

BOOK REVIEWS

PHARMAKOLOGISCHE METHODEN by L. Ther. Pp. 443 and Index. Wissenschaftliche Verlagsgesellschaft m.b.H. Stuttgart, 1949.

This book, a product of post-war Germany, should be of interest to those pharmacologists, physiologists, and others concerned with the techniques of experimental investigation of the properties of medicinal substances. The volume has many good features to recommend it as a practical book of reference, or a guide book to laboratory procedures, not least of which is the presence of some 244 line drawings of apparatus or techniques, and the citing of over 1,200 references to original literature describing technical procedures. The apparatus depicted is somewhat out of date, many of the blocks dating from the time when the favourite mode of heating depicted was a small Bunsen flame. The text deals mostly with continental methods with a preponderance of Teutonic origins. It is of interest that nothing much more recent than a decade ago is described. The descriptions apply briefly to a multiplicity of methods rather than provide an adequate description of any one procedure. The chapter on testing of vermicides is interesting, that on striped muscle singularly inadequate. The others vary in quality. There is no evidence of acquaintance with any of the recent advances in physics, biochemistry or operative procedures in this volume. The chapter on the handling of common laboratory animals is useful, though the rhesus monkey might have been included with advantage. The type and paper are good, the binding of a lower standard. The book might be described as a useful guide to the more classical methods of investigation of drug action, with a particular interest for the teacher of pharmacology on account of the description of several useful methods of demonstrating the action of drugs on tissues.

J. D. P. GRAHAM.

A TEXT BOOK OF PHARMACOGNOSY, by G. E. Trease. Pp. VIII-811 and Index. Fifth Edition. Bailliere, Tindall and Cox, London, 1949, 30s. net.

A perusal of this text-book shows the wide field covered by modern pharmacognosy. Besides descriptions of a large number of vegetable and animal drugs, information is given on such varied materials as cotton, silk and surgical dressings, bacteria and fungi (including *Penicillium* spp. and yeast), chalk and kieselguhr, shellac, gelatin, beeswax and spermaceti, wool alcohols and gums; in short, the raw materials from the vegetable and animal kingdoms which go to furnish the pharmacist with his dressings, his vaccines and antibiotics, his plant insecticides and cosmetic creams, as well as the usual tinctures, infusions and tablets, pure alkaloids and crystalline products like picrotoxin and tubocurarine. The arrangement of the information is similar to that of the previous edition, the bulk of the book consisting of descriptions of crude drugs, etc., arranged in order of Phyla and families. Many of the descriptions include microscopical characters.

Besides this descriptive part there are short chapters on the history, commerce, cultivation, storage and evaluation of crude drugs. There are also chapters of a general nature on microscopical technique, constituents and extraction of crude drugs, and analysis (including fluorescence and chromatographic analysis). This information is necessary in order that the practitioner may be able to apply modern technique both to the description and evaluation of crude drugs.

As the author's aim is to cover the requirements of examination syllabuses