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Book Reviews

Textbook of Clinical Parasitology, by DAVID L. BELDING, M.D., Professor of Bacteriology and Experimental Pathology, Boston University School of Medicine, Member of staff of Evans Memorial, Massachusetts Memorial Hospitals. D. Appleton-Century Co., Inc., New York, N. Y., 1942. xxi + 888 pp., 279 figs., 44 tables and 4 colored plates. Price, \$8.50.

Knowledge of the diagnosis and treatment of parasitological infections is very important and must receive more attention in the present conflict, since many theaters of war are located in the tropical and subtropical countries. This book is intended for medical students, physicians, public health officials, medical personnel in the armed forces, laboratory workers and biologists. The book is written from the standpoint of one responsible for teaching the subject, and to accomplish this end, numerous illustrations are used throughout the text. Many of the illustrations are diagrammatic and convey a fairly complete picture of the topic under discussion, independent of the text. Numerous keys are also incorporated in the text which should prove helpful to those who have need for a ready reference book. In place of the more popular terms, the author employs a few expressions which are little used to-day, such as alexin-fixation instead of complement-fixation. Nearly every chapter is accompanied by a few selected references, which should enhance the usefulness of the book for those desiring more than an elementary knowledge of the subject. The book, as the title implies, is a textbook and in this respect it fulfills its purpose.—H. E. Morton.

Synopsis of Materia Medica, Toxicology and Pharmacology, by FORREST RAMON DAVISON, Medical Department, The Upjohn Company. Second edition. The C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, Mo., 1942. 695 pp., 45 figs., 12.5 x 19.5 cm. Price, \$5.75.

The writing of a synopsis in any field entails the careful selection of material to be included. Dr. Davison has not always been wise in his choice of subject matter, for at the expense of much valuable information, such drugs of secondary importance as conium, the sulfone hypnotics, and new agents which are almost untried are discussed, while many important facts are omitted. For example, there is nothing stated about the mode of destruction of epinephrine, the value of the short and intermediate acting barbiturates in cocaine poisoning, nor the more modern treatment of acute and chronic alcoholism. It is pleasing, however, to see the inclusion of such modern findings as the use of dihydrotachysterol to replace parathormone.

This synopsis is divided into two parts. Part I, comprising 95 pages, is given over to the consideration of fundamental principles of pharmacology, materia medica and prescription writing. Pharmacists will be pleased to see in this book many helpful suggestions regarding prescription writing, made available in such a way as to encourage the physician to prescribe in a simple and straightforward manner. Particularly noteworthy is the section on vehicles in which the most useful properties of coloring and flavoring agents are tabulated and the basic principles of disguising medicaments are outlined.

Part II develops the basic principles of the pharmacology of individual drugs, divided into the following sections: drugs acting on the skin and mucous membranes, drugs acting locally on the gastrointestinal tract, drugs acting on the central nervous system, drugs acting on the peripheral nervous system, drugs acting on the muscles, diuretics, metals and metalloids, and the sulfonamides. Ideal methods, which are all-embracing, for classifying the agents commonly used in therapeutics are difficult to attain. In broad outline, Davison has developed a convenient classification scheme. Unfortunately in the organization of subheadings the scheme frequently fails, creating unnecessary overlapping and misplacements. The chapter on antiseptics is a case in point. The classification is loose, the scheme being partially chemical and partially therapeutic, a scheme which has never been satisfactory. Further, the subsection on intestinal disinfection which appears in the chapter on gastrointestinal drugs, in the opinion of the reviewer, belongs more properly in the antiseptic chapter. There are many other chapters which show such poor organization. The section on anthelmintics has no organization whatever.

The chapters on autonomic pharmacology are especially well written. This is important, for since the discovery of the true nature of acetylcholine, a clear understanding of this phase of pharmacology is essential for the comprehension of many problems. The tracings and the charts in this section contribute much in the interest of clarity.

It is gratifying to see so many practical prescriptions scattered throughout the book. It is unfortunate that many of these prescriptions are misplaced. A prescription for methyl salicylate, to be used for counterirritation, is placed under the central action of the salicylates; in the section on counterirritation appears a prescription using alcohol to lessen sweating; in the section on antiseptics is found a prescription to tolu to be used as an expectorant, and there are many other examples of such misplacement.

Dr. Davison's book contains many errors of fact. Some of these are relatively trivial, but some are serious. For example, the advocacy of the use of metrazol in the treatment of morphine poisoning is positively dangerous in view of the long-known biphasic action of morphine. Since cocaine is a central stimulant, the use of camphor or strychnine in acute cocaine poisoning is also a highly questionable procedure.

This book can be recommended as a text for pharmacy students only if the instructor is fully conscious of the organizational defects and providing he is sufficiently well grounded in pharmacological fundamentals that he may point out its errors. For reference purposes, there are many books which are more suitable.

The press work in this book is very poor, there being many examples of broken type and crowded spacing. The rhetoric leaves much to be desired. For example, in referring to ipral sodium the author states that "its actions and uses are the same as those of calcium," although it is obvious that calcium ipral, and not calcium, is meant.—M. W. GREEN

A Textbook of Dental Pharmacology, Materia Dentica and Pharmaco-Therapeutics, by WILLIAM H. O. MCGHEE, M.D., D.D.S., F.A.C.D., and MELVIN W. GREEN, Ph.G., B.S., Ph.D. Second edition. The Blakiston Company, Philadelphia, Pa., 1941. xiv + 462 pp., 15 x 23 cm. Price, \$5.00.

The scope and quality of this text has been greatly increased in the present edition. Aside from the pharmacological and therapeutic considerations, the book contains brief but well-written chapters on pharmacognosy, pharmacy and prescription writing. Mastery of this portion of the book by the dental student would do much toward giving him the confidence and knowledge necessary for the proper employment of prescription writing in his profession.

The appendix is well organized, containing toxicological summaries, tabular information on solubilities, metrological equivalents and percentage solutions. Of particular interest to pharmacists as well as dentists is the dental formulary and prescription guide. The authors acknowledge a great many sources for these formulas and prescriptions and have conveniently presented them under seven headings, according to their use in dentistry.

The pharmacological text material has been extensively revised and modernized by emphasis on principles, inclusion of illustrative material, addition of chapters on sulfonamide drugs and vitamins. The brief, compact treatment in this text accorded to local and general anesthesia and autonomic drugs is excellent. Many of the fundamental and theoretical details have necessarily been omitted, but the omission has been rendered almost painless by the quality of the writing. Perhaps the most serious criticism in this respect is the extreme brevity with which normal physiological functions are treated before consideration of the effects produced by pharmacological modification of these functions. Considering the extent of the revision, very few organizational errors are apparent.

Representing as it does the combined experience of the authors as physician-dentist and pharmacist-pharmacologist, the book should be found exceedingly useful for study and reference by the student or practitioner of dentistry or pharmacy.—L. W. HAZLETON.