



NOVANT'ANNI *delle Leggi Mendeliane*

del
PROF. LUIGI GEDDA

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NOVANT'ANNI DELLE LEGGI MENDELIANE.
1865-1955 (1865-1955 XC of the Mendelian
Laws) Rome, 1956. Istituto di Genetica Me-
dica e Gemellologia « Gregorio Mendel ».
Pp. XIII-494. Price L. 10.000 (\$ 18.00).

This splendidly produced volume was published from Rome under the editorship of Professor Luigi Gedda to commemorate the ninetyeth year since Mendel first published his laws of heredity. The book is in two parts. The first part is historical, the second describes current research. The book opens with a reproduction of Mendel's original manuscripts on « Experiments on Plant Hybrids » together with an Italian translation. A re-reading brings out the clarity of Mendel's exposition and to a later age it is difficult to see how his discoveries should not have been recognized till 1900 - sixteen years after his death at the age of sixty-two.

The second chapter by Bishop Van Lierde assesses Mendel's character and religious life. The Bishop stresses that the whole record of Mendel's career in the Church contradicts the view that he became a priest through the pressure of external circumstances and without inner conviction.

The third chapter is an assessment of Mendel's scientific interests by the single survivor, Tschermak, of the three biologists who rediscovered Mendel's laws in 1900. It is interesting to read that Mendel was interested in meteorology as well as biology and made observations on sunspots.

The fourth chapter by Sino-Yosito describes the development of genetics in Japan. The importance of the rediscovery of Mendel's laws was appreciated early in Japan and so, starting level with Western Europe and America, Japan now leads the field in some branches of genetics; for example, the genetics of the silkworm and the rice plant.

The second part of the book includes a variety of articles on current research in human genetics; some are review-articles and some are original communications. The quality of these papers is somewhat uneven, but presumably the aim of the editor was to emphasize the vitality of human genetics by drawing on authors from many different countries. The two most noteworthy articles are perhaps those by Dr. A. S. Wiener and I. B. Wexler summarizing their work on the rhesus blood types, and by E. Hanhart summarizing his work on genetically determined diseases in Switzerland.

C. O. C.

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