

Book Reviews

This book was originally commissioned from John Gaddum and Henry Dale as part of a German series of monographs on Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics. It was published three years later, translated into German by W. S. Feldberg, under the sole authorship of Gaddum but with an introduction and final chapter on anaphylactic shock contributed by Dale.

Its fiftieth birthday is now celebrated with re-publication. It has been translated back into English by F. C. MacIntosh assisted by Professor Feldberg, and both have provided new historical prefaces, explaining the genesis of the book and their associations with Dale and with Gaddum, although both modestly play down their own considerable roles in the history of physiological pharmacology.

This book has been sadly neglected since its original publication, partly because of its availability in German only and partly because it went out of print at the beginning of World War II. A third reason is the inappropriateness of its title. Even in 1936, as MacIntosh points out in his preface, "vasodilator" was an uncomfortable taxon for the wide variety of substances included, and it is a shame that advantage has not been taken of this new edition to re-christen it with a more fitting title.

This small niggle apart, the book is a gem. Not only does it offer a comprehensive account of chemical mediation fifty years ago, but combined with Professor MacIntosh's authoritative annotations, it provides a compact history of modern pharmacology, particularly the pharmacology of the autonomic nervous system. Of course, the book was published in the year that the concept of chemical neurotransmission achieved official recognition with the award of the Nobel Prize to Dale and Otto Loewi. Gaddum's chapter on neuronal release of chemical substances, combined with MacIntosh's notes and an addendum by Sir William Paton, gives a particularly illuminating and thoughtful view of the development of this concept.

Finally available in its original language, this book should be compulsory reading for Final Year students in any biomedical discipline. It will surely be compulsive reading for their teachers.

E. M. Tansey
Wellcome Institute

CORRIGENDA

The National Library of Medicine provided us with an incorrect Government Printing Office stock number for their microfiche catalogue (*See Med. Hist.*, October 1986, pp. 470–471) The correct number is 017–052–00256–2.

RUDOLF VIRCHOW, *Medizin und Naturwissenschaft. Zwei Reden 1845 . . .* (see review in *Med. Hist.*, April 1987, pp. 243–244). The publishers (Akademie Verlag, Berlin DDR) ask us to point out that Virchow's hand-written texts have been transcribed, edited, and annotated by Klaus Klaus.