

Books

Lever's Histopathology of the Skin*

By David Elder, Rosalie Elenitsas, Christine Jaworsky and Bennett Johnson, Jr. Pp. xvii + 1073. Illustrated. US\$172.50. 1997. New York: Lippincott-Raven. ISBN 0-397-51500-6.

Lever's Histopathology of the Skin is a classic work, in its 8th edition after 50 years. No longer a single or two-person text, nearly 50 contributors from around the world have provided many new features.

Few pathology registrars or consultants would feel confident in reaching a diagnosis, without reference to 'Lever'. Yet it was never a book that facilitated accurate histopathological diagnosis unless the correct diagnosis was already provided by the clinician. In this way its reference value was not unlike that of a dictionary – an essential reference work useful in its specific way.

The limitations of *Lever's Histopathology of the Skin* were clearly recognised by the new editors, who have rectified this with an invaluable new chapter, devoted to an

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algorithmic pattern approach to diagnosis. This incorporates the best from other writers who have developed and described diagnosis by pattern recognition. The book becomes even more user-friendly by linking each pattern, with page references, to relevant sections.

Two pathology colleagues kindly helped evaluate the book on the work bench and provided the following comments: they liked the pattern approach, updated references, clarity on many controversial subjects including good updated chapters on melanoma, lymphoma, fibrous tumours, histiocytosis, drug toxicity and an improved approach to photosensitivity.

While I shared their appreciation of the colour clinical pictures, these are few in number and do not compensate for the poor quality of most of the black and white clinical pictures, which are equally sparse. The clinical pictures represent an idiosyncratic choice of conditions and are not differentiated from the histological illustrations in the index. The pathologists would have liked more clinical information, one noting that, despite the overall improvement in layout, it was still a difficult book for the novice pathologist to read. We all thought that many of the histology pictures could be improved.

I liked the chapters on laboratory methods with discussion on special stains and immunohistochemistry, the thoughtful approach to vascular disease, comprehensive coverage of vascular tumours and the updated chapters mentioned earlier. In short, although there are criticisms as noted, the book has been greatly improved by incorporating the pattern approach, while retaining groupings of diseases that appear to belong together (even though at times it is difficult to see why).

Lever's Histopathology of the Skin is a book that is so firmly ensconced in the psyche as the classic dermatopathology text, that I am sure it will continue in this role and prove extremely useful, particularly to pathology registrars studying for examinations. This new edition can certainly lay better claim to being an essential reference work.

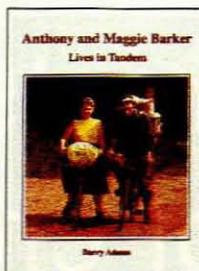
N Saxe

Anthony and Maggie Barker. *Lives in Tandem**

By Barry Adams. Pp. viii + 168. Illustrated. R85. Long Melford, UK: E B Adams, 1996. ISBN 0 952877406.

I first heard of Anthony and Maggie Barker from an obituary in the *SAMJ*, and was instantly fascinated by them. I was therefore delighted to be able to review this book about these two remarkable mission doctors who, inspired by a deep religious faith, devoted their lives to the care of those less fortunate than themselves.

Barry Adams' 'biography' is really a valentine – for which he makes no apology. 'Anthony and Maggie may well have had their faults. . . The media in today's world give great prominence to what is bad in mankind. . . here is my attempt to balance the picture by relating the lives of two remarkably



Books received

The receipt of these books is acknowledged, and this listing must be regarded as sufficient return for the courtesy of the sender. Books that appear to be of particular interest will be reviewed as space permits. The *SAMJ* does not publish unsolicited reviews.

The International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes. A Common Review and Evaluation Framework.* Nutrition Unit, Division of Food and Nutrition, WHO. Pp. vii + 134. SwFr20/US\$18. Geneva: WHO. 1996. WHO/NUT/96.2.

ABC of Clinical Genetics.* 2nd Edition. By Helen M Kingston. Pp. vi + 75. Illustrated. £19. London: BMJ. 1997. ISBN 0-7279-1101-5.

Procedures in General Practice.* Edited by John Stuart Brown. Pp. xi + 177. Illustrated. £27. London: BMJ. 1997. ISBN 0-7279-1035-3.

Paediatric Problems in General Practice.* Oxford General Practice Series 36. 3rd Edition. By Michael Modell, Zulf Mughal and Robert Boyd. Pp. xv + 337. R285. Cape Town: Oxford University Press. 1996. ISBN 0-19-262512-8.

Child Health. A Manual for Medical and Health Workers in Health Centres and Rural Hospitals. 2nd Edition. Edited by Paget Stanfield, Bo Balldin and Zier Versluys. Pp. xii + 528. Illustrated. KSh360. Kenya: African Medical and Research Foundation. 1997. ISBN 9966-874-07-0.

Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine. Volume 7: Advances in Pediatric Pulmonology. Edited by E Kerem, GJ Canny, D Branski and H Levison. Series Editor D Branski. Pp. viii + 172. SwFr198/DM237/US\$172.25. Basel: Karger. 1997. ISBN 3-8055-6382-5.

Coronary Microcirculation during Ischaemia and Reperfusion. Alfred Benzon Symposium 41. Edited by Stig Haunso, Jan Aldershvile and Jesper Hastrup Svendsen. Pp. 478. Illustrated. DKK400. Copenhagen: Munksgaard. ISBN 87-16-11940-1.

good people . . . from whose lives we can all learn so much.'

What follows is both a love story – Adams quotes Shakespeare's 'Let me not to the marriage of true minds admit impediments' – and a fascinating sociohistorical account of rural medicine in South Africa. Over a period of 30 years, the Barkers transformed the ramshackle Charles Johnson Memorial Hospital in Nqutu, KwaZulu-Natal, into a medical facility of high quality whose fame drew numerous interested visitors from around the world. Even at the height of apartheid, they steadfastly maintained a non-racial 'community', frequent government harassment notwithstanding. In addition to their medical work, they also undertook (often gruelling) sponsored bicycle rides to raise money for the 'Charlie J' and other worthy causes.

Adams makes frequent reference to the 'Barker magic', which touched all who came into contact with Anthony and Maggie, and his chronicle is illuminated by excerpts from Anthony's diaries and other writings, as well as by the reminiscences of many friends/relatives/colleagues of the Barkers. Perhaps the most moving of these is by Tim Burnett, who had worked at Nqutu while a medical student, and with whom the Barkers spent their last night before being killed in a road accident on 30 August 1993, when their tandem collided with a farm vehicle in the English lake district.

It is sad to reflect that Barry Adams was unable to find a publisher sufficiently interested to publish this book, for it is

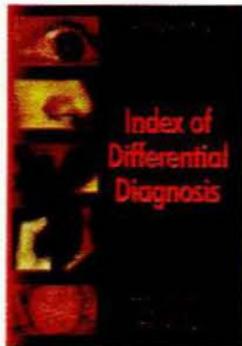
a story that richly merits being told. All the more credit to him for publishing the book himself. Its virtues are many and its flaws (some repetitiousness, several proofreading glitches) minor. I recommend it highly.

Peter Wagenaar

French's Index of Differential Diagnosis*

13th Edition. Edited by Ian A D Bouchier, Harold Ellis and Peter R Fleming. Pp. xv + 811. Illustrated. R389. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann. ISBN 0-7506-1434-X.

The latest edition of this well-known textbook carries on with the tradition of providing a differential diagnosis of any condition that a clinician may encounter. Compared to the ninth edition in my possession, this edition is a considerable improvement of this historical publication. For instance, schistosomiasis is now listed as a cause of splenomegaly; a fact that was completely ignored in the earlier editions although it is the commonest cause of splenomegaly in the northern Transvaal. The enormous



breadth of this subject is covered by listing signs and symptoms alphabetically. Possible causes are tabulated and discussed in often surprising detail. A comprehensive index helps to link the disease to the various symptoms. The text has numerous illustrations, often as good quality colour photographs, replacing some of the outdated and inappropriate illustrations of the earlier editions, that help to differentiate diseases.

I tested the book on a recent case of a girl presenting with lower abdominal pain and an abdominal mass who had a haematocolpos. The condition was listed under 'amenorrhoea' and 'pelvis, swelling in' but not under 'abdominal pain, acute, localised'. Because of the constantly changing pattern of disease patterns, this book will have to be frequently revised in order to remain relevant in clinical medicine.

Despite some minor shortcomings, this book will be of value to any clinician as a handy reference book for use when uncertainty exists about a diagnosis. Medical students will find it of great use as almost all topics are clearly defined and clinical examination techniques explained in detail. Although the book is expensive, it offers good value for money because it covers a vast subject matter.

D P van Velden
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