

Further experiments will doubtless show to what extent my explanation of my own results is correct, but they can do so only if they fulfil the essential conditions referred to in my paper. Insufficiently controlled experiments can only confuse the issue. To carry out experiments which fulfil these conditions is not easy, but it is in my opinion the only way to shed further light on the matter.

G. ROY LANE.

### REVIEWS

**HUMAN FERTILITY : THE MODERN DILEMMA.** By Robert C. Cook. (Introduction by Julian Huxley.) London : Gollancz. 1951. Pp. 348. 21s.

The numbers of mankind are greater and are increasing faster than ever before. This increase is, as hitherto, differential with respect to different races and classes. But the races and classes that are favoured are not, as hitherto, those technically *best* fitted to maintain themselves but those *least* fitted to do so. The limits of food production set by the area of cultivable land, and the capacity to cultivate it efficiently, have therefore been reached and passed for certain peoples. Thus the problems brought to light by Malthus and Galton in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have, after some delay, come into focus together in the twentieth. How they have done so, and the catastrophe with which they now threaten us, it is Robert Cook's purpose to explain. At the same time he attempts to show how the genetic and evolutionary principles of Mendel and Darwin were discovered and how they apply to the situation.

The presentation is popular, the style is expansive, and the phrasing not always rigorous. It does not mean anything, or at least it ought not to mean anything, to say that "four-fifths of human mental ability is traceable to genetic factors" (p. 212). And sometimes the statistics run loose—5 million immigrants into the U.S.A. is the maximum for 5 years, not for one year (p. 87). One wonders whether the death-rate in Italy is really 10.2 (p. 92) or lower than it has ever reached in England. And when it is said (p. 262) that in Japan : "In 1948 births exceeded deaths by nearly two million" should it not have been : 1,400,000? That, after all, is enough. It means 4000 a day, or a large and fully-loaded liner leaving every day for a foreign port, to keep the population stable. Or something greater than the maximum immigration rate into the U.S.A. in 1908.

These are details. The principles, the arguments and the conclusions are clear and, I believe, inescapable. Indeed they are devastating. Whether it is in the history of Puerto Rico, in the picture of the visiting ladies advising General MacArthur on the subject of birth control in Japan, or in the account of Lysenko expounding the true doctrine of heredity, we see the size of the task that confronts those who would apply their knowledge of biology to save humanity from a not very remote disaster.

C. D. D.

**SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.** Edited by A. S. Heath. London : Watts. 1951. Pp. 387. 42s.

The articles in this book on Statistics by R. A. Fisher, Zoology by P. B. Medawar and Genetics by E. B. Ford will be of value to readers of *Heredity*. The attempts to describe Social Medicine by Alice Stewart, Sociology by D. G. Macrae, and especially Social Anthropology by Meyer Fortes,

without using the information or assumptions of genetics, also deserve our attention. Partly by accident and partly by intention they reveal the problems of what we may call the floating sciences. And they reveal them in the same book as those of the sciences to which (as Goldschmidt has so clearly explained in "Genetics in the 20th Century") they will have to be attached.

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#### BOOKS RECEIVED

- NOTES FOR INTRODUCTORY COURSES IN GENETICS. By C. Auerbach, Ph.D., D.Sc. London and Edinburgh : Oliver and Boyd. 1951. Pp. 41. 2s.
- EUGENICS IN RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT. By C. P. Blacker, M.A., M.D. Occasional Papers on Eugenics. No. 1. 2nd ed. London : Cassell and Co. Ltd. 1950. Pp. 38. 2s. 6d.
- PROBLEM FAMILIES IN BRISTOL. By R. C. Wofinden, M.D., D.P.H. Occasional Papers on Eugenics. No. 6. London : Cassell and Co. Ltd. 1950. Pp. 59. 2s. 6d.
- THE EXPECTATION OF MENTAL INFIRMITY IN A SAMPLE OF THE DANISH POPULATION. By K. H. Fremming, M.D. Occasional Papers on Eugenics. No. 7. 1951. Pp. 53. 3s. 6d.