

The Chemistry of the Antibiotics Used in Medicine. R. M. EVANS, D.SC., D.I.C., F.R.I.C. Oxford, London, Edinburgh, New York, Paris, Frankfurt. Pergamon Press. 1965. Pp. x+226. Price 25s.

This scholarly and comprehensive work is naturally highly specialized. Yet it succeeds in holding the uninitiated reader's interest even when the esoteric chemistry eludes him. The author fully substantiates his belief that the study of the chemical structures of microbial metabolites is a fascinating and challenging problem. He reproduces the drama of this scientific saga with an impressive economy of words.

The first chapter presents a brief but adequate account of the discovery, development and classification of the antibiotics. Subsequent chapters deal in logical sequence with the subdivisions of the classification. Each antibiotic is reviewed chemically and clinically. The last chapter relates to the modes and sites of action of these drugs and is especially lucid and engrossing.

The first appendix describes the physical contents of antibiotics in clinical use. The second appendix is topical and yet anticipative in that it is concerned with the antibiotics which have antitumour activity—such as the actinomycins.

There is a vast storehouse of information in this small volume. The material is well presented and only one small typographical error was noted. The bibliography is exhaustive. Such a notable new work should run into several editions and deserves the dignity of stiff covers in the future.

Bedside Diagnosis. Seventh edition. CHARLES SEWARD, M.D., F.R.C.P. Edinburgh and London. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd. 1965. Pp. xx+568. Price 35s.

This book is in the clinical tradition for which British medicine is justly renowned. Each of the 21 chapters is devoted to an important presenting symptom. After a brief description of the physiological background, the symptom is analysed as it would be by the clinician at the bedside. The conditions which can cause the symptoms are described, and last of all—in their proper place—come the pathological and radiological investigations. It is refreshing to find psychogenic symptoms taking pride of place in the first chapter. Two chapters consider drugs as a cause of symptoms and the use of radio-active isotopes in diagnosis; and the book ends with 20 pages of normal values—a particularly helpful section for the family doctor. The index is complementary to the text in that it has diseases, rather than symptoms, for its main headings.

In this seventh edition the text has been extensively rewritten. The style is pleasing and Dr Seward makes good use of the apt quotation. Doctors in all fields of medicine will find much of value here; the newly qualified, in particular, will find no better book for learning the art and science of diagnosis.