

BOOK REVIEW

BENTLEY AND DRIVER'S TEXTBOOK OF PHARMACEUTICAL CHEMISTRY. 7th Edition. Revised by R. E. Driver. Pp. ix + 728 (including Index). Oxford University Press, London, 1960. 63s.

Although the general arrangement of this new edition follows the lines of its predecessors the text has been extensively revised, much of it has been rewritten and some new material has been included.

The book as before is divided into three parts: analytical methods, inorganic and organic. Two new chapters have been added to Part I, one a short account of organometallic complexes in analysis and the other an account of measurement of radioactivity. The extension of the section on ultra-violet absorption has improved the chapter on photometric methods.

Part II now begins with elementary but clear and concise accounts of atomic nuclei and radioactivity and periodicity and valency. The remaining chapters which describe the more important inorganic compounds used in pharmacy follow the lines of previous editions except that they have been revised to exclude compounds no longer described in the *British Pharmacopoeia*.

Part III which comprises the organic section has been improved by being extensively rewritten on more general lines. It is perhaps a pity that the author did not take the opportunity to go further in an attempt to present the theoretical aspects of the subject as an integral part of the description of the behaviour of organic compounds. Where possible medicinal compounds recognised by the current Pharmacopoeia are used as examples of each organic type.

A welcome feature is the increased space given to descriptions of synthetic medicinal chemicals. This was previously dealt with in one chapter and, has now been extended to twelve chapters each dealing with a different chemical type. The sections dealing with proteins, hormones, vitamins and antibiotics have also been improved by extension.

It is comparatively easy to criticise this work on the basis of its omissions. This arises from the misconception that one volume could adequately cover all aspects of pharmaceutical chemistry. The student who reads either for a diploma or a degree is required to have a knowledge of the principles underlying analytical methods, classical physical chemistry, general and inorganic chemistry and the principles of organic chemistry; it is asking too much that one textbook should adequately cover all these topics. The author obviously realising this has had to in some instances curtail and in others omit certain aspects of the subject. Perhaps in future editions the author will consider the inclusion of such topics as the factors influencing drug action, structure activity relationships and general chemotherapy. This would be useful in the light of the requirements for the three year diploma students.

It might also be helpful if instead of including the occasional reference, each chapter was followed by suggestions for further reading.

In spite of the above criticisms this new edition of "Bentley and Driver" will still continue to be of great use to students, particularly diploma students of pharmaceutical chemistry. The book is beautifully printed on fine quality paper.

N. J. HARPER.