

Geography and Travel

- (1) *Southern Europe: a Regional and Economic Geography of the Mediterranean Lands (Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Albania and Switzerland)*. By Dr. Marion I. Newbigin. (Methuen's Advanced Geographies.) Pp. xviii + 428. (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1932.) 15s. net.
- (2) *The Geography of the Mediterranean Region: its Relation to Ancient History*. By Prof. Ellen Churchill Semple. Pp. ix + 737. (London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1932.) 21s. net.

THESE two volumes, each based on extensive personal travels of the author, are complementary to one another and together will be invaluable to the advanced student of geography.

(1) Dr. Newbigin's volume covers Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Albania and Switzerland and contains also several introductory chapters on the physical geography of southern Europe. In a relatively small compass the conflicting theories of geomorphology are outlined in a way that will be a real help to the student. Climate is treated on a basis of fact free from the simplified generalisations which are too often far from the truth. The various lands are fully treated on a physical foundation and the relegation of statistical matter, except climatic data, to appendices makes the text readable and allows scope for discussion of the broad issues of human response to physical circumstance. There are copious lists of authoritative works and papers and full indications of the maps available for each country.

(2) Prof. Semple's book, on the other hand, deals primarily with the development of human civilisation in the Mediterranean area. The physical background is sketched briefly. Physiographic processes are outside the scope of the book. Climate is considered in its influences, and the sections on vegetation and agriculture are particularly valuable. It is a volume that is packed with information and ideas and every chapter is fully documented. It should become a standard work for geographer and historian alike.

Northern Lights: the Official Account of the British Arctic Air-Route Expedition, 1930-1931. By F. Spencer Chapman. With Additional Chapters by J. M. Scott, Capt. P. M. H. Lemon and Augustine Courtauld. Pp. xvi + 304 + 64 plates. (London: Chatto and Windus, 1932.) 18s. net.

FEW arctic expeditions from Great Britain in recent years have succeeded in accomplishing more useful work than that which the late Mr. H. G. Watkins led to East Greenland in 1930. The programme before the expedition was ambitious but much of it was carried out, including the survey of a long stretch of little-known coastline between lat. 64° and 68° N., two traverses of the interior ice cap, the establishment of an ice cap meteorological observatory as well as one

on the coast, and various geological and biological investigations.

Many of the details of this work cannot be told in this popular account of the expedition, but enough is said to show that no opportunities were wasted. Two aeroplanes proved useful though they seem scarcely to have given the services that were hoped for. On the ice cap the old-fashioned dog teams were found to be the most serviceable transport. Wireless equipment was a doubtful blessing, in spite of certain advantages.

The story is well told by various members of the expedition. There is no attempt to exaggerate difficulties or to magnify dangers. In fact, the long journeys are described so briefly that they give the reader the false impression of ease. There are several scientific appendices. The book is a notable contribution to arctic literature.

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Geology

Petrography and Petrology: a Textbook. By Prof. Frank F. Grout. Pp. xvii + 522. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc.; London: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., Ltd., 1932.) 30s. net.

THE aim of this book is to study the life-history of rocks rather than their description and classification. To this end, perhaps, the author has subordinated petrography to petrology, the result being that some readers may wish he had omitted petrography entirely. The petrographic parts of the book, especially that on the igneous rocks, are very disappointing when compared with the outstanding excellence of the petrological parts. However, these petrographical portions include many good illustrations well worth studying by readers able to neglect the associated letterpress.

In the petrological sections, which follow the petrographies of the igneous, sedimentary and metamorphic rocks in turn, there is given a really excellent account of modern views on the origin of rocks. An attempt is made to separate fact from theory, and the author is not engaged in boosting a theory of his own—a circumstance to be thankful for nowadays in a work accessible to students.

The modern American points of view on igneous and sedimentary petrology are well known to European geologists, but not so that on metamorphism. In this field it seems that the Europeans are more likely to fulfil the author's aim—interpretation of rocks in terms of history—than are his countrymen.

The sets of mineral tables given are not necessary in a book such as this. A list of selected readings is a welcome feature, though certain omissions, such as Eskola, Sederholm, Sander and others from the metamorphic section, will be noticeable to European readers.

In summary, this book, in spite of its petrographical blemishes, is a very valuable contribution to the general literature on the origin of rocks.