

BOOK REVIEWS

MEDICINAL CHEMISTRY (Vol. I). A Series of Reviews prepared under the auspices of the Division of Medicinal Chemistry of the American Chemical Society. Pp. vi + 466 and Index. Chapman and Hall, Ltd., London. 1951. 80s.

This volume is the first of a proposed series containing reviews, the purpose of which is to "summarise the available data on the biological properties of medicinal substances and to correlate the relationship between chemical structure and physiological activity in each area covered." The subjects dealt with in this first volume are antithyroid compounds, antispasmodics (derivatives of carboxylic acids), antibiotics from plants, benzoates and substituted benzoates as local anaesthetics, analgesics (A. aralkylamines and B. partial structures related to morphine.) Each chapter contains a discussion of the methods of synthesis and pharmacological test procedures and an examination of the relationship between chemical structure and pharmacological activity. All the compounds which have been tested for the type of pharmacological activity covered in each chapter are presented in tabular form giving the pharmacological activity and references. Each chapter has been contributed by authorities whose personal experience and knowledge in the field discussed is extensive. The style adopted in the book is similar to that used in the well known "Organic Reactions" series, produced by the same publisher, and the printing, binding and quality of paper is of the same high standard. *Medicinal Chemistry*, Vol. I, is an excellent book, and the series promises to be of great value to research chemists and pharmacologists. The only criticism is of the price—80s.

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A TEXTBOOK OF PHARMACOGNOSY, by T. C. Denston. Fifth Edition. Pp. xviii + 624 and Index. Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, Ltd., London. 1951. 45s.

The fifth edition of this well-known textbook has been brought up to date by giving information on polyploidy, insect infestation, vegetable materials now being used more commonly, such as yeast, sterculia gum, derris, etc., and by revising wherever necessary the information on constituents, and the requirements of the B.P. 1948 and the B.P.C. 1949. Besides the information on individual drugs there are chapters of a general nature on drug constituents; cultivation, collection and storage; and adulteration and commerce in drugs. The relationship of the facts described to the practice of pharmacy, as well as the effect of the Second World War and the present economic situation on the commerce in crude drugs, are rightly emphasised. As the book has grown out of an earlier laboratory manual there are still retained sufficient instructions to enable suitable practical exercises to be carried out; many of the line drawings are also suitable as examples of the drawings students should make. These illustrations are supplemented by some excellent and interesting photographs. The revision of information seems to have been well done though the reference to the preparation of oil of lemon implies that the sponge and *écuelle* processes are still extensively used. According to Guenther (*The Essential Oils*, 1949, III, 9 *et seq.*) the sponge process is seldom used now and the *écuelle* process is never used in Europe; in the West Indies it is still used for the production of orange and lime oils. The book is well suited for courses such as that prescribed for the old Chemist and Druggist Examination; however, little information is given on the histology of drugs, and this omission will have to be made good if future editions are intended to cover the courses in pharmacognosy for present degrees and diplomas.

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