

become differentiated? When and where did they come by their languages? When and where did they acquire their customs, beliefs and ways of living and their manner of doing things? He does not answer these questions by culling quotations from authorities, but, using his well-stocked mind, a wide personal experience, a sane judgment, and a happy gift of expression, returns answers that all who read may understand and, at the same time, feel that they are in touch with the live problems of anthropology. His main aim is to explain how peoples in every land have come by their cultures, particularly how the peoples of the New World, both ancient and modern, came by theirs.

Amongst European anthropologists, that school which regards inventions, beliefs and practices, now widely spread amongst living peoples, as having arisen in single centres, is gaining adherents every day. Prof. Kroeber, while open to the fact that cultures do often spread by borrowings and by migrations, champions the cause of independent and multiple origins. The practice of the *couvade* prevailed in Europe and Brazil. That fact is construed by the growing school as evidence that there had been a culture drift from the Old World to the New. Prof. Kroeber, from the same facts, draws the inference that the natives of Europe and the natives of Brazil were provided with a common impulse, and that under the influence of this impulse they devised a common practice. Although the reviewer's sympathies are altogether against "independent origins," it is well that "migrationists" should be thoroughly acquainted with the other side of their case. They will find that Prof. Kroeber has culled much from the ancient civilisations of Mexico, Maya and Peru which deserves their serious consideration. Beyond all this, the book is one of the most comprehensive and attractive of text-books on anthropology.

*Chronique des événements météorologiques en Belgique jusqu'en 1834.* Par E. Vanderlinden. Pp. 329. (Bruxelles: M. Hayez, 1924.) 16 francs.

REGULAR meteorological observations are of comparatively recent origin, but mankind has always been interested in the weather, and numerous meteorological references are scattered through the literature of all countries from the earliest times. The importance of collecting these records has been recognised by the International Meteorological Committee, and in recent years several eminent meteorologists have occupied themselves with the task, especially the late A. Angot in France and G. Hellmann in Germany. Last year Sir Richard Gregory presented us with a summary of the early meteorological records of the British Isles, and we have now to welcome an exhaustive compilation of the material from Belgium by the veteran meteorologist, E. Vanderlinden, commencing with the record of a rainy summer in the year A.D. 120, and continuing until the beginning of regular meteorological observations at Brussels in 1834.

The records deal with mild or severe winters, dry or rainy summers, early or late frosts, floods and storms; the most valuable are those which were recorded owing to their agricultural importance. It is interesting to notice that the author recognises three stages in the

recording of meteorological notes; in the most ancient medieval chronicles the remarks are generally brief and to the point—"severe winter." Later they become longer and more fanciful, often verse is employed. In the third stage the facts are distorted to fit the narrator's theories or his love of the marvellous, and it is not until the end of the eighteenth century that a scientific character is recovered. The usual historical difficulties were met with, especially in the dating of events which occurred in winter, but the author appears to have performed the critical part of his work with good judgment. The documentation is excellent; for each year, after a brief summary of the phenomena in French the original remark is quoted, followed by a reference to the chapter and page of the authority. At the end of the work the principal phenomena are tabulated.

*Einführung in die allgemeine Kohlenpetrographie.* Von Dr. Robert Potonié. Pp. x+285. (Berlin: Gebrüder Borntraeger, 1924.) 13s. 2d.

THIS work is not only of importance in itself, but also derives considerable interest from the fact that it embodies the continuation, by a distinguished son, of work commenced by a distinguished father, for Henry Potonié's work on the structure of coal may be regarded in many respects as a classic. The author describes the object of the work by quoting a definition of Weinschenk to the effect that petrography considers the origin, the characteristics, and the mode of decomposition of rocks, and notes that, from this point of view, but little attention has been paid to the study of coal, so that the petrography of coal is still in its infancy. He further quotes a sentence from Dannenberg to the effect that, for practical purposes, distinctions drawn from a mineralogical or petrological point of view are of but little importance, but he shows that this statement is only true because so little has been done towards the scientific study of the subject of the present book.

Dr. Potonié discusses first the modes of formation of coal, the macroscopic structure of coal and its origin, the microscopic structure of coal and its causes, and then, in some detail, the petrographic constituents of coal, and the various materials from which these have been built up. It need scarcely be said that a very large number of the views which he sets forth will not be universally accepted, our knowledge of the subject being in fact too imperfect to admit as yet of anything like finality, but the book before us undoubtedly constitutes a very important contribution to the study of a subject which is not only of profound scientific interest, but also may well prove to have very important practical bearings.

*The Student's Handbook of British Mosses.* By H. N. Dixon. Third edition, revised and enlarged. Pp. xlviii+582+63 plates. (Eastbourne: V. V. Sumfield; London: Wheldon and Wesley, Ltd., 1924.) 24s.

THIS well-known work has now been re-issued in a third edition which will prove very welcome to bryologists. Thinner paper, improved type, and new drawings for many of the plates serve to make the volume both of more convenient size and also more attractive. Much new material has been incorporated