

REVIEWS.

STRAUSBAUGH, P. D. & E. L. CORE, *Flora of West Virginia*, part I. *West Virginia University Bulletin*, series 52, no. 12-2, June 1952, 273 pages, many ill.; part II. *idem*, series 53, no. 12-1, June 1953, 296 pages, many ill.

The editor has received the first and second fascicle of a treatise of the vascular plants of West Virginia. According to the preface this flora, when complete, will present descriptions, illustrations, geographical data and other information, particularly of local interest for the approximately 2000 species found growing without cultivation in that State. The first part contains the Pteridophyta, Gymnospermae, and Monocotyledoneae, the second part the Dicotyledoneae, p.p. (Saururaceae-Leguminosae). Keys are given for genera and species. The rather short descriptions are completed by many for the greater part original line drawings. Nomenclature and sequence are those of the 8th edition of Gray's Manual, 1950, by M. L. Fernald.

S. J. VAN OOSTSTROOM.

GOOD, R., *The Geography of the Flowering Plants*, XIV + 452 pp., with 75 line drawings, 9 maps in colour and 16 photogravure plates — Longmans, Green & Co., London, New York, and Toronto, 1953 — Price 50/.—

The fact that a second edition of this book follows the first after a lapse of only 6 years is, to my mind, a good sign. It means that the book is valued by many and it means also that plant-geography has not yet fallen entirely into the hands of "experimentalists". I do not mean to say, of course, that phytogeography does not badly need to be tackled from the experimental side, for every student in this field may have learnt a great deal from the publications of such capable scientists as Cain, Dansereau, Braun-Blanquet, and others who have given valuable inside information about the bearing of environment and history on the distribution of plants. But, in a way, they have been walking around the subject as a cat around hot porridge, leaving the reader more or less unsatisfied if he wants to see the main lines.

Without in any way neglecting modern evidence from the experimental side, Good has given us a book, something halfway between a textbook and a handbook, which tries

to show those main lines. In his methods he is primarily an alpha-taxonomist and in a world where the other letters of the Greek alphabet are so often prevailing it is comforting to look at a sound overall picture resting on firm facts, trustworthy, open to various interpretations by various readers of different experience and taste, free of the excess of imagination displayed, for instance, by Croizat. In this way, Prof. Good's book is a worthy, and much more complete successor of Hayek's good though all too concise "Allgemeine Pflanzengeographie" of 1926.

The second edition is certainly an improvement of the first without being detrimental to the context. Many plates have been replaced by more suitable ones. Two of the chapters (4 and 20) have been rewritten, but the main subdivision of the work has been maintained which proves that the original one was sound.

The list of references is enormously extended (from 295 to 629 entries!) and many passages in the text itself show that this is not a mere addition of titles. In many cases the book is really astonishingly up to date (cf fig. 33, in which *Nothofagus* is already shown as occurring in New Guinea and New Caledonia, the latter a discovery of 1951; also Plate 4, Floristic Regions, which correctly includes the Malay Peninsula in the Malaysian area).

Of course, every specialist can find omissions and little mistakes. These are inevitable in a work of great scope like this one. They are not of a nature to be mentioned here. The author will doubtless be better supported by being privately informed of them. For this is a task which can hardly be expected to be mastered by a single man and, as it is, the work can be best touched up by international cooperation. The main thing is that Prof. Good has been laying the foundation in an admirable way, stressing what has interested him for long years, viz the discontinuous areas which are the rough material for any great book on the distribution of plants. I regret, though, that he has not made a more ample use of polar projections. The favoured Mollweide Homographic Projection, which shows the entire surface of the Earth on a single ellipse seems less suitable for certain Pacific areas.

H. J. LAM.