

BOOK REVIEWS

MATERIA MEDICA. PHARMACY, PHARMACOLOGY AND THERAPEUTICS, by *W. Hale-White*, 28th Edition, revised by *A. H. Douthwaite*. Pp. 507 with Appendix and Index. J. & A. Churchill, Ltd., London, 1949. 16s. 0d.

There are many books which attempt to present the subjects of materia medica, pharmacology and therapeutics in a form acceptable to the student and to the medical practitioner. The most frequent criticism of such publications is that they either provide too much or too little information. Probably the chief fault of a book such as Hale-White's "Materia Medica" is that the concise nature of the text does not afford a fuller presentation of the available evidence on the pharmacological action of drugs. This does not permit discussion of some aspects of the subject where it is perhaps desirable to distinguish between opinions arising from conjecture and statements based on fact. In conformity with the traditional nature of the book there is a comprehensive list of the drugs and preparations described in the British Pharmacopœia. For the student of pharmacy this may be a desirable feature, but it is doubtful whether the medical student can derive much benefit from such an array of names, except as a dictionary of reference. He might well be puzzled regarding the necessity for a strong tincture and a weak tincture of ginger; a strong and a weak solution of ammonium acetate; a liquid extract, two infusions and a tincture of senega, especially when in the latter instance the text indicates that they are only occasionally used as expectorants. A text-book which in the course of over half a century has provided on the average a revised edition every second year, requires no further comment on its popularity. The 28th edition of this book incorporates all the numerous changes in the drugs and preparations resulting from the appearance of the British Pharmacopœia of 1948.

ANDREW WILSON.

GRUNDLAGEN DER PHARMAKOLOGIE, by *K. W. Merz*. Pp. 274 and Index. Wissenschaftliche Verlagsgesellschaft M.B.H. Stuttgart, 1948.

Professor Merz, who was formerly Director of the Institute of Pharmaceutical Chemistry in the University of Königsberg, has completed the fourth edition of his text-book of Pharmacology. It is primarily intended for pharmacists, chemists and biologists, and if chemical formulæ might be regarded as an inducement to the reader, there is much to attract his attention. The book is divided into 18 chapters which permits a systematic and quite comprehensive treatment of the subject. The first three chapters consist of a general discussion of definitions, types of pharmacological action and the mechanism of drug action. In the remaining sections the action and uses of drugs are discussed in relation to the systems of the body, in much the same fashion as in Clark's "Applied Pharmacology." There is a concise description of the anatomy, and physiology, and where appropriate, of the pathology relevant to each such system. A very useful chapter deals with the toxicology of the common organic solvents and gases. On the whole the account of the pharmacological actions is sound though in some instances the author appears content to concern himself only with what happens in the frog and not in the higher species, particularly in man. It is desirable also to indicate more clearly that the parasympathomimetic drugs do not stimulate nerve endings, though their action resembles this effect. The book is well illustrated with chemical formulæ, line drawings and photographs of original

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tracings. It is unfortunate that the quality of the paper is poor and does not permit a reasonable reproduction of those photographs which are intended to display characteristic clinical features. In some instances the effect is spoiled by lack of definition in which important detail is not clearly visible. For those to whom the German language presents no difficulties the book is well worth reading; others may prefer to await a suitable English translation.

ANDREW WILSON.

BENTLEY'S TEXTBOOK OF PHARMACEUTICS, by Harold Davis. Pp. xiv + 1100 and Index. Fifth Edition. Bailliere, Tindall & Cox, London, 1949. 30s. net.

While welcoming the fifth edition of Bentley and recommending it to all students of pharmacy as an essential text-book, one wonders whether it is in fact possible to produce successfully in one volume, a satisfying account of the very numerous pharmaceutical phenomena, together with their explanations, descriptions of machinery and their uses, dispensing of medicines, surgical dressings, bacteriology, immunology, and pharmaceuticals even in 1100 pages. The numerous references to the original literature without which no modern text-book is of value, help in some measure to ease the path of the earnest student, but many of the less critical students will neglect the implied advice of the authors to read widely and the curriculum does not allow much time for work in the library. Having said this, in the hope that Dr. Davis and his collaborators will feel only partially satisfied with their efforts and from their wide experience and knowledge will be inspired in the near future to produce a series of volumes consisting of the sections of the present volume each expanded to a volume of its own, congratulations are extended to the authors for the accomplishment of a really formidable task and encouragement is offered to go even further. Such a work would help to meet the needs of critical students of whom there is an ever-increasing number.

The volume is well printed by modern British standards and is freely illustrated. Many of the illustrations are excellent but some of the photographs have not reproduced well and as sources of information the sketches on pages 489 and 490 would convey little to one not already familiar with the equipment concerned. The proof reading has been well done although the reference to chapter LXXVI on page 47 should read LXXVII. J. P. TODD.

ABSTRACTS (Continued from Page 731)

Escherichia coli, *Staphylococcus albus* and *Candida albicans*. Different media were used for different organisms, but the reaction was adjusted in all cases to pH 7.4. The concentrations tested were 2, 1, 0.2, 0.02, 0.002 and 0.0002 per cent. in 5 ml. of medium; this was poured into Petri dishes containing about 10 to 15 ml. of the corresponding medium. Each micro-organism was grown on these six concentrations, and on a control plate, the aerobes were cultivated at room-temperature, the anaerobes and facultative anaerobes were incubated at 37.5°C., the anaerobes in Brewster anaerobic jars. The amount of growth was compared with the control at intervals of 24, 48 and 72 hours. Growth of *R. phaseoli* and *R. japonicum* appeared to be inhibited after 48 hours, but some growth appeared in the lower concentrations after 72 hours; whereas *R. trifolii* and *A. chroöcoccus* were inhibited only temporarily by the higher concentrations, lower concentrations increased the amount of growth. No inhibitory effects were observed with the facultative anaerobic organisms or with the anaerobes.

L. H. P.