

PHARMACOPOEIAS AND FORMULARIES

The final section gives tables and formulae for the dilution of liquids of different specific gravity and concentrations of active material.

The volume is complementary to the standard works of reference and is clearly intended to be enlarged with new material as the opportunity occurs. By widening the coverage and scope especially of Sections I and II this work could be made to occupy an important place among pharmaceutical reference books.

Professors Steiger and Büchi and their collaborators are to be congratulated on a fine beginning and encouraged to continue their efforts.

BRITISH NATIONAL FORMULARY 1957*

Reviewed by Miles Weatherall

This edition of the British National Formulary differs from its predecessors because the preparations listed in it are classified according to their use instead of their pharmaceutical form. The Notes for Prescribers of the main edition have been extended and used as preambles to the list of preparations in each group. The result appears to be as convenient for reference as the main edition and at first sight more likely to be helpful to the prescriber whose mind is not yet made up. However, this more rational arrangement of the contents, being unaccompanied by any more critical selection than in the main edition, emphasizes the tiresome consequences of prescribing "by habit and tradition", and the Joint Formulary Committee are to be congratulated on having made the unreasonableness of the present position more evident by their new arrangement. There are still 23 expectorants, 29 sedative applications to the skin and 30 purgatives listed, and it would be a remarkable physician who could quote different indications for each of them and support his indications with evidence from properly controlled clinical trials. If all these preparations are therapeutically effective (about which there may be some reasonable doubt) it would not be difficult to compare their activities experimentally and show which were best. The hard facts of such trials would be more informative than some of the conventional observations contained in the present Prescribers' Notes, and a reduction in the number of identically active (or inactive) remedies which are put before the practising doctor would be no bad thing.

*Alternative Edition based on a Pharmacological Classification. Pp. 245 (including Index). The British Medical Association and the Pharmaceutical Press, London. 7s. 6d.; interleaved copy, 10s. 6d.