Book Reviews

HEART ATTACK RARENESS IN THYROID-TREATED PATIENTS. By Broda O. Barnes and Charlotte W. Barnes. Charles C Thomas, Springfield, Ill., 1972. vii, 95 pp. $7.25.

The publication of the book *Heart Attack Rareness in Thyroid-Treated Patients* by Broda O. Barnes, Ph.D., M.D. and Charlotte W. Barnes, M. A. can only be taken to indicate that the authors and the publisher believe the American public and her physicians are gullible, uninformed, and lack intelligence. "Written for both the layman and the scientist interested in preventing premature heart attacks" but hastening to point out that "the rise in heart attacks is the greatest blessing in the history of medicine" because "if aging were conquered, total birth control or legalized genocide would be the only alternatives," this book attempts to prove that "low thyroid function is responsible for hardening of the arteries." Using only basal body temperature to test thyroid function, the authors have treated patients with thyroid and say they have prevented heart attacks. Since no data are given and since no controls were employed, no conclusions can be drawn other than being suspicious of work not subjected to editorial scrutiny by one's peers, and perhaps of the editorial policy of Charles C Thomas, Publisher.

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METHODS IN MOLECULAR BIOLOGY, Volume 1. Protein Biosynthesis in Bacterial Systems. Edited by Jerold A. Last and Allen I. Laskin. Marcel Dekker, New York, 1971. xi, 333 pp. $16.50.

*Protein Biosynthesis in Bacterial Systems* is the first of a four-volume series by these editors presenting current laboratory methods in molecular biology. Judging from the contents of this volume and from the titles of its successors, the series deals with the biochemical aspects of this field, i.e., the preparation of biological materials of interest to molecular biologists and the assay of their activities. The early chapters describe *in vitro* protein-synthesizing systems from several bacterial species. Both RNA-dependent systems and those coupled to DNA-dependent RNA synthesis are covered. The bulk of the rest of the volume treats the isolation of components of the protein-synthesizing system from *E. coli*. As is customary, each chapter is written by an expert and stands complete, independent of the rest of the book. Based on the sections dealing with techniques familiar to this reviewer, the information given is sound and the presentations are thorough and clear.
Other books covering this material are already in print: the four volumes in the *Methods in Enzymology* series covering nucleic acids spring immediately to mind. The editors justify the production of this book on the grounds that (i) it is inexpensive and, (ii) that the topics dealt with are covered in unusual detail. First, the claim that this volume is inexpensive is misleading. Compared to *Methods in Enzymology* its price per page is high. Its “low price,” therefore, reflects only its small size. Second, the detail in the treatment of each topic is adequate, but is no more than usual for a methods text, in my opinion. (In this connection, it is worth noting that 3 of the 12 authors involved have written similar chapters for *Methods in Enzymology*.)

In summary, had I access to *Methods in Enzymology*, I would not buy this book. However, were I a novice in the field needing a bench top guide or were I lacking *Methods in Enzymology*, this volume could be of considerable help.

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**Limbic System Mechanisms and Autonomic Function.** Edited by Charles H. Hockman. Charles C Thomas, Springfield, Ill., 1972. xviii, 294 pp. $22.80.

This book is the result of a three-day Brain Research Symposium held at the University of Toronto. Like most volumes based on symposia, this one contains more information of a summary nature than new data, although some of the chapters such as the one by Hoffer, Mitra, and Snider on blood pressure responses to cerebellar stimulation are notable exceptions.

The list of participants at this meeting reads like a “Who’s Who” of limbic system neurobiologists: Dell, French, Gloor, Jasper, Lindsley, MacLean, Nauta, Yakovlev, and many others. I found that the report by Nauta and the closing comments by Yakovlev were especially worthwhile. In a survey of the neuroanatomic circuitry of the central visceromotor system Nauta emphasizes the crucial role of the hypothalamus in reciprocally linking the limbic forebrain with the paramedian region of the midbrain. Yakovlev ostensibly sets out to propose an anatomic definition of the limbic system but, in fact, his paper turns out to be a concise treatise on comparative neuroanatomy and behavior! It is rough going but well worth it.

As a summary of research within the last 15 years or so on the limbic system this book should be useful to both basic scientists and clinicians. Unfortunately, its price is so high that only the most affluent graduate or medical student could afford to purchase it, and this is a pity because this group would probably derive the most benefit from it.

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**Molecular Control of Cell Differentiation and Morphogenesis: A Systematic Theory.** By Gerhard D. Wassermann. Marcel Dekker, New York, 1972 582 pp. $36.50.

Wassermann’s expressed aim is a comprehensive theory of cell uniqueness and its consequences, rather than an elegant theory. While inordinate complexity seems