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Preface

Hemoglobin, a fascinating molecule, generates a feeling more of devotion than of simple scientific interest. Some protein chemists say it is an atypical protein, while enzymologists consider it not a true enzyme. In a somewhat pejorative manner, James D. Watson has said in his much discussed book, The Double Helix (1968), that hemoglobin is not the center of the universe. Nevertheless, those who are dedicating their efforts to its study number in the hundreds. Hardly another biochemical substance can gather around it such an array of physicians, geneticists, physicists, chemists, biologists and anthropologists. Not even the most determined critics can deny that the hemoglobin system has allowed the fundamentation of basic genetic, biological and biochemical concepts.
that now form the core of modern molecular biology.
The Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Cientificas of Caracas, Venezuela organized the 1st Inter-American Symposium on Hemoglobins in December 1969, in order to gather a distinguished group of researchers from America, dedicated to the study of the hemoglobin molecule, its structure, function and problems related to the distribution, genetics and anthropological aspects of its variants. Those who attended this Symposium were in agreement that perhaps for the first time workers of different backgrounds, but with a common interest, were able to talk face to face about the many aspects of hemoglobin.
The quality of the papers presented prompted the idea for publishing the proceedings to offer an approximate idea of the work done on hemoglobin in the American continent. We only regret that some distinguished investigators in the field of hemoglobin were not present at the meetings.

Preface VIII

We wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to the Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Cientificas for hosting and financing this Symposium; to the International Society of Hematology, Inter-American Division for sponsoring this meeting; to Mrs. Beatriz Fair and Mrs. Marina de Camejo for their invaluable collaboration, and to the publishers, S. Karger AG, for making possible the publication of these proceedings.

Caracas, October 1970 T. Arends, G. Bemski, R. L. Nagel