genetics, and the chemical nature of the gene. It could certainly be useful as a crammer, and to the lazy or dull student. The reviewer retains an open mind about its use to the bright student.

MARGARET E. WALLACE


The two London symposia were held in June and in July 1965, and both appear as an Action for the Crippled Child Monograph. Each runs to about 100 pages of up-to-date and authoritative accounts, going well beyond current textbook reading.

In the first symposium C. O. Carter discussed briefly the genetics of spina bifida. In the second, genetic and biochemical aspects of scoliosis were dealt with fairly exhaustively under the chairmanship of J. A. Fraser Roberts in a wide-ranging discussion, to which P. Polani, C. O. Carter, Janet Anders, Ruth Wynn-Davies, and R. Ling contributed for the genetic angle. The fund sponsoring these symposia hopes to arrange for two such meetings each year dealing with different aspects of the crippled child. These two opening symposia augur well for future developments.

In preparation for the meeting in October 1965 the Human Genetics Unit of W.H.O. at Geneva produced an extensive summary of some 45 major studies on twins carried out at various centres. (This report is available on request from the unit.) The meeting itself concentrated on the possible use of twin material for such affections as coronary heart disease, hypertension, peptic ulcer, and diabetes. The value of a centralized agency such as W.H.O. to promote and co-ordinate international studies of such a type was recognized as was the need for acceptable criteria for the collection and analysis of the material.

ARNOLD SORSBY


It is becoming almost monotonous to mark the appearance of new editions of this classic work which has been invaluable to generations of medical research workers and to vital and health statisticians. But it would not be sufficient to say that this is the best value for money in textbooks today.

The book has been enlarged by the addition of more extensive treatment of clinical trials, (of which the author has made himself the acknowledged master) and more material on the epidemiological study of chronic disease. When a book grows in successive editions two dangers arise—over-solidity and imbalance. These have been avoided.

The early chapters are packed with the sort of commonsense that both appeals and condemns, especially the chapters on forms of record and inquiry and the presentation of statistics. The chapter on the standard deviation might perhaps be extended by the use of other estimators, e.g. the range (an efficient estimator in very small samples). Tests of significance are admirably dealt with, and there can be no excuse for students remaining bemused by the word ‘significant’.

All the way through the book there are warnings about jumping to hasty conclusions on insufficient evidence, and the lesson is rammed home in the chapters on ‘common fallacies and difficulties’. If it were possible to ask for more, one would suggest the provision of a formal chapter on cohort and longitudinal studies of chronic disease and on some of the principles and problems arising in two fast-expanding disciplines, biochemistry and genetics.

There will, of course, be further editions of this book which began in 1937 as ‘a series of short simple articles on such methods as... would be most useful’ in the columns of The Lancet. Herein lies the secret of the remarkable popularity of this work.

B. BENJAMIN