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Genes and Common Diseases presents an up-to-date view of the role of genetics in modern medicine, reflecting the strengths and limitations of a genetic perspective. The current shift in emphasis from the study of rare single gene disorders to common diseases brings genetics into every aspect of modern medicine, from infectious diseases to therapeutics. However, it is unclear whether this increasingly genetic focus will prove useful in the face of major environmental influences in many common diseases. The book takes a hard and self-critical look at what can and cannot be achieved using a genetic approach and what is known about genetic and environmental mechanisms in a variety of common diseases. It seeks to clarify the goals of human genetic research by providing state-of-the art insights into known molecular mechanisms underlying common disease processes while at the same time providing a realistic overview of the expected genetic and physiological complexity.