British Wild Flowers (review)*—Claiming to bridge the gap between popular guides and comprehensive floras, this volume is designed for the beginner. With complete contrariety, however, the introduction goes on to point out that, as the botanical arrangement adopted follows that of Bentham & Hooker's Handbook, the student who is acquainted with the latter will have little difficulty here. But the student, if he has attained this level, is no tyro.

Genera may be hunted down with the keys provided, but within this framework there are no keys to the species but the need for these is lessened since only the commoner species are included. In *Ranunculus*, for instance, only 8 out of the 21 species in Clapham, Tutin and Warburg's Flora are fully described, likewise the Orchidaceae, 5 species out of 53; other species receive only passing mention, while grasses and sedges figure nowhere. The reason given for this ruthless abridgement is one of simplification, coupled with economy of space, allowing for fuller descriptions and notes. But descriptions, unless one has the facility of a Reginald Farrer, are apt to be heavy going and ought to be rendered in terse style. In this book valuable space has been squandered on them by needless verbosity.

The production of this book is commendable and the coloured plates by Ann V. Webster are, in the main, beautiful and well executed. Of the many line drawings by Lura M. Ripley some are good and portray the species in lifelike fashion, but others, reminiscent of the woodcut illustrations of herbals, sacrifice the plant's habit to the rectangle allowed for the drawing. Where space permitted, the inclusion of more analytical sketches would have benefited the student.

It would appear that this book has been ordered to certain dimensions, regardless of subject matter, in order to give the appearance of completeness to this botanical series. One must, therefore, sympathise with the author in the thankless task of grappling with a work thus limited in scope.

A. J. C. GRIERSON.

* British Wild Flowers, by Patricia Lewis, with Introduction and Keys by R. D. Meikle. London, Eyre & Spottiswoode (The Kew Series No. 1). 1958. Pp. 376, 15 coloured plates and 163 line drawings. Price 25 shillings.