BOOK REVIEW


Sir Christopher Andrewes has given us a well written, well organized and timely outline of our present knowledge of the viro as microorganisms. The classification recognizes that the true viruses, so far as known, are included in two distinct groups, those containing RNA (ribonucleic acid) and those containing DNA (desoxyribonucleic acid). None contains both. Organisms heretofore frequently classified with the viruses which contain both RNA and DNA are regarded as closely related to the rickettsias, hence are bacteria, but included because long thought to be viro.

Part IV (pp. 365-391) treats of the "Psittacosis-Lymphogranuloma-Trachoma Group" regarded as bacteria. This section only is reviewed herein.

The organisms here included are those placed in the family Chlamydiaceae by Rake 1957. The older questionable name Chlamydozoaceae Moshkovskiy 1945 is here accepted. Two generic names Miyagawanella and Bedsonia [sic] are listed as synonyms of the psittacosis-lymphogranuloma-trachoma group of organisms. The reasons for exclusion of the members of the group from the viruses are listed. The presence of both DNA and RNA, the presence of a cell wall and certain cell wall constituents, the presence of a life cycle, susceptibility to certain antibiotics, and ability to stain well by certain methods are characteristic.

Dr. Andrewes makes an interesting observation: "If these organisms are regarded as subject to the Code of Nomenclature of Bacteria, the cumbersome generic name Miyagawanella has technical priority." One may speculate on why the name Miyagawanella with 13 letters is termed cumbersome when, in the generally accepted generic names of bacteria (as in the 7th edition of Bergey's Manual of Determinative Bacteriology) there are 49 commonly accepted generic names with 13 letters or more. It is quite possible that Miyagawanella may be illegitimate or not validly published. The organisms of the group as recognized are quite adequately discussed on the basis of current knowledge under 18 headings giving the vernacular names of the diseases caused.
"Viruses of Vertebrates" is a valued contribution from a recognized authority, and a must for microbiological laboratories.

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