

## BOOK REVIEW

**Introduction to Pharmaceutical Biology.** Fourth Edition. By O. MORITZ, in co-operation with D. FROHNE, Kiel. Gustav Fischer-Verlag, Stuttgart, 1967, 449 pp., Price DM 54. (In German.)

THIS "Pharmacognosy textbook", having now been revised in co-operation with Dr. D. Frohne and being the second edition since the war, preserves the fundamental concept of Pharmaceutical biology, or pharmacognosy, as being the study of biogenic drugs. The purpose of this book is to be seen not so much in the imparting of special pharmacognostic knowledge of the drugs but in showing connexions between the products, their basic characteristics, their handling and their application. One therefore finds contained within the individual chapters general problems discussed in detail as for example the question of processes for drying drugs, the basics of growing drug plants and the problems of evaluating drugs and so on. By contrast, there is hardly anything about the microscopic identification of drugs and modern drug evaluation, topics which should be found in any modern pharmaceutical book.

After an introduction to the nature and principles of classification of general pharmacognosy and the effect of drugs, the drugs themselves and their derivatives are dealt with under three headings: essential, biogenic and "accidentally active" substances. Blood, enzymes, hormones and amino acids (exogenous substances) belong to the first group. The accidental "healing drugs" include all the other groups of plant substances. According to the fundamental concept of this book, the drugs are always seen in the framework of plant metabolism and their general effect; i.e. the importance of substances for the plant, their biosynthesis, their relationship to other plant substances are all dealt with. Only from this point of view do chapters such as "drugs with or without distinct relationship to individual amino acids" have a logical value. The book ends with two chapters about the problems of researching into drugs and the fundamental principles of judging biogenic remedies in respect to authenticity of plant origin and value. Finally, there is a bibliographic index listing the most important handbooks from home and abroad, and giving literature surveys arranged according to the 22 chapters of this book.

Those who have studied this book deeply will be astonished at the wealth of factual information contained within it. But the question arises, whether a textbook to which a strong philosophical conception of nature is peculiar, which consciously renounces the generally accepted principles of classification and which is written in a very lengthy style, especially in the general chapters, will still be well received by students today. I wonder whether the "advice for the use of this textbook" given here will be of much value?

For a new edition it would be desirable to adopt for the general chapters present day theories, to use more modern and concise principles of classification and above all to give more consideration to those "topical" drugs and their derivatives now on the international market. Neither should the modern analysis of drugs be neglected. As this book illustrates the field of pharmacognosy from a new point of view and imparts an interesting comprehensive view of "pharmaceutical biology" it certainly will again find many friends among pharmacists, botanists, and medical students.

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