

Taxonomy of Flowering Plants. C. L. Porter. Freeman, San Francisco, 1959. xii + 452 pp. Illus. \$6.75.

This handsomely illustrated volume is expressly designed to help fill the gap "between texts that are really reference books for advanced students and much abbreviated texts that have had much of the meat of the subject deleted from them." Porter's work is not intended to win new beachheads in the advancement of plant classification. The average student of applied botany might use the book for his first (and probably only) taxonomic course without discovering that there is more to the subject than identification by morphological characters. For those who are interested, however, the quietly planted leads and excellent, selective bibliographies should enable them to penetrate as far as enthusiasm carries.

The book is divided into three sections: the first deals succinctly with the history, methodology, and traditional theory of the subject, the second with some 19 orders and 23 families of monocotyledons, and the third with 35 orders and 80 families of dicotyledons. The author is tacitly neutral on questions of phylogeny. Selection of groups is clearly intended for a North American audience, and the well-illustrated description of families is stressed. If some choices of arrangement, of taxonomic concept, and of nomenclature are open to debate, these matters will not trouble the students to whom the book is addressed.

I find the volume refreshingly clear, straight-forward, unassuming, and unpretentious. The author has succeeded most admirably in attaining his worthy, if limited, objective.

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Russian Diary. Gaylord P. Harnwell. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1959. 125 pp. Plates. \$3.75.

Russian Diary is just that—an entertaining and instructive account of a busman's holiday. Gaylord Harnwell was a member of one of the cultural exchange groups (this group was made up of college and university presidents) going to the Soviet Union to obtain

firsthand knowledge about higher education there. The diary covers about 2 weeks during the summer of 1958 and about 5000 miles of travel within the Soviet Union.

The diary is simply written, and its general flavor of good humor conveys the author's pleasure in the experience. The diary is human in that it reflects a good observer's frank curiosity toward life behind the Iron Curtain. Harnwell found much to interest him besides the organization and structure of higher education and scientific research in the U.S.S.R.: the arts, the culture, and the day-to-day living experiences available to the visiting group in their busy schedule of travel that ranged from Leningrad and Moscow to Tashkent, Samarkand, and Alma-Ata. One particularly interesting feature of the book is its frequent mention of the food and drink enjoyed by the group under various circumstances, suggesting that the busman's holiday had its compensations and anticipating the inevitable questions on the care and feeding of the inner man in terra incognita.

In condensed form, Harnwell gives the basic concepts and operations of higher education in the U.S.S.R. His own background in science, research direction, and university administration led to his particular focus of interest and to his selection of material from the vast Soviet educational effort that has been and is being studied by our specialists from various fields. Harnwell noted particularly the relation of the Soviet Academy of Sciences to the educational institutions and to the laboratories that it operates, as well as the breadth of knowledge that it includes. Indeed, the Russian word translated freely as "science" is far broader in its meaning than the English word, and the Soviet Academy in its composition and operations reflects this broader concept of higher learning.

The diary includes a short section dealing with advanced degrees—Kandidat and Doctor, but does not make clear that both degrees are under the central control of the Higher Attestation Commission. This centralized authority for granting higher degrees is a feature of unusual interest to educators in the United States.

Another unusual feature of Soviet higher education is that engineering is taught in separate institutes, not in the universities. Although the diary de-

scribes the Leningrad Polytechnic Institute, an outstanding engineering school, attention is not directed to the novel relationship between the engineering schools and the universities.

Harnwell's *Russian Diary* has the merits of brevity, substance, and entertainment, and it provides a pleasant as well as a rewarding evening's reading. The photographs add substantial interest. Those particular readers who have been to the U.S.S.R. will relive in the diary many common experiences.

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Prologue to Teaching. Reading and source material. Marjorie B. Smiley and John S. Diekhoff, Eds. Oxford University Press, New York, 1959. xvii + 590 pp. \$5.75.

This is a text prepared for use in professional education courses at the undergraduate level. Because it is so different from traditional texts for these courses, and because the prospective teacher who studies these materials will be exposed to the writing of scholars and by this exposure, soundly introduced to a philosophical approach to modern education, the book seems worthy of review in *Science*. In a real sense this text material represents the substantial discipline which professional education could become.

The book consists of selections from writings about education by scholars from the time of Plato and Aristotle to Commager and Riesman. Included are selections by major educators such as Pestalozzi and John Dewey, and documentary materials from Supreme Court decisions, editorials, and prominent educational committees. The text is wholly exploratory. Competing viewpoints are presented so that the student may formulate from them his own philosophy of education. The editor's essays introducing each section should contribute to the understanding of the implications and the significance of the various quotations.

The authors and publishers indicate that the book could be used for a variety of purposes in education. The fact that this is true is perhaps one basis for criticism of current professional education courses. I suggest that this prologue, along with work in the psychology of