

## BOOK REVIEW

*REMINGTON'S PRACTICE OF PHARMACY*, Eleventh Edition, 1956. Edited by Eric W. Martin and E. Fullerton Cook. Pp. xii + 1707 (including over 1000 illustrations and Index). Interscience Publishers, Ltd., London, 135s. The Mack Publishing Company, Easton, Pa., U.S.A. \$18.00.

This is an astonishing publication. It is described as a "treatise on the manufacturing, standardising and dispensing of pharmaceutical products with biological and chemical properties, tests for purity, assays, uses and doses: also a guide to the legal obligations of the pharmacist and the professional services rendered in helping to maintain community health. A textbook and reference guide for pharmacists, physicians and other medical scientists". Even this description is too modest. It does not refer to veterinary medicines, horticultural products including insecticides, or first aid. It does not suggest that here is to be found detailed information on how to run the pharmaceutical side of a drug store from the pricing of prescriptions to a list of items that should be kept in the Baby Department, neither does it indicate that the book contains a fascinating account of American hospital pharmacy and of the organisation and administration of the hospital service in that country. But all this and more is contained in the 1700 large pages and 100 chapters of this encyclopaedic work with an index comprising some 20,000 entries.

There is no doubt that individually the editors, Dr. E. W. Martin, of the University of Pennsylvania, and Dr. E. Fullerton Cook, formerly chairman of the U.S.P. Revision Committee, the four associate editors and more than 200 assistant editors and contributors have done a first-class job and produced a book which contains a vast amount of information likely to be needed by all who practise or hope to practise pharmacy. But that is not to say that all pharmacists need the whole of this massive compilation.

Remington's "Practice", which first appeared in 1885, was originally compiled by a teacher as a comprehensive single-volume textbook for students of pharmacy, and 70 years ago the student's needs could be covered in a single volume of reasonable size. In spite of the vast increase that has taken place in the intervening period in the range of the various subjects included in the term pharmacy the original plan has been followed and even extended in this eleventh edition.

Obviously a book on pharmacy for students must deal comprehensively with what we know as "pharmaceutics" and this the new Remington does adequately, in quality as well as quantity. On the other hand there are several subjects, for example organic, inorganic and analytical chemistry, biological assays and legal matters, still coming within the broad ambit of "pharmacy", which the student could probably learn better from one of the many available textbooks in each of these subjects rather than from a "potted" version of all, however well the potting is done. In any event the student does not want to pay for information he will not need until he is actually in practice.

For the practising pharmacist the comprehensiveness and "reference" character of Remington will be attractive, although the appeal to British pharmacists will, of course, be diminished by the fact that the book is based on American practice. In some respects the book overlaps the standard reference books which he will already possess, and there is much that no pharmacist, whatever his nationality or the branch of the profession in which he is engaged, will need when once his student days are over.

## BOOK REVIEW

However, the defects of the book are those of its qualities, particularly its comprehensiveness. Too much has been attempted and unfortunately the attempt has succeeded. It is impossible to meet the needs of widely differing kinds of reader and still give full value to each. So large and heavy a publication is not really a practical proposition from the user's point of view and it seems essential in future to issue the book in more than one volume. If the contents of each volume could be selected with the main kinds of user in mind, the student would certainly welcome something more portable and the pharmacist would not have to pay for information he does not require. Yet for those who have the money to spare and want a single reference work on all the subjects that go to make up modern pharmacy, Remington is probably the book of choice.

H. TREVES BROWN.

---

(ABSTRACTS continued from p. 1173.)

action of these amines followed a similar pattern. Some related amines showed no such toxicity. Some sulphhydryl compounds inhibited the toxic action. Spermine had an anti-heparin action and an effect on blood coagulation similar to that of protamine.

G. P.

## APPLIED BACTERIOLOGY

**Mercury Salts, Value of, as Disinfectants and Fungicides for Inanimate Surfaces.** L. F. Ortenzio, L. S. Stuart and J. L. Friedl. (*J. Ass. off. agric. Chem., Wash.*, 1956, **39**, 476.) The authors report results obtained when six mercury salts were tested for bactericidal and fungicidal activity. The bactericidal tests were made in accordance with the Association of Official Agricultural Chemists use-dilution method, using *Salm. choleraesuis* and *M. pyogenes* var. *aureus* as the test organisms and using U.S.P. thioglycollate broth as the sub-culture medium. Tests for fungicidal activity employed the A.O.A.C. fungicide test method, using *Trichophyton interdigitale* and *Streptomyces scabies* as test organisms. The mercurials were found to have much greater fungicidal than bactericidal activities. Thus 1-20 dilutions of mercuric chloride and mercuric potassium iodide were required to kill the two bacteria whereas dilutions of 1-4500 and 1-3500 respectively were effective against the spores of *T. interdigitale*. Phenylmercuric salts were also found to be fungicidal in high dilution. The mercury salts were used in aqueous solutions containing low but unspecified concentrations of acetic acid. Investigations with *Streptomyces scabies* were made in order to determine the behaviour of organisms intermediary between bacteria and fungi. A standardised conidiospore suspension was killed within 10 minutes by 1-80 phenol and by 1-5000 mercuric chloride, indicating that *Streptomyces* are similar to fungi in their sensitivity to mercurials. It is concluded that mercurials might possess value in decontaminating premises or articles carrying causative agents of fungal infections. Although the bacteriostatic and fungistatic activities of mercurials are well-established, the authors point out that, where pyogenic and enteric bacteria are concerned, claims of disinfecting benefits cannot be justified unless the formulation contains bactericidally active chemicals other than mercury salts.

B. A. W.