

## Book Review

*The Chemistry of Drugs* by Norman Evers and Dennis Caldwell, both of Allen and Hanburys Ltd. Third Edition. Ernest Bell Ltd., London, 1959. 415 pp. £4 4s. 0d.

Since the second edition of Evers' book of the same title in 1933, the greatest expansion of all times in the field of therapeutic agents has taken place. The practical pharmaceutical chemist engaged in purifying, manufacturing and synthesizing drugs will welcome this up-to-date revision of a previously widely read book. Part I arranges 18 types of synthetic drugs according to their biological activities. Part II lists 12 types of alkaloids according to their botanical source, and this is followed by eight sections on steroids, non-steroid hormones, antibiotics, vitamins, and, strangely enough, naturally occurring purgatives. The methods of preparation of members of each of these classes of drugs listed in the U.S. or British pharmacopoeias are given in schematic formula outline and in an overall descriptive way, but exact reproducible directions are not included, on the whole. However, the representative references will lead the specialist to the respective original patent or journal article. For many drugs, characteristic physical properties are listed.

The book makes no claim to explaining the biological actions of drugs, and the biologist will therefore not find answers to questions in his field. The brief statements of therapeutic utility of each class of drugs listed may help a solely chemical-minded reader to appreciate the *raison d'être* of some of the unusual structures. The most valuable feature of the book is a 40-page compilation of approved non-proprietary, and many proprietary and chemical names of hundreds of therapeutic agents which are so hard to find in the scattered literature.

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