

LD<sub>50</sub> means a dose which is lethal to 50% of a population.

It is a pity that a book which is otherwise admirable should be marred by one chapter, and it is very surprising that the editors have not insisted on extensive alterations. The book is pleasantly produced and not very expensive. Misprints are uncommon but in the Tables of Appendix II one series of columns is without a proper heading to indicate that the energy of the gamma component is being quoted. On p. 53 the initials of one of the editors are incorrect!

E. V. HULSE

**The Diagnosis and Treatment of Acute Poisoning.** By J. D. P. Graham. (Pp. viii + 438; 17 figures + 52 tables. 45s.) London: Oxford University Press. 1962.

The author wrote this book because he considered existing texts inadequate. It is intended for the general practitioner and resident hospital staff as "a practical guide to the treatment of acute poisoning". "Wherever possible full details of specific and tried remedies are given. When this is not possible the application of general principles is discussed in detail. Where controversy exists among experts an attempt is made to present both sides of the case so that the doctor in charge may make a considered choice". These are high aims, and, as the author wrote those words in January 1961 and the book did not appear until 1962, it may fairly be supposed that he had not then found out how hard to attain these ideals were to be.

The book is sensibly planned and begins with chapters on incidence and epidemiology, diagnosis, and principles of treatment of acute poisoning. Then follow individual accounts in which the author works assiduously through all likely and some unlikely poisons, showing no signs of flagging until he reaches "motoring specialities". At this point he appeals to the fact that the number of possible causes of poisoning is so great and the number of patients involved is so small! He has the reader's sympathy. The task is not only impossible to accomplish in a book to be sold at a reasonable price, but, owing to the rapidly changing commercial scene nothing short of a continuously operating reference system can hope to be both up to date and comprehensive. The book ends with medico-legal aspects and an alphabetical appendix of proprietary preparations.

Unfortunately the main part of the book is marred by vague statements and terminology and by errors whose frequency is sufficient for it to be hard to acquit the author of casualness in fields where meticulous accuracy and clarity should be the order. Typical examples of these include: the table (p. 388) giving "a selection of the more frequently used poisons in Schedule I", which lists aconite, nalorphine, picrotoxin, relaxant drugs, curari-form compounds, cantharides and cyclophosphamide! Also, any reader who, like the reviewer, does not know what are "benzethidine", "Dinosam", "dimenoxadole and salts" and "furethidine and salts" gets no help from the inadequate index. A table of "predictable side-effects" (p. 375) is similarly erratic and is sometimes misleading (cyanocobalamin, phenothiazine). The treatments "offered" for cocaine poisoning are bizarre and potentially

dangerous and are not discussed at all. It is also inappropriate to equate procainamide with neostigmine as one of the anticholinesterases.

The use of the terms simple hypotension, shock, and peripheral circulatory failure are obscure, and the author's ideas on the therapy of these conditions are far from clear (pp. 74, 96, 99).

The "so-called specific" against strychnine in the table on p. 101 receives no mention in the discussion on treatment (p. 256-7). Monoacetin is classed as "of value" in fluoracetate poisoning on p. 101, but on p. 322 it is stated that there is no report of its use in man. The alphabetical list of drugs already mentioned is carried out curiously, for where a preparation contains several important agents only one of them is recorded so that opposite Drinamyl, only amylobarbitone appears, with no mention of dexamphetamine and, opposite the similar preparation Diseded, methylamphetamine alone is recorded. The objection is not mitigated by the use of an asterisk, against Drinamyl but not Diseded, to indicate that the preparation contains "other, possibly toxic, materials". Many drugs are not mentioned on the pages to which reference is made in the list, and the relevance, though sometimes self-evident, is by no means always so, e.g. Dewfume (propylene dichloride), thymol. That these objections are not the result of a laudable desire to save space is shown by no less than nine entries of different forms of codeine (linctus, syrup, etc.) under its own name, though designated "proprietary", with, opposite each, the words codeine phosphate. Similar waste of space occurs with other drugs, and it is impossible to believe that the author had any purpose in mind when he constructed these parts of the list.

Especially after reading the preface it is hard to accept without impatience the bald statement that the obsolete operation of renal decapsulation "has been practised with success" in salicylate poisoning.

The size, plan, and price of this book are such as may "fill a need", but it will need to be purged (there is no account of purgative poisoning, incidentally) of much error before it can be recommended to general practitioners and resident hospital staff as a reliable practical guide.

D. R. LAURENCE

**Die Meldepflichtigen Berufskrankheiten. Ein Leitfaden für Ärzte und Medizinstudierende.** By Franz Koelsch. (Pp. viii + 74. D.M. 4.80.) Munich and Berlin: Urban and Schwarzenberg. 1962.

In the new (fourth) edition of this work the writer has emphasized the legal difference between those diseases that must be notified and those that may involve right to compensation. When both occur together we find that, according to legislation in Western Germany, there are now 47 groups of conditions.

Certain postulates are laid down regarding length of exposure to a recognized noxious agent; and it should be noted that certain forms of compensation originally intended to cover accident are now extended to occupational diseases of more insidious development.

Koelsch first describes the big group of conditions due