

BOOK REVIEWS

A TEXTBOOK OF FORENSIC PHARMACY. By Thomas Dewar. Third Edition. Pp. xvi + 287 (including Index). Edward Arnold (Publishers), Ltd., London. 1954. 18s.

The text and arrangement of this edition (November, 1953) follows almost exactly that of the second edition (1950) but embodies changes effected by at least 28 enactments made since 1950. This rate of forensic change is a measure of the importance of the new publication, and an illustration of the fact that *A Textbook of Forensic Pharmacy* deals exclusively with practical problems which are continually presenting themselves. It is essential, though often difficult, for practising pharmacists, teachers and students to keep accurate note of changes in regulations and conditions through the succession of acts, amendments and orders. Dr. Dewar's latest edition, therefore, comes as a most welcome landmark from which a fresh and accurate start can be made. Even so, the first marginal note to make is on page 1: that the Supplementary Charter stated sought by the Pharmaceutical Society was granted on December 31, 1953. Incidentally, the inclusion of more blank marginal space in any future editions would be most useful. Among the more noteworthy of the changes and innovations dealt with are those in the conditions governing the supply of medicinal opium, tincture of opium, and pethidine to certified midwives; then there is the inclusion of dimercaprol and aureomycin among the substances to which the Therapeutic Substances Act applies, the Regulations controlling chloramphenicol and isoniazid, and the charges payable by the patient under National Health Service Regulations for drugs or appliances. This fully documented and unique textbook is therefore an essential part of the reference library of every practising pharmacist and teacher; the author states that it is written primarily for students, yet the mass of necessary and intricate detail and the legal phraseology, however well arranged, may easily create a degree of confusion in the student mind unless that mind is tempered by practical pharmaceutical experience and comprehensive instruction.

E. W. SKYRME.

LEHRBUCH DER ORGANISCHEN CHEMIE, by Paul Karrer. Twelfth Edition. Pp. xix + 949 (including Index). George Thieme Verlag, Stuttgart, 1954. D.M. 59.70.

This very well-known textbook of organic chemistry, now in its twelfth edition, has been completely revised and extended to embrace many of the more recent advances of organic chemistry. The systematic treatment of the subject matter follows the familiar pattern of earlier editions, the main subdivisions being aliphatic, carbocyclic and heterocyclic chemistry; always with marked emphasis on substances of natural origin. As might be expected, the revision of an established textbook leaves much of the fundamental chemistry in its original presentation. Nevertheless, much new material has been included but, despite these additions, the book has been retained within a reasonable compass. It is fitting that this newer material finds its logical place in the systematic treatment of the subject; space has been given to a limited but adequate treatment of newer theoretical concepts, so that a nicely balanced presentation is achieved throughout. The account of modern ideas on the structure of the *cyclohexane* ring is typical. The treatment is lucid, elementary, yet sufficient to enable those who may wish to pursue the subject further to do so without difficulty. The application of these ideas to the elucidation of the stereochemistry of the tropane

alkaloids provides an excellent example of the use of conformational analysis, though the absence of any mention of these studies in connection with the steroids is indeed surprising. Notable additions include complete sections on fluorohydrocarbons, the tropolones, penicillin, the chemistry of acetylenic compounds and such newer synthetic reagents as lithium aluminium hydride. The treatment of reaction mechanism from the standpoint of fundamental electronic theory has been given much greater prominence throughout the book than was the case in earlier editions. There is no doubt that in this, as in many other ways, the utility of an already much valued textbook has been considerably enhanced.

J. B. STENLAKE.

METHODEN DER ORGANISCHEN CHEMIE (Houben-Weyl). Volume II. Analytische Methoden. Fourth Edition. Edited by Eugen Müller. Pp. xxiv + 1070 (including 252 illustrations) and Index. Georg Thieme Verlag, Stuttgart, 1953. D.M. 139.00.

The second volume of the new fourth edition of Houben-Weyl is devoted entirely to the application of analytical methods in organic chemistry. An extensive introductory section deals with methods of elementary analysis, both qualitative and quantitative. As in the rest of the book, the treatment is comprehensive, giving experimental details for all the more important analytical methods. Semi-micro, micro and macro methods of analysis are described and the section concludes with a short account of ultra-micro methods. By far the greater part of the book is devoted to a first class survey of analytical methods available for estimating organic functional groups. The treatment is systematic and includes all the more important types such as carbon-carbon, hydroxyl, carbon-oxygen functions and functional groups containing nitrogen and sulphur.

The remainder of the book which constitutes Part II consists of five sections, each devoted to some specialised aspect of organic analysis. General gasometric methods of analysis are described, including both chemical and physical methods, together with a number of more specialised techniques for particular classes of gaseous product. The study of melting and freezing points, boiling points and condensation temperatures forms the subject of yet another of these specialist sections. Thermal analysis and chromatographic analysis are each accorded an individual section of the book. The treatment is both theoretical and practical. The latter section is excellent and detailed, and provides a wealth of valuable information in all branches of chromatography. The concluding section is devoted to the analytical control of solvents and the analysis of solvent mixtures. Throughout the book the bibliography is extensive, seemingly complete and up to date. There are many excellent diagrams of both conventional and novel pieces of apparatus. This new volume would be a most valuable addition to any library.

J. B. STENLAKE.

(ABSTRACTS *continued from p. 573*).

At present there appears to be no place for the thiosemicarbazones in the treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis except possibly as a last resort in patients who have failed to respond to all other antituberculosis drugs. S. L. W.

War Gases, Physiological and Biochemical Effects of. H. Collumbine. (*Brit. med. Bull.*, 1954, 10, 18.) Whether gross tissue damage (as by the vesicants) or dysfunction (as by the lethal agents) is produced, it appears that some biochemical disturbances may be the fundamental "key" action of the war gases. Thus, the visible skin damage caused by mustard gas and the nitrogen mustards is accompanied by metabolic changes in the skin, for example, inhibition of glycolysis, which has been shown to be due to the inhibition of

(ABSTRACTS *continued on p. 576*.)