

Book reviews

Atlas of Glomerular Histopathology. PHM Schillings and JH Schuurmans Stekhoven. (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; £9.95 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

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effects on the skeleton. There is an excellent concise description of histological abnormalities and a discussion of the diagnostic value of estimating circulating D metabolites. Skeletal changes associated with anti-convulsant drug therapy and corticosteroid treatment are comprehensively described. Other chapters deal with nutritional osteomalacia, renal osteodystrophy in children, skeletal abnormalities in gastrointestinal-hepatic disease, and postmenopausal osteoporosis. That there are statements in different chapters that are contradictory or with which other observers might disagree is a reflection of our relative lack of understanding in what is a very complex area of physiology and pathology. As a review of current information and thinking on this subject this book is recommended.

CG WOODS

Microbiology and Pathology. 12th ed. Ed Alice Lorraine Smith. (Pp xii + 801; illustrated; £11.50.) YB Medical Publishers. 1980.

This book provides a comprehensive introductory overview to two disciplines of pathology. Some 500 pages are given to microbiology, mycology, and parasitology, with a further 300 pages for histopathology. The text is concise, and each chapter is short and informative with forceful photographs and clear diagrams. It is a pity that the diagnostic illustration of parasitic ova lacks clarity and does not give relative dimensions. There are chapters on host resistance and a substantial section on public health.

The authors have succeeded in emphasising the clinical aspect of each topic, and the layout of the book is attractive. There are two disadvantages to the reader in this country; the nomenclature largely follows *Bergey's Manual* (consequently corynebacteria are described in the same chapter as actinomycosis) and the cultural media are those used in North America. There is little about mechanisms of bacterial resistance to antibiotics for a book keen to show the practical aspects of microbiology.

This is a wide ranging book and the standard of information is suitable to people studying these disciplines for the first time. It will serve well MLSOs doing the TEC and HNC courses.

PJ SANDERSON

Interferon and Interferon Inducers: Clinical Application. Ed DA Stringfellow. (Pp 329;

illustrated; Sw Fr 92.) Marcel Dekker. 1980.

Here is another review volume on interferon. It deals with the production and purification of interferon for human use and also with its stability and pharmacokinetics, important in trials and clinical use. There are chapters on the use of interferon in malignancies and viral infections. There are also useful chapters summarising preclinical and small amounts of clinical information on inducers such as polynucleotides, tilorone hydrochloride, propanediamines, and polyanions. Finally, there is a laboratory-based chapter on interferon as an immune modulator.

The chapters are all up to date, with references up to 1979 in most of them, and also a sprinkling of unpublished material. There is little overlapping. The chapter on treatment of malignant disease is understandably already dated. There are minor errors of style, but all chapters are readable. The book would help anyone wanting to keep up with the field or to find his way to recent important work.

DAJ TYRRELL

Liver Biopsy Interpretation. PJ Scheuer. (Pp 260; 160 black and white plates; 29 colour plates; £19.50.) Bailliere Tindall. 1980.

The third edition of this book is in the same format as made the two previous editions such a success but with the updating required after a lapse of seven years. If liver biopsies come into your laboratory, buy it as an essential bench book for consultants and trainees.

G SLAVIN

Biochemical Correlates of Lung Disease. BC Fanburg. (Pp 44; illustrated; £6.) Pergamon Press. 1979.

This monograph comprises one issue (Vol 2, No 4) of *Molecular Aspects of Medicine*, an interdisciplinary review journal with which this reviewer was previously unfamiliar. It is set in camera-ready typescript and consists of a brief introduction, a short chapter on the architecture of the lung, a longer one on pulmonary cellular and structural function and dysfunction, and a final chapter entitled strategy for therapy, which is only four pages long. The 11 figures comprise four electron micrographs and seven diagrams of dynamic processes. There are 125 references. This slim volume would

benefit the research scientist turning to the lung from another field or the general pathologist or clinician seeking a succinct review of pulmonary structure and function.

B CORRIN

Histochemistry. Theoretical and Applied. 4th ed. Vol 1. AGE Pearse. (Pp x + 439; illustrated; £25.) Churchill Livingstone. 1980.

It is now 30 years since Professor Pearse wrote the first chapters of the first edition of this book. The increased awareness of the importance and relevance of histochemistry, especially to pathology, has been due in large measure to this standard text.

This fourth edition now comprises three volumes, of which this, subtitled *Preparative and Optical Technology*, is the first. A number of subjects have been dealt with in greater detail than in the former editions; of these, the chapter on Immunocytochemistry is probably of greatest current interest to clinical pathologists. The discussion of newer fixatives and their application as well as the two chapters by Dr FWD Rost on fluorescence microscopy and quantitative histochemistry will also be welcomed.

Sadly, as with so much else, the price one pays for erudition is so increased that these three volumes may not be within the grasp of the wide audience awaiting them.

L BITENSKY

Aspects of Slow and Persistent Virus Infections. Ed DAJ Tyrrell. (Pp xii + 286; illustrated; 80 Guilders.) Martinus Nijhoff. 1979.

This book comprises the proceedings of a European workshop on aspects of slow and persistent virus infections held in April 1979. Agents discussed include scrapie, measles virus, retroviruses, and visna. Generally, examples of both fundamental and applied work with a particular agent are presented. The papers range in style from excellent broad reviews to detailed descriptions of very recent experimental results. The practical difficulties of handling many of these systems are highlighted, as is the limited extent of our present understanding. This is tantalising reading for all those interested in infectious diseases and immunology.

GB CLEMENTS