An Atlas of Radiological Anatomy. Second edition, Jamie Weir and Peter Abrahams. Pp. viii + 355, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1986. £50.00.

Radiologists are reared, schooled, disciplined and ultimately subjected to a large daily dose of anatomy, albeit in a shadowy form. Nevertheless their anatomical vocabulary requires a continual renewal. While being manifestly unable to retreat into the dissecting room or like surgeons inspect and palpate living tissue, they must *faute de mieux* resort to texts, surrounding themselves, even being veritably encased by books.

Naturally each has a favourite, be it Gray's, Cunningham's or the smaller Last (but not least) when rapid reference is all important. The choice is often historical going back into the distant past of medical school and even beyond, but every now and then a striking new work appears, above all one of clarity in exposition, format and illustration.

Many superb radiological texts on anatomy suffer from a major drawback; the reproductions are small and therefore inevitably there is a loss of detail or the reader must resort to magnification. The alternative is near life size prints and their accompanying line drawings. Certainly Weir and Abrahams have succeeded admirably in these respects with regard to conventional radiographs.

The proliferation of scanning methods has added yet another dimension ranging from the speckled but detailed sonography, through the realistic computed tomography sections to the exquisite detailed depiction of the brain by magnetic resonance imaging. Not surprisingly these illustrations are smaller but more numerous.

Anatomy then is quite suddenly an exciting daily experience for those fortunate enough to have access to all the modern diagnostic modalities. The less fortunate can take vicarious pleasure in sampling this book. For teachers of anatomy it must surely prove invaluable but over and above these this is a volume to be cherished by the trainee radiologist. If by any chance you know one and generosity is your strong point, this coming Christmas or a birthday will ensure life-long gratitude. Less personally, no medical library nor radiology department should be without a copy.

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Basic Pharmacology. Second edition, edited by R.W. Foster. Pp. xvii + 390, illustrated. Butterworths, London, Boston, Durban, Singapore, Sydney, Toronto, Wellington, 1986. £13.95.

Clinical pharmacology and therapeutics is now included in the curriculum of most medical schools in the United Kingdom. The preclinical pharmacology course must be designed, therefore, to provide a sound scientific basis on which to build a rational approach to the therapeutic use of drugs. Since the publication of its first edition in 1980 this volume has become established as a concise readable basic

text for pharmacology students. This second edition has been thoroughly revised and updated to include major advances in the subject.

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Casarett & Doull's Toxicology: the Basic Science of Poisons. Third edition, edited by Curtis D. Klaassen, Mary O. Amdur and John Doull. Pp. xiii + 974, illustrated. Macmillan Publishing Co, New York; Collier Macmillan Canada, Toronto; Collier Macmillan, London, 1986. £45.00.

For anyone, expert or tyro, it is comforting to have at one's side an omnibus tome on one's chosen subject within which one can find some answer to any query that may arise. Whether, nowadays, bearing in mind the vast corpus of knowledge that has been accumulated, this is ever feasible, remains debatable. With toxicology, moreover, intertwined with a bewildering mass of facts is an interpretive and speculative component that defies unanimity. This third edition on *The Basic Science of Poisons*, to give the book its full title, is accordingly no bible, to be taken at face value and accepted as an act of faith.

Not that the editors have ever made such a claim for it. Rather do they state that it 'is designed primarily as a textbook for, or adjunct to, courses in toxicology'. Set in that context it may be rated highly, though at a price of £45.00 it is likely to find its place more on the library shelves than among the student's personal possessions. Even so, while what is headed Unit I on 'General Principles of Toxicology' and, possibly, Unit II on 'Systemic Toxicology' may serve as a very useful didactic companion, it is questionable whether the remaining three Units on 'Toxic Agents', 'Experimental Toxicology' and 'Applications of Toxicology' may be quite so acceptable, unless the tutor guiding the student can personally infuse his own possibly counterbalancing explanations and attitudes.

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Case Studies in Medicine. K.L. Gupta. Pp. vi + 120. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1986. £9.95.

This is a useful book and the author who is now an associate professor in New York, has produced compact yet realistic case histories. The one major criticism which applies as much to this volume as to others similar, is that it is almost impossible to word the questions following the case histories in such a way that the answer to the first question - 'What is the diagnosis?' is not clear from the subsequent questions (which test knowledge of the diagnosis).

A better formula for the questions and answers based on the case histories is for the answers to explain why the author