Referate.

Walter, H. E. *Genetics: an introduction to the study of heredity.* 12 mo. pp. XIV and 272. New York. Macmillan 1913.

In twelve comparatively short chapters the author has written a delightful little book on the elements of genetics. It is not a treatise on the subject and was not so intended, it is hardly comprehensive enough to be used as a textbook, but it does give the layman a good clear idea of the principles of heredity in a style that is charming without being imaginative. In the preface it is asserted that a writer not engaged in investigating genetic problems holds some advantage over the seasoned expert in writing for the beginning student. One might be inclined to doubt this statement as a generality, but Dr. Walter leaves a good argument in its support in this particular volume at least.

After a short introduction the book deals successively with the physical basis of heredity, variation, the inheritance of acquired characters, Mendelism including Johanssen's work and sex-limited heredity, and eugenics. The author does not propose new theories, nor sit in judgment on old ones. He simply gives a very readable account of recent work in a way that will be acceptable to most biologists. Of course since many theories are under discussion in present day biology, anyone might think it proper to differ from the author on certain points, but perhaps the only fair criticisms should be directed against his sins of omission and his choice of illustrative material. The general consequences of a belief in the mutation theory, the genotype theory or the Mendelian theory are hardly touched although their discussion takes up a large part of the work. In other words the conception of heredity is rather one of parts than of a whole. Again, such a subject as gametic coupling would seem to deserve mention. On the whole, however, the author is to be congratulated on a work that is eminently sane though progressive.

E. M. East.

Drinkwater, H. *Account of a family showing Minor-Brachydactyly.* Journal of Genetics. February 1912. Vol. 2. No 1. S. 21.

Drinkwater beschreibt eine Familie mit einer besonderen Art von Kurzfingerigkeit, die er „Minorbrachydactyly“ nennt. Während er früher (Proceedings of the Roy. of Edin. Vol. XXVIII, Part. I) die Brachydactylie als die Verschmelzung einer sehr kurzen 2. Phalange mit der 3. zu einem Stück geschildert hat, versteht er unter „Minorbrachydactyly“ gleichfalls die Verkürzung der 2. Phalange, die aber als selbstständiges Knochenstück erhalten bleibt. Es handelt sich also, wie den beigefügten Photographien zu entnehmen ist, gewissermaßen um eine mildere Form der ausgesprochenen Brachydactylie: die Hände sind kürzer und breiter, die Finger plumper als normal, doch sehen die Hände, da kein Gelenk fehlt, den normalen ähn-