

Forward to Race & Sanger's Blood Group book.

I am extremely glad that Race and Sanger have been induced to undertake the heavy labour of preparing a modern book on the blood groups, giving especial attention to their inheritance. The need for an exact and comprehensive text-book has been increasingly evident during the rapid progress of the last decade, and no authors could be better qualified for the task. Both are, however, fully occupied by new researches in the fields which they themselves have to a great extent opened up, and great self-discipline was surely needed to bring themselves to sacrifice so much of their time as this book needed.

Research people are usually so conscious of how much remains to be done, that they sometimes underrate the extent of what has been already accomplished. In particular this seems to be the case with respect to the future use of blood-grouping as the principal tool of a comprehensive study of the human germ plasm. To have established, in a short time, nine usable marked loci is surely to have gone a long way towards establishing that "basic triangulation" by which in due time the whole will be surveyed. There are in Man only twenty-three autosomes, and to have at least one good marker on nine of these puts the future study of the numerous Mendelian factors known in Man, through the transmission of rare anomalies, in a position very

advantageous compared with that when I left the Galton Laboratory. Many new linkages must be already within reach of detection, when family studies can be combined with comprehensive serological tests.

On matters once controversial (and still so occasionally) the senior author has exercised a commendable restraint. No one would judge from the text how often his personal contributions have been ignored, and when verified have been published without acknowledgement of his priority. Our present understanding of the complex Rh situation owes much to the good temper with which, in spite of irritants, he steadily pushed on with his own problems.

It is fortunate that the authors can command a simple and lucid style, for much that is to be expounded is really intricate. Those who have followed the work during its development will often be surprised at the simplicity with which an adequate account can now be given. They may also be amused at the "evasive action" occasionally taken by the authors, when anything heavy in the way of mathematics seems imminent.

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17 May 1950.