

*Medizinische Genetik. Grundlagen, Ergebnisse und Probleme.* By W. LENZ. 2d ed. Stuttgart: Georg Thieme Verlag, 1970. Pp. 308. DM. 9.80.

This is the second edition of Lenz's *Medical Genetics* which was first published in 1960 in German and in 1963 in English. The major difference between the two editions is apparent from the subtitles. The first was called an introduction to the foundations and problems, while the second deals with foundations, results, and problems. It is, of course, the enormous amount of experimental and clinical work during the past decade which has made a new edition essential. In the first edition, the author produced one of the most useful small books in this field. Fortunately, he has decided to keep the second edition equally concise and readable, even though he has incorporated many of the exciting results of recent work. The second section of the book, which is completely new, is a thorough review of cytogenetics. Another newly expanded discussion deals with polygenic inheritance, a field whose importance is gaining increasing recognition. The author has numerous tables listing genetic defects and variation which make this book, despite its small size, a useful reference work. Its greatest utilization, however, will be as an easily read introduction to the field of medical genetics, so necessary and useful for students of medicine and biology. The German edition is in soft cover, and it is hoped that an English translation will appear soon and will also be in soft cover, so that its price will allow the average student to purchase the book. The illustrations are surprisingly clear, despite the quality of the paper, designed to keep the price low. Finally, attention must be drawn to the five-page discussion at the end of the book dealing with practical aspects of human genetics in medical practice. It is evident that Lenz's long experience as a pediatrician and a geneticist has allowed him to summarize these principles into a succinct and helpful philosophy from which even more experienced geneticists can benefit.

KURT HIRSCHHORN

*Mount Sinai School of Medicine  
of the City University of New York*

---

*Biochemical Evolution and the Origin of Life.* Edited by E. SCHOFFENIELS. Molecular Evolution II. Proceedings of the International Conference on Biochemical Evolution. Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Co.; New York: American Elsevier Publishing Co., 1971. Pp. 398. \$23.00.

Conferences on biochemical or molecular evolution have been quite popular in recent years, and several proceedings or summaries of such conferences have appeared in print. The speakers, or at least their subjects, tend to change relatively little, and the conference from which this volume is drawn (International Conference on Biochemical Evolution, Liege, 1970) is no exception. Again, there is emphasis on the use of protein structural analysis for the elucidation of evolutionary pathways and the construction of phylogenetic trees. In this category fall discussions of the neurohypophyseal polypeptide hormones, cytochrome C (essentially a reprinting of an article which appeared in 1968), immunoglobulins, fibrinogen, phosphagen (arginine-, creatine-) kinases, and trypsinogen activation peptides. Other articles are concerned with other types of molecules (steroid hormones, bile salts, and chitin) or with molecular systems, structures, or organelles (the respiratory chain, photosynthesis, chloroplasts, plant cell walls, and membranes).

The text is primarily devoted to an exposition and expansion of previously established