years. Plutonium is not at present an important contributor, though it will remain as the chief contaminant after the fission products have decayed away.

In general the papers represent typical applications of the science of health physics to what is recognised to be one of the major problems of nuclear energy. The general reader will perhaps be comforted by Dr H. M. Parker's closing remark that acceptance of risk is 'a societal problem and all that we (scientists) can do is to place our concepts of the real risk before the public, honestly and forthrightly, and hope (for) . . . agreement on these risks sometime before we get to the nuclear economy of the year 2000'.

M. J. DAY

Clinical Toxicology of Commercial Products: Acute Poisoning. By R. E. Gosselin, H. C. Hodge, R. P. Smith and M. N. Gleason. 4th Edition. (Pp. 1783; \$54.00.) Williams and Wilkins Co: Baltimore.

Anyone familiar with previous editions of this book will welcome the appearance of the fourth edition. Still under the same management, this compendious reference work should prove as popular as its predecessors.

Like previous editions, the book is divided into seven sections and it is essential for readers to understand how it is set out if they are to realise the full potential of the work. In order to make this clearer, the authors have incorporated a flow chart opposite the fifth page which guides the uninitiated through the (coloured) sections.

Section I contains a brief and unremarkable account of the first aid and emergency treatment of acute poisoning. This is a gentle introduction to the detailed systematic account of supportive management in Section IV. Both are written clearly, with the needs of practising clinicians in mind.

Sections II, III, V and VI are the real meat. Section II gives alphabetical and numerical indices (Chemical Abstract Service Registry Number) to short accounts of the toxicology of over 1300 substances, or classes of substances. Each entry categorises the compound into one of 80 'reference congeners' which are fully described in Section III. Each reference congener typifies a group of related compounds, stressing toxic signs and symptoms as well as appropriate programmes of treatment. Important refer-

ences are also included. Section V is an alphabetical listing of 17 000 commercial products. Each entry details the manufacturer, and the ingredients, with an asterisk against ones likely to produce major toxic effects. Section VI describes the usual constituents of substances of unknown generic origin, and Section VII gives the addresses and telephone numbers of American manufacturers.

This book is obviously of the greatest value for American medicine. The fact that the commercial index is derived from compounds widely used in the United States reduces the value of Section V for physicians on this side of the Atlantic. However, British physicians involved with industrial medicine, toxicology and poisoning will find most of it appropriate and much of it useful.

MICHAEL D. RAWLINS

Poison Detection in Human Organs. By Alan Curry. 3rd Edition. (Pp. 356; \$21.50.) Charles C. Thomas; Illinois. 1976.

Poisoning is now a major cause of acute admissions to hospital, and an important cause of death. This book is a laboratory manual for the detection and quantification of poisons, particularly drugs. The first part of the book is of a more general nature dealing with emergency toxicology, analyses of liver, alimentary tract, brain and kidney, as well as abuse screening. The second part is an alphabetical list of poisons with methods for their determination and information on the interpretation of the results.

The book contains some disappointments. The methods advocated rely heavily on spectrophotometry, the specificity and sensitivity of which are now very suspect. There is little mention of modern mass spectrometric and mass fragmentographic methods of identification and analysis, radioimmunoassay, and polarography. The volume will be of value to forensic scientists; its value to clinical biochemists will be less because of the increasing realisation that analytical data have a very limited place in the management of acute poisoning. Only for those drugs where specific methods of treatment exist, can such laboratory data be regarded as important. For the large majority, clinical management, irrespective of the quantitative findings, represents the only effective means of preserving life.

MICHAEL D. RAWLINS

Occupiers' Liability Act 1957 and the Liability of Hospitals. By B. Williams. (Pp. 69; £6 soft cover, £8 hard cover.) Ravenswood Publications: Beckenham. 1976.

This is one of the uniformly excellent series of Case Studies on Health Service Management Law and Practice, and fully maintains the high standard set by earlier volumes. The subject dealt with is a complicated one, the complications introduced by such factors as the danger on hospital premises being produced by independent contractors, or the damage being suffered by such classes of persons as children who can't read warning signs, or trespassers. It is not easy for a lawyer to judge whether what is plain to him is made equally plain to non-lawyers, but as far as this lawyer can judge, the treatment of the subject in this book is a model of clarity and comprehensiveness.

The method used is that of setting out an imaginary case of an accident occurring and dealing *seriatim* with the legal and factual points which will or may arise. The points are dealt with by posing direct questions, such as is the Hospital liable to visitors to houses and flats let to staff? The answers are direct and clear (so far as the state of the law allows) and are illustrated by copious citation of actual cases in the reports. The author is to be congratulated on producing a work which not only prepares students for the examinations of the Institute of Health Administrators, but which will also be useful as a reference book for administrators faced with accidents which actually arise in their daily work. The only reservation is, as usual with this series, the high price.

D. W. ELLIOTT

Environmental and Industrial Health Hazards: A Practical Guide. Revised Reprint. By R. A. Trevethick. (Pp. 214; £5.75.) William Heinemann Medical Books: London. 1976.

This reprint of a book designed for lay and medical staff in industry and for postgraduate medical centres comes only three years after the first publication which was reviewed in the *British Journal of Industrial Medicine*, (1974) 31, 80. It has now been extended and brought up to date. It has the same format as before with facing pages dealing with a particular hazard; the right-hand page in black type is a Hazard Data Sheet for lay