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A COMPENDIUM OF PHARMACY.

The Practice of Pharmacy. By Dr. J. P. Remington, assisted by Dr. E. Fullerton Cook. Sixth edition. Pp. xxviii + 25 to 1987. (Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Co.) Price 35s. net.

OF all the American works on pharmacy none is so well known as Remington's. Since the publication of the first edition in 1885 its popularity has been maintained, and from a comparatively modest size it has grown to a stately volume of nearly 2000 pages. It must, however, be borne in mind that the author has put a very wide interpretation upon the term "pharmacy," and has not used it in the restricted sense in which it is commonly employed in this country. In "The Practice of Pharmacy" he has embodied to all intents and purposes the whole of the Pharmacopœia of the United States and also the National Formulary, appending notes to the monographs where necessary. He has dealt with crude vegetable drugs, unofficial as well as official, and with chemical drugs, both inorganic and organic, together with many of their derivatives and most of the newer synthetic remedies. Thus, for example, in the section on cellulose he treats of cotton, styptic cotton, pyroxylin, oxalic acid, acetic acid, acetone, fars, phenols, coal-tar and products obtained therefrom, thus covering an extremely wide range of subjects. Pharmaceutical testing, including biochemical assays, and reagents for the analysis of urine, for the examination of blood, and for bacteriology are also discussed.

"The Practice of Pharmacy" is, therefore, essentially a hand-book or compendium and a work of reference, rather than a text-book for students. For the former purpose it appears to be well suited, as there are but few subjects connected with pharmacy concerning which information is not to be found in it; whereas the ground covered and the arrangement of the subject-matter render it unsuitable for use by students as a text-book.

American pharmacists have for a number of years enjoyed the reputation of excelling in practical pharmacy, and the part of the volume dealing with this subject is well written and fairly complete, although it does not convey the impression that the American pharmacist is in this respect appreciably ahead of his British colleague. Among the pharmaceutical presses, for instance, the double-lever press, which is a powerful and handy press, and undoubtedly the best for use in the pharmaceutical laboratory, might well have been included. The section on ampoules, now so important a means of preserving and distributing sterile solutions for medicinal use, would be improved by a more detailed description of the methods at the disposal of the pharmacist for filling them.

The crude vegetable drugs have been classified

according to the nature of their chief constituents, a classification that has recently been advocated by Prof. Tschirch, but is difficult to carry out as the constituents are in many cases insufficiently known. This section of the work, particularly as regards the constituents of the drugs, stands much in need of careful revision in the light of the many recent researches in this field. In some of the "liquors" also revision is necessary, as, for example, solution of arsenious and mercuric iodide, which is made by triturating arsenious iodide with mercuric iodide and water until solution is effected in which, the author says, "no chemical change occurs." That the finished solution is apt to darken in colour is well known, but the restoration to normal colour by shaking it with metallic mercury or arsenium is surely a questionable proceeding.

These minor defects, while not materially detracting from the utility of the book as a work of reference, indicate the desirability of securing for the next edition the collaboration of several experts to each of whom a section should be allotted for careful revision. The scope of the work is so extensive that it is only by such a combination of experts that a thoroughly satisfactory result can be attained. Nevertheless, Remington's "Practice of Pharmacy" will continue to be for British pharmacists a mine of information on American pharmacy.

RECENT CHEMICAL ANTISEPTICS.

A Handbook on Antiseptics. By Dr. H. D. Dakin and Dr. E. K. Dunham. Pp. ix + 129. (New York: The Macmillan Co.; London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1917.) Price 7s. net.

THE object of this little handbook, so the authors state, is to give a concise account of the chief chemical antiseptics which have been found useful for surgical purposes during the present war. It appears at a very opportune moment, for, in spite of the disapprobation with which these substances are viewed in certain quarters, there is no indication that, as accessories to surgical treatment, they are losing in favour—rather the contrary. The septic character of most of the wounds received in France emphasised, at an early period of the war, the importance of a searching and systematic study of antiseptics. The result has been an array of new active substances. And this fact furnishes an additional *raison d'être* for the volume under review. Dakin's hypochlorite solution, Lorraine Smith's eusol, the chloramine antiseptics of Dakin and his collaborators, Browning's flavine antiseptics, and Morison's so-called B.I.P. paste, which have supplanted to a great extent the older preparations, have all appeared during the last four years. In most of the larger military hospitals these substances are known and used, but there must be a number of surgeons who have not access to the information except through occasional detached articles in the medical Press.