

the type is that element of a group with which the name of the group is permanently associated. An alteration, the effect of which had not been adequately appreciated, was introduced into the rule dealing with homonyms. A saving clause was an addition to the final rule by which modifications accepted at one Congress remain on trial until the next, at which they will receive sanction unless undesirable consequences show need for

further amendment or rejection. A supplement provides a list of proposed additions to the names of genera to be conserved and also lists of standard species typifying such genera.

The volume as published by Messrs. Fischer conforms in size and character of text with the two previous editions emanating respectively from the Vienna and Brussels Congresses of 1905 and 1910.

Epidemics and Crowd-Diseases

Epidemics and Crowd-Diseases :
an Introduction to the Study of Epidemiology.
By Prof. Major Greenwood. Pp. 409. (London :
Williams and Norgate, Ltd., 1935.) 21s. net.

THE value of a scientific treatise lies not so much in the information which it imparts as in the inspiration which the reader derives from it to inquire further into the matters with which it deals. We have read "introductions to the study of" subjects, which left the impression that nothing remained worth inquiring into, and even destroyed all desire for such exercises. In his work on "Epidemics and Crowd-Diseases"—which will become a classic—Prof. Greenwood, far from doing this, introduces his readers to the study of epidemiology in such charming fashion that, as the tale unfolds, each chapter seems to end on a note of lively interrogation.

The volume is divided into two parts, general principles and methods, and special illustrations. The first four chapters, dealing with the history of epidemiology from Hippocrates and Galen through Graunt and Farr to the present time, and two chapters in the second part dealing with Jenner and Creighton, provide continuous entertainment as well as instruction, this being due to their literary style rather than their subject matter. The chapters on experimental epidemiology, artificial immunisation, nutrition, and the influence of occupation and of psychological factors upon crowd-diseases, are masterly essays, all too brief, on our knowledge of these matters. The special illustrations chosen are the typhoid group, cholera, typhus, measles, diphtheria, scarlet fever, small-pox, plague, epidemic diseases of the central nervous system, influenza, venereal diseases, tuberculosis and cancer. It is impossible to do more than enumerate these chapters, each of exceptional interest and critical value. A wealth of satire, not overdone and certainly salutary in its effects, pervades these chapters, as indeed the whole work, and adds pleasure to the reading.

The greatest living exponent of the application of the statistical method to epidemiology might be pardoned if he exaggerated the services which statistical research has rendered to the progress of medical knowledge ; but Prof. Greenwood might rather be accused of under-estimating the achievements of statistical epidemiology and of undue pessimism as to the possibilities of such research in the future. In the opening chapter, for example, he tells us that so far as epidemics of catarrhal disease, common colds and pneumonias are concerned, we know scarcely any more than Hippocrates did about their general etiology. Again, in his account of "The Age of Pasteur and Galton", he asks whether the new statistical calculus has yet solved any of the age-old problems of secular variation, change of type or method of spread of infectious diseases ; and having answered this with an emphatic negative, passes to the depressing conclusions that "we do not know enough of the elements of the subject to be fit to ask questions" of Dame Nature, and "at present, with all our knowledge of detail, we shall not reach the general 'laws' which Sydenham failed to discover".

It is difficult for us in this analytical period to 'see the wood for trees' sometimes. Our knowledge of the individual factors which combine to make the general etiology of crowd-diseases so complex becomes every year more complete, and when analysis has proceeded far enough—a tedious process seeming to our foreshortened vision to lead us farther from the solution of the general problems rather than nearer—the time will come when to some fresh mind with a genius for synthesis the fitting together of the carefully sorted pieces will appear amazingly simple. Perhaps the first steps in this synthesis are not so far away as Prof. Greenwood thinks ; without doubt they will be brought nearer by the inspirations derived from the publication of such a work as this.

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