

REVIEWS

EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN AND ITS STATISTICAL BASIS. By D. J. Finney. Cambridge University Press. 1952. Pp. xi+169. 68s.

The public is by now perhaps broken in to purchasing an elementary exposition of less than 200 pages for thirty shillings. In time, in fact, we may look back on such a price as cheap ; yet as things stand the attention of publishers should be drawn to the buyers' attitude towards this extraordinary inflation of book prices.

The University of Chicago Press are to be congratulated on production which is quite excellent. From Dr Finney we can be sure of a solid and masterly exposition. In contrast to some of his previous works in this new one the greatest attention has been given to lucidity, and the style is light and easy.

Evidently the author has medical applications largely in view, and it is to be hoped that the book will be widely read by those concerned with clinical trials. The subject of experimental design had, however, a largely agricultural origin, and thinking in academic circles is still so class-conscious that it is with reluctance that the qualified member of a Learned Profession realises that he has anything to learn from a country bumpkin. Finney gives a helpful suggestion when he writes of the technical terms that from its inception have been used in this subject :

“ The words taken over from agricultural research often help the reader to visualize a problem : they must never be thought to limit the application of the methods.”

A difficult point of exposition is presented by the factorial principle in experimentation, for in its train come a great wealth both of new theoretical concepts, and of practical “ tips and dodges ”. Dr Finney has a certain affection for the “ fractional replication ”, and, rather surprisingly introduces it before his discussion of confounding. For teaching purposes both should, I believe, but especially the first, be introduced to the student with some warnings as to the new element of uncertainty introduced, sometimes to good purpose, and sometimes pointlessly.

This device, like that of the split-plot, is surely an accessory of occasional utility, but as the latter once did is liable to arouse the same sort of attraction as the latest level of the waist-line !

In all ways, however, this is a most attractive little book, and should serve well to spread competent principles of experimentation into new fields.

R. A. FISHER.

POPULATION GENETICS. By C. C. Li. The University of Chicago Press. 1955. Pp. 366. 75s.

This book, which is a revised and somewhat enlarged edition of Professor Li's *Introduction to Population Genetics*, published in 1948 by the National Peking University Press, consists of an exposition of the “ statistical study of Mendelian consequences in populations ”. The statistical study of quantitative inheritance and experimental work in population genetics