BOOK REVIEWS

A TEXTBOOK OF THE PRACTICE OF MEDICINE

By various authors

Edited by Frederick W. Price. Seventh edition
(Oxford University Press. 1946. Pp. 2034. £2 2s.)

To have produced yet another new edition of 'Price's Medicine' during war is a wonderful achievement, especially in view of the great amount of new material included. The various authors have brought their sections up to date. The uses of penicillin are well covered. The thiourea and thiouracil treatments of hyperthyroidism, the latest diagnostic techniques in Addison's disease, thyroidectomy in the treatment of heart failure, the uses of the sulphonamides, the convulsant treatment of manic depressive states and the insulin treatment of schizophrenia are only a few instances of subjects brought up to date. In the section on blood diseases, always admirably concise and well ordered, some modifications have been made in line with recent developments; the treatment of haemorrhagic disease of the newborn by synthetic vitamin K is given, and there is an excellent summary of the pathology of erythroblastosis foetalis in the light of recent work on the Rh factor. Similarly, in the deficiency diseases section the most recent work is well collated, as well as clear and comprehensible. The section on endocrinology is particularly well done. Industrial toxicology has been given plenty of space, the metallic poisons, coal-tar derivatives and chlorinated hydrocarbons being

dealt with in detail. The neurology section has been completely rewritten; as stated in the preface, the aim here has been at greater systematization, and this aim has been achieved. The presentation is clear and admirable in every way. Even though syndromes have been introduced which were omitted previously there is no feeling of over-concentration; indeed, as an example, the essay on aphasia is a model of lucidity. The text-book is an institution, and its worth increases with each new edition. Its sales are enormous. It is a pity, therefore, that some contributors still affect a medieval style. Some pages are still littered with fatal issues, impending dissolutions, and the *exhibition* of drugs including croton oil! One author deprecates the giving of milk to cases of vascular thrombosis because of the well known effect of calcium on the coagulation of blood. Another confides to us that he has always been disappointed by mistletoe. When readers as ignorant as the present reviewer have never known that any substance of value in therapeutics can be obtained from mistletoe, such a statement constitutes a mild psychic shock. The volume is still handsome, and the quality of the paper and print very good indeed. The only evidence of the difficulties encountered in war-time production is the slight increase in misprints; these are particularly noticeable in the section on diseases of the skin. As the editor states, the sale of this book abroad almost equals that in the United Kingdom. He rightly regards this as evidence of the international prestige of British medicine, but all will agree that medicine owes him, and his devoted collaborators, a great debt of gratitude for enhancing that prestige. D. H.

BRITISH AND FOREIGN OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS

TOXICITY AND POTENTIAL DANGERS OF AEROSOLS AND RESIDUES FROM SUCH AEROSOLS CONTAINING THREE PER CENT. DDT

Various Authors. U.S. Public Health Reports.
Supp. No. 183.

Two aerosols samples containing respectively 2.5 and 3.0 per cent. of DDT were first used, but later experiments were restricted to the latter since no appreciable differences were noted. Single exposure to high concentrations in a sealed chamber caused nasal irritation, restlessness, tremors and death in convulsions for some mice, particularly the younger ones. Rats were less affected and guinea-pigs less still; dogs only showed signs referable to the constituents of the aerosol itself. The DDT concentration was 26.4 to 32.9 mg. per litre and was maintained for 45 minutes.

Repeated daily exposures, for 45 minutes a day, over a period of 8 weeks with 33 mg. DDT per litre of air caused no injury to dogs beyond the symptoms of narcosis by the solvent, and exposure of monkeys, in the same conditions, for 22 weeks caused no signs of DDT intoxication or liver damage. When exposed three times daily the dogs died of pulmonary injury due to the solvents. The residue of the aerosols from which the propellant was omitted was easily absorbed through the skin of mice and 0.1 ml. was usually fatal by this route. Even applications of 0.012 ml. (2 mg. of DDT) were toxic and cumulative in under 3 weeks. Dogs died

only after 12-21 weeks of daily repeated skin applications and, in contrast to the mice which died in convulsions, they died in severe depression, showing at autopsy jaundice and depletion of the fat depots only. The application of DDT here was massive.

Instillation of DDT aerosol into the conjunctival sac in rabbits caused irritation due to the solvents. Similarly local irritation followed subcutaneous injections, and only minor DDT intoxication resulted even after 200 mg. per Kg. were used.

Autopsy findings in general showed fatty degeneration of liver and kidney cells, and minor changes in the anterior horn cells of the mice. In those experiments the concentration of DDT put up was 3000-4500 times that usually used for entomological purposes, which is 0.004-0.001 mg. per litre. There is not likely to be danger to human beings from skin contamination under these conditions, but might occur from careless handling while filling aerosol bombs. J. N. Agate.

REPORT ON AN INVESTIGATION INTO DUST AND VENTILATION CONDITIONS IN THE COPPER MINES IN NORTHERN RHODESIA, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO SILICOSIS.

By J. de V. Lambrechts, M.Sc.

(Government Press, Lusaka. 1945. Pp. 42. 2s. 6d.)

This work comprises a study of environmental and technical considerations in four copper mines and one