

BOOK REVIEWS

CELL PHYSIOLOGY AND PHARMACOLOGY, by J. F. Danielli. Pp. viii + 153 (including 21 illustrations, 3 plates and 22 tables). Cleaver-Hume Press Ltd., London. 1950. 24s.

A knowledge of the function of cells and the effects of drugs thereon is fundamental to the understanding of the complexities of drug action. Yet to-day we must admit that we know very little of the biological reactions occurring within the cell and the manner in which drugs affect them. Much of our information consists of hypotheses and data from results with an inherent degree of inaccuracy. Pharmacology is a young science which is rapidly developing and, while we are gaining an insight into many problems, as we progress we become more acutely aware of the complexities of biological systems. We may compare our present knowledge with that of the chemist prior to the elucidation of atomic structure. Reading Dr. Danielli's book one is soon aware of the lack of progress in this field since the classical publication of the late Professor Clark on the "Mode of Action of Drugs on Cells" in 1933. It is to be hoped that the main purpose of the book, to stimulate research in the cellular action of drugs, is fulfilled.

The book itself is based upon a series of lectures given at University College, London, and is chiefly concerned with the physico-chemical aspects of the cell and its reactions to drugs. It is divided into six chapters dealing with the cell as a physico-chemical unit; the actions of drugs on surfaces, membrane permeability and enzymes; the actions of narcotics and the response of cells on the biological level. It assumes, from the reader, a reasonable knowledge of physical chemistry and for the student a more elementary account of the complex systems and formulæ involved would appear desirable. The book is a valuable contribution to biological research on drug action and can be profitably read by chemists who may then more fully appreciate the limitations of the biological worker.

G. F. SOMERS.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Correction.

CONVERSION OF VITAMIN B_{12b} INTO VITAMIN B₁₂

BY B. ELLIS, V. PETROW, G. H. BEAVEN, E. R. HOLIDAY AND E. A. JOHNSON.

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Lines 10 and 17, for B₁₂ read B_{12b}