Flowers of the Italian Alps (review).—This new tourist flora* deals with the region of the southern alps lying between Lake Garda and Lake Como and begins with a seventeen-page introduction to its geology, topography and vegetation. Thereafter the book consists of keys to the commonest genera and species—the user is evidently expected to be able to place a plant in its correct family.

Under each family there is a main key to the identification of the genera and the species of the small genera: those of the larger genera being dealt with separately. This arrangement may save space, but it is slightly disconcerting to find, for instance, the 4 species of *Melandrium* in the main key while those of *Silene* and *Lychnis* receive separate treatment several pages later. Familiarity will overcome that feeling and is always an essential to the happy use of a tourist flora.

There are two criticisms to be made. A selective flora should always indicate the total number of species of each genus in the area—so that the user may judge the likelihood of his plant having been deemed unworthy of inclusion. The second criticism must have taken up ten times more space in reviews than it would take to meet it in all the offending books. The illustrations lack any scale. Apart from this they serve admirably their function in aiding identification, although a few are too small to be of much value.

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Facsimile of Linnaeus, Species Plantarum.†—Volume one of the Ray Society's facsimile edition was published, with a massive introduction by W. T. Stearn, in 1957; volume two, with an Appendix by J. L. Heller and W. T. Stearn, appeared early in 1959. There can be no denial that the rising total of practising plant taxonomists contains an ever-decreasing percentage who can handle Linnaean literature with competence and confidence. If any single contribution can halt that trend it is this facsimile edition of the Species Plantarum and the accompanying essays and annotations by Mr. Stearn and (in the second volume) Mr. Heller. Here, as nowhere before, the intricacies of interpretation, and the background knowledge so essential for correct interpretation, are set out. The Ray Society and their editor have performed a service to taxonomic botany that will be appreciated more and more as the years pass. For botanists everywhere, and not least for those isolated from the traditional centres of taxonomic research, these volumes will be of immense and lasting value.

B. L. BURTT.

* Bilder-Flora der Sudalpen vom Gardasee zum Somersee. Stuttgart, Fischer Verlag. 1959. Pp. 278, 32 plates (30 coloured). Price DM 28.50.

† Species Plantarum, by C. Linnaeus; a Facsimile of the first edition, 1753, with an introduction by W. T. Stearn and an appendix by J. L. Heller and W. T. Stearn. London, Ray Society. 1957–59. 2 volumes. Price £5, 10*s*.