography, and aspiration cytology, is liberally illustrated with almost 300 photographic plates, approximately one-tenth in colour. The rich visual feast which this provides is, however, poorly supported by the text, amounting to 40 pages. In attempting to be comprehensive, the author oversimplifies several complex issues, and the supporting tables and graphs are drawn from the literature rather than an analysis of the 13 000 patients examined by the author's group. While it has to be remembered that this is a translation of the original German text and that disease terminology and classification will be different from those conventionally applied in Britain, there are often major problems in recognising the relevant points being put across. The book is divided logically into sections beginning with examination methods, followed by the features of normal breast, of benign disease, of calcification, of non-invasive carcinoma, and finally of invasive malignancy. Although the text material is well referenced (mainly German) it is unlikely to be enlightening to the pathologist, who may find himself in disagreement with some of the comments on the biology, structure, and designation of tumours. Many of the illustrations of malignancy refer to advanced stages of disease, which is not the area in which mammography is intended to have its impact. The histological illustrations are of poor quality, and frequent use is made of hand drawings to illustrate specific cell patterns. These

are occasionally incorrect or misleading and to find them in an atlas of such high quality reproduction is rather surprising. This book is aimed to advance the understanding between radiologist and pathologist, and my recommendation is to persuade the radiologist to make the purchase.

TJ ANDERSON

Immunological Investigation of Renal Disease. AR McGiven. (Pp 143; illustrated; £16.) Churchill Livingstone. 1980.

This book is the first of a series of monographs entitled 'Practical Methods in Clinical Immunology'. It describes a range of biochemical and immunological tests which the author uses in his laboratories for the investigation and interpretation of renal disease. The individual chapters are clearly and simply written, and one could carry out many of the tests following these instructions alone. The author has resisted the temptation to go into excessive detail on the interpretation of results and therefore manages to remain non-contentious. I would have expected a book of this type to be difficult to read, but in fact it is quite easily digestible.

This book will be of value to nephrologists and nephropathologists who need to interpret the various laboratory tests performed on patients with renal disease. It will also be of value to clinical biochemists and immunologists who need to know what the nephrologists expect them to be able to do. I think this book is a useful addition to the medical literature.

DR TURNER

Clinics in Endocrinology and Metabolism. Vol 9. No. 1 March 1980. 'Metabolic Bone Disease'. Ed LV Avioli and LG Raisz. (Pp vii + 208; illustrated; £9 single copy.) WB Saunders. 1980.

The title of this volume is to some extent misleading since it is concerned almost entirely with aspects of vitamin D and its metabolites and the interplay between these and other hormones on skeletal growth and modelling. Chapters 1 and 2 are reviews of current knowledge of the chemistry of vitamin D and the direct