

many other more or less specialized areas of genetic research are currently being exploited in the study of neoplasia, and it is to be hoped that the example of the researchers who contributed to the 1969 Houston Symposium may lead many other geneticists to apply their knowledge and effort in this direction.

M. M. C.

The Future of Human Heredity

An Introduction to Eugenics in Modern Society

By Frederick Osborn, with a Foreword by Th. Dobzhansky. Weybright and Talley - New York 1968. Bound volume with cover; 14×21 cm; X+133 pages, including five tables and one graph, references, and index. Price: US \$ 5.95.

“The real problem which mankind will not be able to evade indefinitely is where the evolutionary process is taking man, and where man himself wishes to go”, Professor Dobzhansky stresses in his foreword. An answer to such a basic problem is attempted by Frederick Osborn, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Population Council, and for several decades the leader of the eugenic movement in America.

A review of man's genetic past introduces the analysis of present situation: selection and survival are examined in their possible action among primitive hunters and food gatherers up to the Neolithic, around 8,000 b. C., and then among agricultural peoples up to the nineteenth century.

Recent changes in the way of life of modern industrialized societies, the spread of birth control and its effect on survival, and group and individual differentials in births, are then examined on the basis of the recent social history and development of the United States (1865-1965).

The genetic significance of such group and individual birth differentials, the frequency of defects and abnormalities, are then taken into account. Eugenic policies are reviewed and proposals put forth.

On account of increased expectation of life (as a result of the largely decreased early mortality) and birth control, a “relaxation” of selection is forecasted, due to “an increase throughout the population in the frequency of mutated genes responsible for serious hereditary defects and abnormalities, and this will be followed in due time by an increase in actual defects”. Such an apparently justified statement would, not necessarily be shared by any population geneticist. Nor would anyone easily agree on the author's speculations about the possibility of building up “superior races”, consisting in “those who breed most from their own superior stocks and least from their poorest stocks”.

P. P.

Gene Activity in Early Development

By Eric H. Davidson (New York). Academic Press - New York and London 1968. Second printing, 1969. Bound volume: 15×23 cm; XI+375 pages including 15 tables and 102 illustrations. Bibliography of 600 items; author and subject index. Price not indicated.

This book provides a review of the current state of knowledge on the gene function in the programming and operation of early development. It is divided into four parts.

Part 1, “Gene Activity in Early Embryogenesis”, deals with the theory of variable gene activity on cell differentiation, onset of genome control in embryogenesis, early molecular indices of differentiation, RNA synthesis in the early embryo, early informational RNA, and maternal template RNA.

Part 2, “Cytoplasmic Localization and the Onset of Differentiation”, is essentially concerned with the phenomenon of localization, its experimental evidence, its demonstrations in regulative embryos, and its interpretations.

Part 3, “Gene Function in Oogenesis”, reviews such topics as the origin and differentiation of the female germ line, oocyte