BOOK REVIEWS

SEMIMICRO QUALITATIVE ORGANIC ANALYSIS: The Systematic Identification of Organic Compounds. Second Edition, 1957. By Nicholas D. Cheronis and John B. Entrikin. Pp. xiv + 774 (including index). Interscience Publishers, London, 72s. New York, $9.00.

Ten years ago Professors Cheronis and Entrikin in the first edition of their book made a praiseworthy attempt to use semi-micro techniques for systematic organic analysis. Brought up to date in a second edition it now contains approximately 250 pages of new material while following closely the pattern of the first edition.

Part I is devoted to techniques of organic analysis and deals with equipment and procedures for weighing, measuring, crystallisation, distillation, sublimation, extraction, chromatography and determination of physical constants. Although much commercially available apparatus is described the authors frequently indicate how suitable equipment may be made by anybody possessing modest glassblowing ability.

Part II deals with procedures for the tentative identification of an unknown substance and seven chapters describe preliminary tests, classification by solubility, use of indicators, general tests for functional groups, specific class tests, separation of mixtures and tentative identification.

For carrying out the final identification 13 chapters are included in Part III. The analytically useful properties of all the main classes of organic compounds are described together with the preparation of suitable derivatives. Full experimental details are given and the beginner should have no difficulty in preparing any of the compounds recommended for identification purposes.

Part IV, the final section, consists of an extensive collection of tables giving physical constants of classified organic compounds and their derivatives. An appendix gives a list of apparatus, chemicals and reagents required by those using the book and there is a comprehensive index.

The book is intended both for students and industrial workers and for this purpose full references to the literature are given at the end of each chapter and in the text. Notes on laboratory accidents have been incorporated so as to appear as soon as the book is opened. This is an excellent feature as so many students are quite unaware of laboratory hazards until involved in an accident. The tables in Part IV occupy nearly 200 pages and contain too much information for the average student and probably too little for the industrial worker.

The book is well printed and produced and American spelling is used throughout; some words like "derivatization" will seem strange to British readers. Although not free from typographical errors the proof reading has been well done in view of the size of the book, which can be thoroughly recommended to students but most industrial workers would require a more comprehensive work for reference.

G. E. FOSTER.

A TEXTBOOK OF FORENSIC PHARMACY. By Thomas Dewar. Fourth Edition. Pp. xvi + 288 (including Index). Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd., London. 1957. 24s.

The first edition of this book appeared eleven years ago with the avowed object of presenting in a single volume all the forensic pharmacy which is ordinarily taught to students preparing for the qualifying examinations of the Pharmaceutical Society. Its success may be gauged by the fact that it has now reached a fourth edition and perhaps also from the relatively high proportion of passes achieved in this subject. The present edition follows the form previously adopted and all the changes in legislation, since the third edition appeared, are included. As the Society's examination appears to be largely based on what the retail pharmacist should know, it naturally follows that the book must be of considerable value as a work of reference for the practising pharmacist. Doubt, however, might be expressed on the value of including some schedules to the National Health Service Regulations. In one instance, the detail is insufficient for use in the busy dispensing department where the Drug Tariff would necessarily be consulted, and in another, even a hospital pharmacist could not be expected to produce any information on the charges for wigs or the soling and heeling of surgical boots. The students' appreciation of the revision questions might be enhanced if some of those set by the examiners during the past twelve years were indicated with the appropriate date. More cross references in the index might profitably be inserted, e.g., the Pharmacutical Society's coat of arms appears only under the main heading of "Titles and Descriptions", and to determine the conditions under which a poison may be sent through the post it is necessary to search for the entry which is "Poisons, Sale of—by Post". This book will continue to be the industrious student's sure guide to examination success and an authoritative exposition of the law.

J. ANDERSON STEWART.

(ABSTRACTS *continued from p. 494.*)

employed sulphonamides. In this series of patients 2 complained of headache following administration of the drug, 3 had mild nausea and anorexia during the first 2 days of administration, and one patient developed drug fever and became acutely ill 7 days after administration of a single 2 g. dose. S. L. W.

APPLIED BACTERIOLOGY

Acrylic Film for Surgical Dressings, Physical and Bacteriological Investigations of. B. T. Ekenstam, B. H. F. von Fieandt, F. Henn and K. B. Olow. (*Scand. J. clin. lab. Invest.*, 1956, **8**, 278.) The preparations investigated consisted of polymerised methacrylic esters dissolved in ethyl acetate (Nobecutan). Films prepared from the ethyl acetate solution were tested for tensile strength, elasticity, fatigue on folding and permeability to water and saline. Films of the polymerised butyl ester of methacrylic acid were stronger than those of the 2-ethoxyethyl ester, but the ethoxyethyl was better than the butyl ester in the elasticity and fatigue on folding tests, and was more permeable to water vapour. Solutions of the polymers in ethyl acetate were found to be sterile and to have a weak antibacterial activity. Films prepared from these solutions were initially sterile but had no antibacterial properties. Tetramethylthiuram disulphide was found to be an active antimicrobial agent, effective under aerobic and anaerobic conditions and in the presence of protein. It is soluble in the plastic solution, and the addition of 0·25 per cent yielded films active against Gram-positive and Gram-negative bacteria and fungi. G. B.