

Book Reviews

Allergy. (2nd ed.) Erich Urbach and Philip M. Gottlieb. New York: Grune & Stratton, 1946. Pp. xix + 968. (Illustrated.) \$12.00.

In this second edition Dr. Gottlieb, who assisted in the production of the first edition, becomes co-author.

Despite an increase in reading matter, this edition is less bulky than the first, due to adoption of a double-column format and use of small type for certain sections.

The number of illustrations of allergic skin manifestations continues to be excessive. One questions the need of 9 illustrations to portray angioneurotic edema or of 14 to demonstrate urticaria, not to mention manifold picturizations of fixed drug eruptions, lichen urticatus, and contact dermatitis. Fig. 29 is supposed to illustrate urticaria but is not obvious as such; while Fig. 296, showing necrosis and scarring of the skin due to injections of adrenalin, duplicates Fig. 157.

As with the first edition, the outstanding feature of the work is its comprehensiveness (although a surprising omission in both editions is that of a section on preparation of extracts). A more detailed review of the literature, and particularly of the foreign literature, is not to be found in any other similar text. Unfortunately, the authors do not always evaluate the literature critically. For example, in the section on the symptomatic therapy of allergic rhinitis one finds the casual statement that the following methods have been recommended for general therapy: injections of histamine, peptone, tuberculin; vaccines of colon bacilli, bee venom, snake venom; and oral histaminase. This statement is followed by the presentation of Beckman's nitrohydrochloric acid prescription in detail, which in turn is followed by the statement that a trial of the ketogenic diet has been recommended—all this without critical comment. Mention of these methods no doubt adds to the comprehensiveness of the book and may be permissible as a matter of historical interest, but the inexperienced reader is entitled to know that these nonspecific methods of therapy have long been discarded, if indeed ever used, by allergists of repute.

Furthermore, present-day practice would frown on the use in a single prescription of such a polypharmaceutic mixture as the following, which is recommended by the authors (p. 643): codeine, ephedrine, belladonna, lobelia, potassium iodide, elixir terpin hydrate, or (p. 651): ephedrine, caffeine, digitalis, belladonna, phenobarbital, aminophyllin.

Also amiss is the continued promulgation by the senior author of certain matters which have so far remained largely unaccepted by other allergists. First may be mentioned his terminology, which produces such coinings as "allergize," and such tortured phrasings as "hetero-allergic pathergy," "polyvalent metaspecific allergy," and "heterospecific deallergization." Second is his technique of treating food sensitivities by means of so-called "propeptans," which are digests derived from foods by treatment with hydrochloric acid, pepsin, and trypsin. Third is his advocacy of oral pollen and pollen propeptan therapy.

For the foregoing reasons, one would hesitate to place this

book in the hands of a beginner who needs orientation in the field of allergy.

These criticisms aside, the work reveals much that is of genuine merit. The advanced student will find that the detailed presentation of the factual material in many sections in Part 2, on the etiologic agents of allergic diseases, and in Part 3, on symptomatology and therapy, cannot be excelled elsewhere. And to the experienced allergist it remains, withal, a valuable compilation of the literature.

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L'origine des cellules reproductrices et le problème de la lignée germinale and Continuité germinale et reproduction agame. L. Bounoure. Paris, France: Gauthiers-Villars, 1939; 1940. Pp. xii + 271; pp. 83. (Illustrated.)

Bounoure's companion volumes, distribution of which was arrested by the war, have now been made available to libraries through the courtesy of the Services du Conseiller Culturel of the French embassy.

These volumes are particularly interesting because they bring into sharp focus two generalizations in biology which are of the highest importance and which should, and probably will, change the fundamental outlook in most of the biological sciences, particularly the applied sciences—the morphological continuity of the totipotent germ cells, and the law of the restriction of cellular potency or competence.

Bounoure has crystallized the conclusions gradually taking shape in the minds of biologists and has demonstrated that a morphological continuity and precocious segregation of the germ cells can no longer be doubted, thus ending a controversy which began after Richard Owen first enunciated the idea in 1843. Belated and much deserved credit is given to John Beard for having championed in his usual logical and forceful manner the morphological continuity and precocious segregation of germ cells at a time when the great majority of biologists were firmly aligned on the side of Weismann and Waldeyer, who reversed his position later, however. Bounoure quotes the following from Beard: "To us as embryologists and men the formation of an embryo has appeared to be everything, the history of the germ-cells a secondary item of no particular moment. Nature, on the other hand, reverses the relative importance of the two, setting the germ-cells on the place of honor, as linking the remote past with the distant future." There is much more for which Beard deserves belated recognition. The tribute which is paid him by Bounoure is a hopeful sign that science, which sometimes buries the work of a genius, does not bury it forever.

The manner in which Bounoure develops his subject makes exciting reading. He examines a wealth of evidence, beginning with the Protozoa and continuing through Volvox, Ascaris, the insects, Crustacea, Chaetognatha, Rotifera, Annelida,