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A. Gafe: Viren — Parasiten unseres Lebensraumes. *Heidelberger Taschenbücher, Band 192, Springer-Verlag, Berlin—Heidelberg—New York 1977, 179 pp. Price 19.80 DM.*

Small in scope, but extensive in content this book gives an outline of virology in all basic trends concerning animal and plant viruses. It opens with a historical introduction which is followed by five comprehensive chapters.

The first chapter, entitled "Virion", deals with the structure, biochemical properties and classification of viruses and with some basic methods used in relevant studies.

The second chapter, entitled "Virus in laboratory", summarizes knowledge on the mechanism of virus multiplication. Virological experimental systems, all most important diagnostic methods are also discussed. The chapter ends with a survey of data on virus interference.

The third chapter entitled "Virus as parasite" is concerned with virus reservoirs and provides the most important information on virus pathogenesis. It also treats viruses as mutagens, their role in human embryopathy and foetopathy, and their importance as oncogenic factors.

The fourth chapter entitled "Our control of viruses" reviews virus disinfection, antiviral

chemotherapy, antiviral protection by means of interferon, and covers immunotherapy and immunoprophylaxis.

The last chapter indicated as "Supplement" presents a table for the calculation of density gradient used in centrifugation, and a nomogram for the determination of the nucleic acid content.

All chapters are profusely and well documented. At the end of the book there is a list of references divided according to relevant chapters, and a subject index.

This is an excellent handbook not only for virologists, but also for other research workers concerned with microbiology. Besides presenting a good orientational outline of most important up-to-date trends and knowledge achieved in virology, the book is a valuable guide, mainly for those who are not directly involved in virology and unfamiliar with the abundant virological terminology. It will also provide useful information for parasitologists. Although the book had to be very brief, sometimes using only definitions, its style makes it intelligible and appealing to a wide professional audience.

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