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BOOK REVIEW

ROTWELL, N. V.: **Understanding Genetics.** — The Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore. 1976, 486 pp.

Genetics has attained such a central position in biology that the number of students who have to acquire an elementary knowledge of this subject is constantly increasing. In the last years a great number of textbooks were published for study of genetics on different levels. "Understanding Genetics" is designed for students whose background includes elementary genetic principles, which are ordinarily provided in a general biology course, and almost no knowledge in molecular biology. The introductory chapters deal with classical genetics (foundations, chromosomes and distribution of genetic material, genic interaction, sex and inheritance, linkage and crossing over *etc.*) in order to demonstrate how our ideas about modern genetics have developed out of the work of the classical geneticists. These chapters are followed by a section on molecular aspects of genetics (chemistry of the gene, gene mutation, information transfer, molecular interactions) and on methods employed in molecular genetics (bacteria and viruses as genetic tools). The following chapters deal with allelism, antigens and antibody and with the basic elements of probability and statistics as applied to genetics. The concluding part considers the significance of today's most challenging genetic problems: genetic engineering, cell fusion and drugs and genetic material. The section "Delay of aging and cloning" includes a hypothetical scheme for cloning in a human being. Each chapter is supplemented by a list of essential references. Substantial to the understanding of scientific problems in a textbook are illustrative materials such as figures and tables. The book reviewed complies with this requirement as the presented figures are vivid and help provide a comprehensible explanation of even complex genetic concepts.

"Understanding genetics" can be considered as one of the most instructive and comprehensible textbooks published in recent years.

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