

BOOK NOTICES AND REVIEWS.

A Text-Book of Pharmacology and Therapeutics. By E. POULSSON. Professor of Pharmacology, University of Christiania. American Edition, Baltimore, The Williams & Wilkins Co. 519 pp. Price \$6.00.

This is one of the most popular textbooks on pharmacology in Germany translated under the supervision of W. E. Dixon of Cambridge, himself the author of one of the most readable smaller English manuals on pharmacology. It is evident that the English translation is as popular as the original German one, for this is the second American printing of the work. The German title "Pharmakologie" is loosely rendered as a "Text-book of Pharmacology and Therapeutics." This is perhaps better than the original German title, inasmuch as it emphasizes one of the most valuable features of the book, namely, that it is a treatise on pharmacology for students and the busy practitioner with especial regard to its applications in practice. In other words, it is a textbook on the art of pharmacotherapy as well as on science of pharmacology. The description of the action of drugs given here does not differ materially from that in other textbooks on pharmacology except in certain of the explanations and hypotheses which serve to show something of the personality of the author and afford an insight into the Continental atmosphere. Thus, for instance, the discussion of camphor receives a rather undue importance, because that drug is extensively used on the Continent in heart conditions, whereas, in England and America, clinicians have found it to be of little value. The classification of the drugs in this book follows the old and somewhat illogical lines of Schmiedeberg's pioneer work on the subject. The first section deals with organic remedies acting as absorbents, the second section deals with organic substances acting locally, the third discusses salts of light metals, alkalies, acids, halogens, etc., oxidizers, etc., the fourth deals with heavy metals, and two smaller sections treat of ferments and antitoxins, etc. This arrangement is very much like that of the most popular textbook on pharmacology, that of Arthur R. Cushny. Poulsson's treatise, however, is more readable; it omits a great many purely pharmacological details which are of interest only to the specialist and lays stress on the relationship of pharmacology to applied therapeutics as an outstanding feature of the book.

Descriptions of various drugs are concise

but are sufficiently complete for the student and general practitioner. A sentence or two in connection with all of the more important drugs gives a brief historical summary. The illustrations are not too numerous but are well selected and just enough chemistry and chemical formulas are incorporated into the work to give the reader an idea of the more important chemical-pharmacodynamic relationships without burdening his mind with unnecessary detail. Some of the sections are of exceptional excellence: Among these may be mentioned the chapter on cocaine, a field in which the author has done pioneer work. Again, the chapter on opium, antipyretics, purine derivatives and purgatives is exceptionally well written. The discussion of digitalis bodies which the author speaks of as the "digitoxin group" steers along conservative lines, so that the author, while adhering to the classical pharmacological conceptions on the subject, gives due regard to the more purely clinical contributions by recent investigators.

This textbook is very much up-to-date. There is a discussion of some of the newer drugs and new uses of older ones. The employment of quinidine in auricular fibrillation is described, and poisoning by wood alcohol is discussed in the light of recent experiences. There is a section on benzyl benzoate; the newer methods of treating syphilis with bismuth, etc., are mentioned and the final paragraph in the book makes a brief mention of insulin. The discussion of alcohol is a very timely topic, covering fourteen pages. It is a very conservative presentation of the subject well worth reading by layman as well as the physician, because, while the presentation is a very conservative one, it is not written in a psycho-pathological spirit which characterizes so many of the recent ebullitions on the subject. As is inevitable in a translation, a few misprints or errors have crept in, as for instance on page 74 where the term benzoylisoquinolin is written in place of benzyloisoquinolin. To the specialist in pharmacology the lack of a bibliography is a deplorable feature. Altogether, however, the book can be highly recommended to the medical student and the general practitioner.

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Biological Relations of Optically Isomeric Substances. By ARTHUR R. CUSHNY. 80 pp. The Williams & Wilkins Co., Baltimore, 1926. Price \$2.00.