

Genetics for Medical Students

By E. B. Ford. Pp. iv+162. (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1942.) 7s. 6d. net.

THE publication of this competently written book which was prepared ostensibly for medical students is particularly opportune. In a straightforward and clear manner the author outlines the principles of particulate inheritance. The medical reader will be pleased to note that examples from man replace bottled *Drosophila* or wrinkled peas. After an adequate and clever account of Mendelism, which may surprise a pedantic geneticist, of linkage and the genetics of sex, there is a chapter on mutations and the nature of heredity. This chapter is a brilliant essay which will go far to counteract prevalent fallacies regarding the inheritance of environmentally influenced characters.

Other chapters on polymorphism, blending inheritance, gene action and blood groups answer many problems of the medical and sociological worker. The author suggests a useful nomenclature to clear up the muddle apparent in most accounts of the genetics of blood groups.

A chapter is devoted to methods which may be adopted in analysing the inheritance of characters in man. There are useful appendixes containing references for further reading, a list of inherited characters in man, and an account of mitosis and meiosis more than adequate for the comprehension of modern genetics.

This book fills a long-felt want by the medical profession and contains both simple descriptions of the fundamental principles of human genetics and illuminating passages of considerable thought and originality.

F. W. SANSOME.

The Statesman's Year-Book

Statistical and Historical Annual of the States of the World for the Year 1942. Edited by Dr. M. Epstein. Seventy-ninth annual publication, revised after Official Returns. Pp. xxxvii+1474. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1942.) 30s. net.

THE revision of statistical information for many States of the world has been difficult and in some cases impossible, but nevertheless this annual volume contains all the latest figures for the British Commonwealth, the United States and other lands within reach, while for enemy lands, or enemy-occupied lands, figures are at least up to the date of enemy action and even later. The editor has retained the arrangement of States as in pre-war editions except that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are now included with Soviet territory. Abyssinia tardily remains within the pages of Italian colonies; Syria remains under French tutelage; but the position of States matters little; the factual information is the valuable side of the book.

It has been found impossible to include the usual tables of world production of various commodities, but two maps, as usual, are provided, one showing naval bases in the Indian and Pacific Oceans and the other the boundary settlement of this year between Ecuador and Peru. Under additions and corrections there have been inserted many facts about Canberra, the federal territory of Australia, and about recent social and economic changes in the authoritarian regime in France. The size of the volume is practically the same as in recent years.

The Philosophy of Edmund Husserl

The Origin and Development of his Phenomenology. By E. Parl Welch. Pp. xxiv+337. (New York: Columbia University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1941.) 22s.

EDMUND HUSSERL died in 1938 at the age of seventy-nine. His writings have had considerable influence on the Continent, but not much in English-speaking countries. He was mainly concerned to give an adequate account of the nature of experience, as that behind which we cannot go and upon which all belief and action are founded. Husserl considered experience to be self-revealing, so that careful attention to what is present to the mind is all that is needed and indeed possible; provided that experience is understood in its full sense, as that which is lived through and directed towards something, not taken partially and incompletely as a collection of 'sense data' after the manner of the Positivists. Like many thinkers, especially German ones, Husserl, having got hold of one good idea, runs it to death by expecting it to do the work of a whole philosophical system. He seems to have thought he was rescuing philosophy from a false psychology, but it is possible that his real merit has been to inspire the Gestalt School of thinkers to help to rescue psychology from a false philosophy. In this matter, however, it is doubtful whether Husserl's attempt at a comprehensive system has done more than the tentative efforts of his teacher Brentano.

The author of this book has tried conscientiously to expound Husserl's thought in clear and intelligible English, and also to compare it with some other types of philosophy. He has supplied an extensive bibliography and some useful criticism of other thinkers, but, for the rest, Husserl remains obscure and only partly intelligible. The fault does not appear to lie with the expositor. A. D. R.

Electrical Engineering

By W. Tolmé Maccall. Vol. 2. Pp. viii+463 (London: University Tutorial Press, Ltd., 1942.) 15s.

THIS book, combined with vol. 1, "is intended to cover the fundamentals of all branches of electrical engineering dealt with in the usual three years day courses". The intention is an ambitious one, and, while the book compares very favourably with others of a like nature, it is not surprising that the result is a superficial treatment of doubtful value to the serious student. It is to be hoped that the average undergraduate is given a deeper insight into the fundamentals of the subject than is provided by the author. The book could have been improved considerably in this respect by the exclusion of those topics which it has not been possible to deal with adequately, of empirical data, constructional details and illustrations, experimental tables, etc., and the real scope increased correspondingly by deeper inquiry into the physical principles underlying the operation of the apparatus and equipment discussed. One of the primary aims in teaching should be to stimulate critical analysis and flexibility of outlook, and the author's treatment of the subject is unlikely to assist materially in this direction. The task attempted is made difficult by the rapid growth of the subject, and in these circumstances it is questionable whether any really useful purpose can now be served by books of this 'comprehensive' type.