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Foreword
In this volume, we brought together some investigators who are currently studying the regulation of the proliferation and differentiation of the skin. In their reviews they stress not only what has been achieved, but also the pitfalls and difficulties which confront the scientist working in this field.
Besides stressing the caution necessary to their work in their fields, they show with enthusiasm the perspectives which may be attained if the methodological barriers are overcome. It is the perspective of a living, ever changing, locally reacting organ which can respond to innumerable stimuli from within or without in its own peculiar and partially genetically determined way. It is the revival of the concept of the 'réaction cutanée', but transposed to the cellular and molecular level.
I think that all of the contributors have tried to bring over the intricacies of their investigations in a manner which will make it possible for every
dermatologist or student to increase his grasp on his own daily work and which eventually enrich the vision he has of his profession. Bauer discusses the manner in which he, as a biologist, has approached the problem of keratinisation. De Bersaques gives a very extensive review of the difficult art of keratin chemistry, while Christophers and Laurence review the kinetics of epidermal growth and digress on their own original contribution to it. Beatrice Garber stresses, in broad outlines, based on her unparalleled practical experience, the interaction between epithelium and mesenchymal tissue. Voorhees and his collaborators present a most stimulating approach to the old enigma psoriasis. It seems to this editor that perhaps the time is near when this 'shame of the dermatologist' (Pautrier) will be cleared up.