

observance was essentially occasional and intended to direct *mana* into profitable channels does offer a reasonably sound explanation of the Roman deities, which stand apart from the circle of deities obviously imported from outside.

*Origins of Education among Primitive Peoples: a Comparative Study in Racial Development.* By W. D. Hambly. Pp. xx + 432 + 79 plates. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1926.) 25s. net.

CONTRARY to popular impression, little boy and girl savages do not live quite a care-free existence, even though they are often more spoiled by their parents than the child of civilisation. The medium of their education often disguises the fact that they are being educated. As with all animals, the early stages of education, largely but not entirely physical, are almost wholly carried on through the play activities—among the boys, mimic hunting, fighting, and care of cattle; among the girls, care of dolls, and simulations of women's work in the field and home. Sometimes instruction may be even more organised and the father will take the boys as his helpers, while the mother requires the assistance of the girls in her work, an appropriate task to be learned at each age. The subject of education among primitive peoples has not been adequately studied, and Mr. Hambly's book serves a useful purpose in gathering together the facts as they have been recorded by travellers and ethnographers. He has brought out very clearly not only the value of the instruction imparted in puberty and initiation ceremonies, but he also emphasises what is apt to be overlooked, namely, the importance of the environmental influence by which the ethical code of the community forcibly, if imperceptibly, impresses itself upon the individual.

### Elementary Botany.

*Elementary Botany: an Introduction to the Study of Plant Life.* By Dr. W. Watson. Pp. viii + 368. (London: Edward Arnold and Co., 1926.) 6s. 6d.

THE number of elementary botanical text-books published in England and America is now so large that it is perhaps not hypercritical to expect that any addition to their number should contribute originality either in substance or in treatment. The text-book before us departs from the conventional type chiefly in its omissions. Thus, although the reader will find the elaters of the liverwort described both as to their structure and function, the fibrous layer of the angiospermic anther receives but passing mention, and incidentally is erroneously figured. Similarly, though the reader will find details of the microscopic structure of the thallus of *Xanthoria*, he will not grasp those details of the stoma of the flowering plant upon which its action depends.

The description is simple and direct though at times a trifle colloquial, and not infrequently the phraseology does not sufficiently guard against the

perpetuation of common errors. Such a statement, for example, as that "respiration is merely a method whereby oxygen can be supplied to the tissues in the working part of the body and the waste carbon dioxide taken away," will, despite the context, probably lead to grave misconceptions in the student's mind. Again, in the description of the tissue elements, in the explanation of Mendel's results, and elsewhere, there appears to be a lack of appropriate emphasis on essentials.

Suggestions for experimental work of a simple character are interspersed in the text, and the physiological and histological aspects are appropriately interwoven with the morphological treatment.

*A Practical Introduction to the Study of Botany.* (Specially intended for the Use of Indian Students.) By Sir J. Bretland Farmer and Dr. Haraprasad Chaudhuri. New edition. Pp. viii + 300. (Calcutta, Bombay and London: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1926.) 3 rupees.

IT is some years since the original edition of this book appeared. Since then considerable advances in our knowledge have been made which are not adequately reflected in these pages. It is true that the trend of modern botanical progress is recognised by the inclusion of a chapter on ecology and one on evolution and heredity, but, to employ the jargon of the diplomatist, these amount to little more than 'gestures,' since ecology is disposed of in five pages chiefly devoted to an enumeration of Warming's habitat classes, whilst evolution and heredity furnish the subject matter of barely four pages, of which two deal with the familiar Mendelian segregation.

The chief modifications from the earlier edition concern the substitution where necessary of Indian for European types and appropriate modifications in the families considered. Several errors of the original edition remain uncorrected, as, for example, the figure of the vascular system of the dead-nettle, in which the four main bundles are shown in duplicate, and the figure of *Sonchus crispus* which appears as *Sonchus oleraceus*. We may note, too, the absence of ligules from Fig. 154 purporting to represent a longitudinal section of a *Selaginella* cone. There are also several irritating if minor misprints, and one cannot but regret that the occasion was not taken to revise the work completely and bring it up-to-date.

*The Story of the Plants.* By Grant Allen. (Hodder and Stoughton's People's Library.) New edition, fully revised and annotated, and with a Biography of the Author by Marcus Woodward. Pp. 200. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., n.d.) 2s. 6d. net.

GRANT ALLEN'S "Story of the Plants" is a work which had a considerable vogue at a time when popular books on botanical subjects were comparatively few. In the present abridged edition, although the original text remains unchanged,