

## BOOK REVIEWS

one should not perhaps expect much information on more recent work in pharmacognosy and additions to the materia medica such as alginates, *Ammi Visnaga*, the *Holarrhena* alkaloids, *Erythrina* alkaloids and rutin, but one would expect information on thyroid and pancreas, both of which are in the new syllabus for the degree of Bachelor of Pharmacy. Apart from these omissions the author's aim is well fulfilled in this book.

J. W. FAIRBAIRN.

*PRECIS DE CHIMIE TOXICOLOGIQUE*, by F. Schoofs. 2nd edition, 1948. Pp. 509 and Index. Les Presses Universitaires de Liege, Maison des Etudiants, Liege.

The scope of toxicology, and of toxicological chemistry in particular, is so wide that it is in the light of the author's statements that any volume on this subject must be considered. In the preface to the first edition it is stated that the book is intended for students as an introduction to the fundamental ideas of toxicological chemistry, not as an encyclopædic treatise but as a guide to those poisons which are more frequently encountered. As regards practical details it is said that these are given to enable "the more important methods used for the detection and determination of poisons" to be performed. It must be stated at the outset that, although the volume forms a useful introduction to the general principles of toxicological chemistry and deals with a wide range of poisons it would, in the opinion of the reviewer, be of limited value to anyone confronted with the actual task of toxicological analysis.

The work is divided into eight chapters: (1) general discussion; (2) gaseous substances; (3) volatile poisons and poisons isolated by distillation; (4) acids; (5) poisons extracted by immiscible solvents; (6) metallic poisons; (7) non-metallic poisons; (8) the purity of reagents. The first chapter on generalities is, to a chemist, one of the most useful in the book. It includes a discussion of the various routes of absorption and excretion of poisons, of the relation between molecular structure and toxicity, and contains some notes on the general precautions to be taken in toxicological analysis. It is to be regretted that the volume does not contain more references to the original literature. Most of the references are to text-books and little is given of recent analytical procedures and in particular of methods capable of detecting and estimating small quantities of organic and inorganic poisons. In dealing with lead, for example, useful notes are given on acute and chronic poisoning, on the toxic dose and on the method of elimination. It is difficult, however, to appreciate the value of the method given for the detection and estimation of lead when one considers that following this the use of a dithizone solution in chloroform is dismissed with the sentence "Cette solution verte, agitée avec un sel de plomb dissous dans l'acétate d'ammonium en présence de cyanure de potassium, donne une coloration rouge." Some sections, such as that on alcohol, are well written and fairly comprehensive, although that on barbituric acid derivatives occupies only six pages, a small number in view of the present day prevalence of this type of poisoning. The book is bound in paper covers and almost all of the pages require cutting. The editing and proof reading have been well done, although the formula for D.D.T. (p.396) is wrongly given. It is likely that this volume will be mostly useful in providing an account of the pharmacological action and general chemistry of a fairly wide range of poisons.

R. E. STUCKEY.