

BOOK REVIEWS

A MANUAL OF PHARMACOLOGY by *Torald Sollman*. 7th Edition. Pp. 1132 and Index. W. B. Saunders Company, London and Philadelphia, 1948, 57s. 6d.

In pharmacology the present decade is one of "anti-drugs." During recent years, pharmacologists and chemists have achieved astonishing results by the development of poisons which act selectively upon one species of living organism or upon one particular type of cell, enzyme or end-organ. The application of the principle of selective poisoning of species has given us new rodenticides, insecticides and weed-killers, the antibiotics, the anti-malarials, antrycide and other antimicrobials. In functional pharmacology, selective poisoning of certain types of cells, enzymes or end organs has given us antihistamine, antithyroid, anticholinesterase and curarising agents. In toxicology, application of an analogous principle has produced dimercaprol. The principle which has already been so successful in the above work is already being applied in cancer research, using the experience gained in these fields. It is perhaps a relief to realise that other types of work have also borne important fruit, such as pteroylglutamic acid, vitamin B₁₂ and dextran.

Two editions of Sollman's Manual of Pharmacology have appeared during this remarkable decade. The edition of 1942 has already established itself, like its predecessors, as a book in which a busy doctor, teacher or research worker may find either the pharmacological information he requires, or references to original papers in which to search further. The clear arrangement of this book, its concentration on what is important and its comprehensive system of references make it extremely useful as a source of information. The question naturally arises as to whether the seventh edition is as successful as its predecessors.

Since the layout of the seventh edition closely follows that of the sixth, the question resolves itself into one of how far the new edition includes and assimilates the developments of the intervening years. It is astonishing to find, owing to the fast growth of pharmacology, that many of the substances now occupying the minds of research workers and clinicians, such as aureomycin, chloromycetin and polymyxin among antibiotics, vitamin B₁₂ and its associated factors, C10 and antrycide, are necessarily omitted, owing to their discovery or development having come too late for inclusion in this edition. Researches published slightly earlier are, on the other hand, treated in the excellent way we have come to expect from Professor Sollman.

For the English reader it is worth mentioning that, as is perhaps natural in an American textbook, attention tends to be concentrated on drugs likely to be of interest to the American reader. For example, chloroquine is given fifteen times as much space as proguanil (paludrine). Moreover, the reader is generally referred to the American literature, which may be more accessible in that continent.

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