

force are in advance of the general public knowledge, they must not be far in advance of public sentiment. Accordingly, in order to popularize food and drug control, it should be the aim of every food official to mold public sentiment to such a degree that he may have the endorsement and help of this powerful factor to assist him in his work.

MEXICO RESTRICTS IMPORTATION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS.

The importation into Mexico of all narcotics, except by the Public Health Department of the Government, has been prohibited by a Mexican decree which became effective July 28, 1923.

Responsible pharmacies legally established were previously allowed to import these narcotics after securing a permit from the Department of Health.

A FALLING OFF IN THE NUMBER OF NARCOTIC ADDICTS IN NEW YORK STATE REFORMATORY FOR WOMEN.

Superintendent Amos T. Baker of the New York State Reformatory for Women has announced that there has been a steady falling off in the number of narcotic addicts at Bedford. There are now only nine left. These are being treated by scientific methods, and the officials hope to turn them out cured.

Two years ago, when the institution first started to receive drug addicts, Bedford had sixty and the care and treatment of them was the institution's hardest problem. Reformatory officials attribute the decline in the number of women narcotic users partly to the educational and publicity campaign conducted to warn people of the danger and ravages of the narcotic habit.

BOOK NOTICES AND REVIEWS.

The Therapeutic Use of Digitalis. By G. Canby Robinson, Professor of Medicine, Vanderbilt University. Published by Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore. Price, \$2.50.

A cardiologist recently remarked to the reviewer that probably more than half of the physicians of the United States use digitalis today with less success than Withering used it a century and a half ago, despite the fact that digitalis has been studied more intensively than any other drug with the possible exception of mercury. This fact is worth remembering when discussing a review of the subject, for it is manifestly impossible for one man to analyze every paper that has been written on the subject of digitalis and its use in cardiac disease.

The advances that have been made in the treatment of cardiac disease with digitalis, mainly within the past fifteen years, are comparable to those that have been made in the treatment of syphilis following the introduction of arsphenamine (salvarsan), or that of diabetes with the introduction of insulin. This may appear as a contradiction of the statement of the cardiologist just cited, but, in fact, it indicates the wide differences between the best methods and those which are all too common because of lack of adequate training. The treatment of cardiac disease often calls for the greatest skill, such as only the trained specialist can acquire.

Robinson wisely endeavored to select for

review only those papers which have contributed to our permanent knowledge of the subject. This can be done only by one who is able and willing to analyze the studies of research workers and not merely summarize the reports of those who have attained more or less prominence in the subject under consideration, for the best men often make serious mistakes, and obscure men sometimes discover truths of the first importance (if it may be conceded that truth varies in importance).

The table of contents gives fourteen subjects and their subdivisions under which the matter is treated. The monograph embraces 137 pages with some 170 references to the literature, and since it is itself an epitome of our knowledge of the subject, it is manifestly impossible for the reviewer to give more than a glimpse of the subject in the space at his disposal.

The author devotes about ten pages to a discussion of the historical data and the different members of the group, and about as many to a consideration of the potency of these substances. It will astonish the reader to see in the table of contents that only two pages are devoted to the subject of "Animal experimentation," while some twenty pages are required for the discussion of "The toxic effects of digitalis." As a matter of fact animal experimentation is the basis for much of the review, and the reader will perceive the impossibility of separating animal experimentation from the

study of the therapeutic use of a drug of this type.

The author considers "The therapeutic effects" with reference to the actions on the heart, as shown by various changes; the effects on blood vessels, with changes in the coronary and venous circulation; and the effects on the kidneys. Following this he considers "The use of digitalis in heart failure" and "Digitalis in infectious diseases." He has not sought to give comprehensive instruction in the treatment of cardiac disease, but rather to outline the main facts and to direct the reader to sources of information; for example, he says (p. 72) "A clear understanding of auricular fibrillation is essential for the intelligent employment of digitalis. It has been especially well described by Lewis (100, 101), to whose work the reader is referred."

The pharmaceutical reader will be interested, to say the least, to find that twenty-two pages are given to the consideration of "Dosage of the digitalis bodies." Dosage constitutes one of the most difficult problems concerned with the treatment of cardiac disease, for its regulation rests upon a number of factors, including potency, absorbability, elimination, and the significance of changes induced in the heart and circulation. It is probable that no part of the monograph is more valuable than this one which is devoted to the question of dosage.

If the author does not state all that is known of the treatment of cardiac disease, he does give the intelligent reader an insight into the difficulties that attend the proper therapeutic use of digitalis, and this should lead to an appreciation of the need of the highest degree of skill when the routine administration does not cause improvement.

A reviewer is usually expected to point out the faults of a book under discussion, but the few typographical errors in this monograph will be obvious to the pharmaceutical reader, and the present reviewer knows of no others that require discussion here.

ROBERT A. HATCHER.

Traité de Matière Médicale et de Chimie Végétale, par le Dr. L. Reutter, privat-docent à l'Université de Genève. L'ouvrage formera un volume in-4 (18 x 28,5) de 850 pages à deux colonnes, avec 293 figures. Il est mis en vente en 8 fascicules de chacun 112 pages environ avec figures. Prix de chaque fascicule, 12 fr.—En vente: *Fascicules I et II*, chaque, 12 fr. (Ajouter 10% pour frais d'envoi.) (Librairie J.-Baillièrre et Fils, 19, rue Hautefeuille, Paris, VI.)

Parts 7 and 8 of this work complete the volume; fascicles 1-6 inclusive have had mention in preceding issues of the JOURNAL. The two parts now before us consider animal drugs according to the method followed in preceding numbers. There is an index of about 100 pages which contains not only references to the text, but also the names and very brief descriptions of drugs of not sufficient importance to warrant inclusion in the text.

A work so comprehensive can hardly fail to have its imperfections, but in looking over the pages we have failed to note any errors of consequence, even though it was, perhaps, impossible for the author to check every reference. He has given pharmacists and those who deal in drugs in a larger way a reference book of great value and usefulness, which is worthy of a place in their libraries and those of the colleges.

Rapport de la Commission de la Nomenclature Pharmaceutique. Reference to this report has been made in an editorial of this issue of the JOURNAL. The committee has performed a service of value to pharmacists and particularly for those engaged in revision work on the standards. The Federation desires co-operation and helpful criticism. There is still much work to be done on the titles of preparations which present more difficulties than the titles of drugs and chemicals from which they are prepared. The parts that have reached us are of Divisions A and B, comprising 144 pages. The work effected by the Committee deserves praise.

Rapport du Comité de la Réglementation de la Vente des Spécialités. This is another report to the International Pharmaceutical Federation and relates to the regulation of the sale of proprietary articles. The report is issued as a brochure of 24 pages. Brief reports are made by representatives from Austria, Great Britain, Belgium, France and Switzerland with an introduction by L. van Itallie and J. J. Hofman. As far as we can determine no definite action was taken on the report but the views expressed in the discussion indicate that the delegates favor that the ownership, preparation and sale of medicinal specialties should be under control of pharmacists, and only those preparations should be licensed for sale that have had the approval of competent authority. Advertising control should be in the hands of licensing authority, and the composition of the products should be declared.