

## BOEKBESPREKING : BOOK REVIEW

### ACTIONS AND USES OF DRUGS

*Actions and Uses of Drugs.* 6th ed. By N. Sapeika, B.A., M.D., Ph.D. (Cape Town), F.R.S.S.Af. Pp. 424. R6.30. Cape Town: A. A. Balkema. 1963.

With new drugs being added to the pharmacopoeia and to the drug lists of pharmaceutical firms with increasing and almost alarming rapidity, it is impossible for any text-book of pharmacology to be completely up-to-date. From the time the page proofs are passed to the time it leaves the press several new drugs are likely to have appeared.

Allowing for this, the new edition of Professor Sapeika's well-known book is an excellent reflection of drugs in common use by practitioners in 1963. Already a 'classic' among students at the University of Cape Town and other medical schools in this country, this book is widely known in other parts of the world as well, and this new edition should rightly take its place on the reference shelves of students and practitioners alike.

That this is the sixth edition of this book in only 20 years shows that its author is alive to the need for constant modification. In this edition there are new chapters on the antidepressant drugs and on skeletal muscle relaxants; many other sections have been re-written to include new information on diuretics, antibiotics, gluco-corticoid and anabolic steroids, tranquillizers, vasoconstrictors and adrenergic blocking agents, among others. At the same time, much old wood has been pruned away.

In this edition there is a new departure in the form of references, at the end of each chapter, to selected reviews and key articles on the particular subjects dealt with, so that the interested reader can delve deeper if he wishes.

The book is well printed and well laid out; the index is comprehensive and the information is concise and practical. These days, when practising doctors need to know all about the multifarious drugs available—their toxicity and side-effects as well as their actions—this book will supply the answers they need.

R.L.K.