Human Cancer. Arthur Purdy Stout, M.D., Associate Professor of Surgery, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Columbia University. XXIII and 990 pages, illustrated. Price $10.00. Lea & Febiger, Philadelphia, 1932.

This work has been written for the surgeon and surgical pathologist, and to them it will make its chief appeal. In his preface the author remarks, "It has long been recognized that each particular anatomical region of the body produces cancers which differ in many respects from those in other parts of the body. Therefore, this book deals with cancer by regions." While the statement is true in a general way, it seems to the reviewer that it is hardly important enough to base the arrangement of a book upon it. The result in this particular case, as a glance at the table of contents will show, is a certain impression of confusion. Doubtless, the topographical system of grouping has an advantage in that it facilitates reference, and accordingly will be agreeable to the clinician, but it will not please the pathologist. "For clarity and convenience in discussion, it has been accepted as a working hypothesis that every cancer is preceded by the action of something upon the body cells which results in hyperplasia. Accordingly the description of every cancer is preceded by a section labelled 'etiological factors and precancerous lesions' in which is collected all of the information which could be found bearing upon the relationship between the action of the so-called 'chronic irritants,' cellular hyperplasias including benign neoplasms, and cancer." Again, the desirability of this may be doubted. The result is inevitable repetition and a book which is a book on neoplasms generally and other matters, rather than one on human cancer. In the introduction there are already sections on Precancerous Lesions, the Criteria of Cancer, and the Criteria of Relative Malignancy; these could have been amplified into an adequate discussion of these subjects, once and for all, and the general principles at work could have been laid down. This would have saved much space. Apart from these criticisms, which, indeed, may not be endorsed by all, the book is an excellent one. Particularly would we commend the practice of giving the diagnostic signs and symptoms and outline of the treatment applicable to each given case. The book represents the result of an immense amount of industry. The recent literature is quoted freely, and a bibliography is given at the end of each chapter. Moot points are discussed and opinions of authorities are given pro and con. Informative cases are quoted from the literature. Statistical returns are used freely. The reader feels that all the available information is put before him in such a way as to permit of a rational judgment. The book is profusely and well illustrated. Pictures are given of the gross specimen, and often of the part of the body involved, followed by the appropriate photomicrograph. The author seldom discusses the results of laboratory research, except where they are generally accepted, and wisely so. The book brings together in a practical helpful way all that is certainly known about the origin, development, and manifestations of tumour growth, and links these with the clinical appearances, and will prove a safe guide to the clinical teacher and operator. It is clearly the production of a surgeon more than usually well versed in the scientific principles of his art.

California's Medical Story. Henry Harris, M.D., Associate Clinical Professor of Medicine, University of California. 421 pages, illustrated. Price $7.00. J. W. Stacey, Inc., San Francisco, 1932.

The importance of so-called local histories is ably discussed by Doctor Singer in his introduction to this medical history of California. They serve as "bricks" in the building erected by historian of national scope; and each brick need not be concerned with geographical units only, for there are "localizations in the mind" also, and medical history belong to these. California presents a well defined geographical unit which has its advantages in the study of its early medical history, although of course it could not be long before it began to be influenced by neighbouring states and countries.

The book is arranged in sections, dealing with various periods in the growth of the State from the time of the Indians up to the present. European medicine was introduced by the Spaniards, and there was then a period when California and Mexico were under the one government. Acquisition by America followed, and then came the gold rush. Here the accounts of the medical men of the time begin to be interesting.

The references to early medical journals of California make good reading. We are told of one which had on its title page the somewhat ambiguous motto "Lights often come through cracks in the Tiling." In another there was the resounding declaration "We belong to no party—no clique; we cannot be influenced by any—we ignore the existence of any." Personalities were occasionally indulged in; one editor called another an advertising quack, a low-bred, disgusting, ignorant knave, and in return was referred to as a medical Judas! But these were only occasional flashes of heat.

The style is unfortunate. There is an attempt, one must suppose, to introduce the romantic element, to force the interest, but this can never be done. As a work of reference, however, the book is valuable, and will be consulted by all who are interested in tracing the development of the modern system of medicine on this continent.

Statistical Methods for Research Workers. R. A. Fisher, Sc.D., F.R.S., Chief Statistician, Rothamsted Experimental Station. Fourth Edition, 307 pages, with tables. Price 15s. Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh and London, 1932.

It is gratifying to find this valuable book, first published in 1925, already in its fourth revised and enlarged edition; it is to be hoped that this indicates a growth of interest in statistical methods. Three years ago H. L. Dunn pointed out that in 90 per cent of a group of American medical and physiological articles statistical methods should have been used and were not; and in 40 per cent of them the conclusions arrived at were not justified in the absence of statistical control. Statistics supply an objective means of attack on one of the greatest difficulties in the way of biological and medical science—the variation between individuals. Fisher's book is admirably adapted to the use of the worker in these fields, since there is no elaborate discussion of the theoretical basis of statistics, and the illustrations used are almost all biological. It is moreover entirely trustworthy, and inefficient methods, such as the "median and quartile" system, and the popular but inaccurate method of determining the significance of correlation coefficients by their so-called "probable error" are either avoided or condemned. It must be admitted that the author's style is so compact that the reader must be prepared to devote his closest attention to the argument, and at a careless perusal may fail to realize that in most cases the use of statistical methods as a tool in research requires no more mathematical knowledge than the use of logarithms. The present edition is enlarged in several respects, especially in its discussion of covariance, and in the use of cumulants in place of the old-fashioned and inconvenient moments in the description of distributions. The tables are convenient to use, but the reviewer feels that this section of the book could be enlarged with profit. In contrast to certain other works on the subject, this volume is attractively printed and bound; it forms one of a series of biological monographs.