

the good work on medical genetics in Scandinavia hitherto reported in speciality journals will find its way into this new journal.

C. O. CARTER

**Ovum Implantation: Its Hormonal, Biochemical, Neurophysiological and Immunological Bases.**

Edited by M. C. Shelesnyak and G. J. Marcus. (Pp. xiv + 482; illustrated + tables.) New York, London, and Paris: Gordon and Breach. 1969.

This book is a record of a meeting held at the Weismann Institute of Science, Rehovot, Israel in August, 1967. Eight papers were read, some on topics directly related to the main theme and others of a more basic nature but probably with important bearing on the subject. These papers and the discussion that followed each are published in full.

The first paper, a study of nidation, was given by Dr. Shelesnyak, who at this time was Head of the Department of Biodynamics at the Weizmann Institute, and Dr. Marcus. It gives a historical step-by-step account of the studies made by Dr. Shelesnyak of the role of histamine and oestrogens in the preparation of the uterus for implantation. The next paper, by Dr. Richard W. Schayer, of Orangeburg, N.Y., is a much more theoretical account of possible mechanisms of histamine participation in hormone action.

Next follows a masterly review by von Euler of the binding, uptake, and release of andrenergic neurotransmitter. Professor Jack Gorski and his co-workers from the University of Illinois follow with a fascinating account of subcellular binding of oestrogens in uterine tissue homogenates. A paper on diencephalic regulation of corpus luteum formation and secretory activity by Professor J. W. Everett of Duke University includes interesting details of studies made in his Department. A more philosophical paper on progesterone action by Professor Marius Tausk of Utrecht Holland comes next, and Professor Tausk also makes the final summing up of the proceedings. The last two papers are among the most exciting. Professor Seymour Katsh of Denver Colorado spoke about immunological problems in reproduction, discussing particularly antigenicity of male and female genital materials, the possibilities of autoimmunity, and why women so rarely develop antibodies to seminal fluids. In the final chapter, Professor R. E. Billingham, of the University of Pennsylvania, describes studies made to try to explain why the mammalian embryo fails to evoke a transplant rejection in the uterus.

There are many fascinating presentations in this book. The discussions following each paper are wide ranging

and often include interesting additional information. Scientists in many fields will find this book worth reading, the authors cover a wide range of disciplines and many modern scientific techniques have been used in the studies reported. The only regret is that the conference was held in August 1967, and though these proceedings provide much background information the book cannot now be regarded as an up-to-date review of the subject.

J. D. N. NABARRO

**Medizinische Genetik. Grundlagen, Ergebnisse und Probleme.** By Widukind Lenz. (Pp. xii + 308; 84 figures + 67 tables. DM.9.80.) Stuttgart: Georg Thieme. 1970.

W. Lenz's *Medizinische Genetik*, published in 1961 as a short exposition of the elements of medical genetics, was distinguished by an excellent concluding chapter on composite gene effects. A welcome and well-produced translation into English came from the Chicago University Press two years later.

The new edition is essentially a new book. The classical laws of inheritance and their mathematical applications are still here, but there is considerable emphasis on the biochemical effects of a gene: dominance and recessivity are dealt with on these lines. Illustrative examples are drawn from affections that can thus be interpreted.

In using the observed behaviour of the chromosomes in maturation and fertilation, Lenz has readily accommodated numerical and structural chromosome anomalies in his basic discussion. The chapters on formal genetics, on the chemical nature of the gene, and on mutations follow logically; they give a balanced account of a developing discipline and mercifully avoid being a catalogue of disjointed observations. As in the first edition the concluding chapter deals with composite gene effects and is particularly valuable for its extensive and critical assessment of studies on twins and on polygenic inheritance. The significance of natural selection in historical times and affluence in contemporary societies is well brought out in his discussion on diabetes. The complexities of multifactorial inheritance are stressed and the too ready recourse to it as an explanation of real difficulties is dismissed as a convenient *asylum ignorantiae*.

A translation of this new edition would be very welcome, and perhaps the publishers could bring it out at something similar to the remarkably low price of the German text.

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