

STERN, CURT. *Principles of Human Genetics.*

1st ed. W. H. Freeman and Co., San Francisco 5, Cal. xi + 617 pp. illus. 1949. \$5.50.

Along with an increasing interest on the part of educators, practicing physicians, social and public health workers, and medical students in disease and abnormalities having hereditary significance and social applications, the study of genetics has rapidly become a more important part of the college curriculum. A significant need has developed for a textbook which covers adequately the fundamentals of the mechanism of heredity, and yet devotes the major part of its text matter and illustrations to applications of the laws of heredity to human beings. Dr. Stern has met this need rather well, and has also included much additional material not readily available in many libraries.

The book is for the most part clearly and forcefully written. However, since it does not contain a glossary and (as stated in the preface) was designed to be used also outside college classrooms, a number of technical terms are included which could better have been simplified or omitted. An example of such unnecessarily burdensome terminology may be noted in the discussion of subtypes of color-blindness on Page 213. The book contains 198 illustrations. Included are line diagrams, charts, tables, graphs, type genealogies, and some photo reproductions. A series of thought-provoking problems appears at the close of most chapters, together with a list of selected references. Answers and solutions for the problems are available to instructors who adopt the book for class use. The index is comprehensive and well-arranged.

This text should prove adaptable for college classes and, within certain limitations, should serve as a desirable reference work and as refresher reading for background understanding of many of the daily problems of physicians, educators, public health workers, and social service personnel.

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GATES, R. RUGGLES. *Pedigrees of Negro Families.* The Blakiston Company, Philadelphia. vii + 267 pp. illus. 1949. \$5.50.

This book is largely a presentation and analysis of pedigrees illustrating the inheritance of numerous specific traits in Negro families. More than 200 pedigrees are diagrammed; these were contributed chiefly by students in the United States, and are for their own families or those of their acquaintances. The author states that a great deal of time was spent in conferences with the contributors of the pedigrees in checking relevant points. He thinks the results are as free from errors and gaps as is usual in similar published material.

The number of pedigrees per trait ranges from one to 27. The latter number applies to polydactyly, and of these, 22 seem to be clear-cut dominants, while the other five may be recessives or dominants, with incomplete penetrance. With this character as well as with others the author finds no evidence that inheritance in Negroes is different from that in other races, in spite of the fact that in his recent work *Human Ancestry* (Harvard University Press) he regards Negroes as one of five distinct species of *Homo*. The frequency of certain genes, however, is known to vary greatly from race to race. Differences in gene frequency are of course the basis of racial and subspecific differences, in man as well as in other species.

Two of the chapters deal with traits which Professor Gates considers racial characters. He points out that such differences are often quantitative and depend upon the cumulative effects of several genes. Nevertheless, there is good evidence that genetic segregation occurs among the descendants of human racial hybrids as it does among individuals within a race.

An interesting feature of the book is a color plate reproducing paintings of blocks representing nine grades of human skin color, ranging from "black" to Caucasoid "white."

The book is clearly printed on an excellent grade of slick paper, and is substantially bound in cloth. There is an index. It should prove useful as a reference work in the high school and college library.

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