

hitherto accepted classification by superficial phenotypic or 'morphological' criteria, an approach which for the most part leaves unspecified the degree of innate relationship between human groups.

This exposition by Prof. Boyd will do much to ensure henceforth the primacy in racial anthropology of genetic method. For this approach provides, through the enumeration of the frequency of identifiable genes in different populations, an entirely objective assessment of genetic relationship. Moreover, it allows some insight into the likely mechanisms at work in human differentiation, taking into account the operation of such factors as population size, systems of mating, isolation and selection. Thus the origins of modern racial groups, the rate and extent of admixture, and the significance of 'clineal' and other modes of geographical distribution can all be understood as dynamic and historical processes. By the older method, despite statistical refinement, the analysis of these phenomena cannot rise above the descriptive level. The basis of these new advances lies, of course, in the comparatively recent discovery of new blood-group systems, the elucidation of their hereditary mechanism, and the application of the evolutionary principles formulated by Haldane, Fisher, Wright and Huxley. All these topics, both in their genetic and mathematical aspects, are dealt with satisfyingly by Prof. Boyd. Some readers, however, may find the chapter on the elements of genetics too skimmed; there is, for example, insufficient discussion of multiple factor inheritance.

Prof. Boyd has found it possible to demarcate six human groups as racial or sub-specific entities on a strictly genetic basis without reference to any of the older criteria such as hair shape or skin colour. This alone shows that a complete re-orientation in physical anthropology has been effected. But is Prof. Boyd doing the subject a service in the castigation he metes out to some of the older workers who have been somewhat slow to appreciate that their concepts are becoming outmoded? Much of his criticism seems unnecessary in order to establish the scientific superiority of the genetic approach. The new reader in this introduction is likely to obtain a distorted impression of past work in racial physical anthropology. He will certainly fail to appreciate, for example, the great contribution represented by the statistical biometry of the Pearson School, even if one admits the weaknesses to which Prof. Boyd directs attention. It is only fair, also, to insist that in the past reasonably good use was made of the only information which human genetics could offer until quite recently, namely, that derived from the *ABO* blood-group system. Prof. Boyd does not really make it plain enough that, while data using identifiable genes such as the blood-group genes have become a *sine qua non* of anthropological field-work, there are many good reasons why information on other characters of imperfectly known or even unknown genetic constitution should continue to be collected. The hereditary basis of some of these is bound in time to be clarified, as has happened recently to some extent in the case of a poly-genetic feature such as body build. In any event there are many other legitimate uses in anthropology to which such data can be put.

This lack of perspective is a blemish in an otherwise excellent book. It invites the further comment that Prof. Boyd, like some of those he severely criticizes, does not quite avoid a tendency which should be guarded against in physical anthropology—the undue preoccupation with racial classification as such,

which carries with it the danger of making taxonomy an ultimate aim of the subject. There are signs that physical anthropology to-day is slowly freeing itself from this long-standing obsession and is taking as its task the whole biology of man in its social and natural context. Racial and genetic constitution is a very important aspect, but yet only a part, of the variability and adaptability which, in relation to the activity and efficiency of human groups, it is the task of physical anthropology to elucidate.

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## EDUCATION FOR MARRIAGE

### Marriage

A Book for the Married and the About to be Married. By Kenneth Walker. (Published for the British Social Biology Council.) Pp. xii+136. (London: Secker and Warburg, Ltd., 1951.) 8s. 6d. net.

THE author, who is a distinguished genitourinary surgeon and is also well known for contributions of a more philosophical kind to the field of biology, has taken the model of a guidebook for those about to be married and has transformed it into something much more rich and interesting. Prejudices on the subject of human sexual behaviour are so strong that it must be the greatest temptation to avoid controversial issues when writing a book meant to be read by all and sundry. Mr. Walker evades none of the difficult points, deals with them with frankness and courage, and does not gloss over his personal views, however unconventional he may feel them to be. When discussing pre-marital continence, for example, he points out that in Western societies the average age at marriage has been steadily pushed back until it is now about thirty. "This means that for at least a dozen years young people are compelled to suppress an instinct which is only second in intensity to that of self-preservation."

No reversal of this tendency to postponement can be expected. Every individual must find his own answer to the problem he is set in this way. It is one thing to be restrained from pre-marital sexual relations by genuine convictions; but quite another to be held back by mere fears, fears of women and sexuality in general, fear of scandal, fear of being found incompetent, fear of going too far. "It is these youths, outwardly continent and inwardly unchaste, who are likely to develop a neurosis in the course of their struggles."

The author points out that in his treatment of this and other difficult topics in the course of the book he does not speak for its sponsors, the British Social Biology Council, but for himself alone.

From the first chapter, on marriage and the family, including their biological and social justifications, to the last, the wider aspects of the theme are tackled with vigour and from a strongly personal point of view. The result is a book which is marked by the personality of the author, is stimulating and refreshing to read, and will surely compel the intelligent reader to do some thinking on his own account. The more purely factual matter—the anatomical and physiological discussion of sexual function—is, of course, expert and accurate. On territory which is factually less safe, there will certainly be readers who will be provoked to differences of opinion, not only on religious but also on anthropological and sociological grounds.

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