fungus hunter with general information on the larger fungi. Most aspects are well covered in this part—the chapter on colours seems particularly sound—but occasionally the selection of material seems ill balanced. For example, in Chapter IV good illustrations and more adequate treatment of cystidia would have been more useful than the rather poor text illustrations of basidial development from Gaumann and Kniep, especially in a book which should lead enthusiasts on to more detailed examination of their finds.

The two hundred colour illustrations by eleven artists set a high standard which reflects good, accurate originals and first-class printing. The illustrations of *Boletus* and *Agaricus* are particularly outstanding. The text accompanying each plate is sound giving concise description of the species and then, perhaps even more important, differential notes on closely related species. Occasionally a key to related species is included. However, it is saddening to see in a good text the too frequent mistake of quoting authorities in the form " Fr. ex Bull." instead of " Bull. ex Fr."

This book with its succeeding sister volumes promises to be a most useful general series for fungus hunters. It should cover sufficient species to counter charges of serious incompleteness, the bane of most books of this type, and the high standard of colour plates will remove much of the tedium to beginners of the dichotomous key approach to identification. To many the German text may be a stumbling block, but then where can the English reader go for a book of this calibre other than to foreign presses?

D. M. HENDERSON.

Camellias (review)*—This is a splendid book, a model of its kind, and the Royal Horticultural Society are to be congratulated on having sponsored this detailed botanical revision of a horticulturally important genus. Mr. Sealy for long has been recognized as the botanical authority on the genus. He has studied the Camellia material contained in every important herbarium in the world, examined the living plants in gardens in Britain and elsewhere, and the result is a statement as authoritative as one could wish for. Eighty-two species are recognized, arranged in twelve sections, and keys are provided for their identification. Each species is comprehensively described, herbarium specimens which the author has examined are cited and each species is illustrated by means of the author's own line drawings. In his Preface, Mr. Sealy is too modest about his black and white figures; they are excellent in that they provide illustrations of all the species and show far better than any description how the species differ from each other. Incidentally, the plate of *Camellia saluenensis* Stapf ex Bean, from a painting by Stella Ross-Craig, is quite beautiful, and one can only agree with Mr. Sealy that it is a matter of regret that circumstances have permitted only one of her paintings to be reproduced. There is a chapter on the history of the genus; one on the taxonomic position of the genera in the family *Theaceae* Mirbel, which chapter is an excellent clear survey of the eight genera which compose the tribe *Gordoniae* DC.;

* A Revision of the Genus Camellia, by J. Robert Sealy. London, The Royal Horticultural Society. 1958. Pp. vii+239, 1 coloured plate and illustrations. Price three guineas.

one on the geographical distribution of the genus illustrated by five maps; one on the inter-relationships of the species; one on imperfectly known species; and, important for all horticulturists who grow these plants, a chapter reviewing the species which are in cultivation as well as the beautiful interspecific hybrids which have been raised during the last thirty years. In this last connection it is good to learn that doubt now has been removed over the parentage of *C.* "Salutation" and that the cytologist has confirmed the opinion long held by Mr. Sealy that *C. japonica* and not *C. reticulata* was crossed with *C. saluenensis* in the production of this beautiful hybrid.

This great work of Mr. Sealy's has been awaiting publication for several years. Let us hope that the Royal Horticultural Society's courageous gesture will meet with the success it merits.

H. R. FLETCHER.

The Arctic Flora (review)—Surely those who are interested in the whole circumpolar arctic flora are sufficiently advanced botanically to have no need of elementary family descriptions? This is the sort of question that Professor Polunin's book* brings quickly to mind, for it is both heavy and expensive. Yet the format dictates that nearly a whole page is needed to deal with *Polygala serpyllacea*, only once recorded from an arctic station.

This is, in intent, a simple flora based on a broad specific concept and without any categories below the species. The two qualifications *agg.* and *sens. lat.* are attached to many names, sometimes rather unexpectedly. For instance, *Oxycoccus palustris* Pers. agg., does not include *O. microcarpus* Rupr. The pattern of the flora is that where there are less than 9 species in the genus these are enumerated with descriptions and notes, where there are 9 or more species there is a descriptive key followed by an enumeration of the species with notes. Every species is illustrated and it is on the illustrations, or in the index, that one finds the authority quoted.

On its avowed level the work seems competent enough. The number of species upheld is 892 and of every one there is a line illustration, each properly scaled. This is admirable and there is no doubt that Professor Polunin's book will henceforth provide the simplest guide for the general determination of a collection of arctic plants. One would probably accord its contents a warmer welcome but for the unhappy feeling that the whole format is just a little pretentious.

B. L. BURTT.

* Circumpolar Arctic Flora, by Nicholas Polunin. Oxford, The Clarendon Press. 1959. Pp. xxviii+514, illustrated. Price six guineas.

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