

BOOK REVIEW

KURZES LEHRBUCH DER PHARMAZEUTISCHEN CHEMIE, by K. Bodendorf. Pp. vii + 490 (including Index). Springer-Verlag, Berlin, 1958. DM. 34.50.

This, the fifth edition of Professor Dr. K. Bodendorf's short textbook of pharmaceutical chemistry, over-emphasises and indeed puts misplaced emphasis on the current importance of inorganic chemistry, at least to the British pharmacist, if not to his Continental counterpart. Thus no less than 190 pages of text out of a total of 471 are devoted to classical inorganic chemistry, introduced admittedly by a short chapter on the periodic classification, electron distribution in the elements, and valency. The idea of energy levels and electron shells is introduced, but one misses the discussion of the Bohr-Sommerfeld atom which is fundamental to any study of modern inorganic chemistry. Radioactivity, too, is dismissed in a few short pages, which are concerned mainly with natural radioactive series, and, whereas such elements as ^{14}C , ^{131}I and ^{32}P are mentioned, there is no serious discussion of their properties and uses. The remaining chapters devoted to organic chemistry follow the conventional pattern of any introductory course, dealing in turn with the main branches of aliphatic, carbocyclic (alicyclic and aromatic) and heterocyclic chemistry, in a manner such as to provide a useful course of general organic chemistry, well illustrated with pharmaceutical examples. Liberal use is made throughout of graphic formulae, which add considerably to the clarity of the text, but the choice of formulae which represent heterocyclic elements as *exocyclic* atoms is very much to be regretted in a students textbook. The general approach to stereochemistry, too, is weak for a textbook of this level, considering the importance of the subject to modern ideas of structure-action relationships. *cyclo*Hexane conformations and the stereochemistry of steroids are not discussed; graphic formula of such familiar substances as vitamins A and D are not represented as the *all-trans* structures which they are and which are essential to their activity. In other ways, however, the book gives a reasonably comprehensive cover of the simpler synthetic organic medicinals, and such natural products as vitamins, the simpler hormones and alkaloids, but the short section on antibiotics is disappointingly short, and could usefully have been extended. Despite the shortcomings enumerated, this volume will provide a useful introduction to pharmaceutical chemistry for those to whom the German text is no serious disadvantage.

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