British Brambles (review)*—In the "Handbook of British Rubi," by the late W. C. R. Watson, we have the most comprehensive work so far published on the complexities of the genus *Rubus* as represented in the British Isles, and it is the result of some forty years extremely close acquaintanceship with the group.

In it Mr. Watson has described 391 species, an increase of about 100 on the number he gave in the Check List of Vascular Plants (1946) and almost 300 more than the 103 species described by the Rev. W. Moyle Rogers in 1900. The main purpose of the work is to describe the multiplicity of forms in the genus as he has observed them, in correlation with western European species, and to provide a reasonably adequate systematic analysis for their identification as a basis for future research in other fields. The fact that he has upheld so many forms at equal specific level, while open to criticism, is perhaps outweighed by interests of convenience and the value of his detailed descriptions with their emphasis on unusual and interesting diagnostic characters.

The conspectus of species preceding the descriptive text incorporates the group descriptions and is also an analytical key to the genus. It is interesting to note certain changes of arrangement from the previous conspectus of 1946. The five subgenera of *Cylactis*, *Chamaemorus*, *Idaeobatus*, *Glaucobatus* and *Rubus* (*Eubatus*) are maintained, with a re-orientation of his major group of *Eubatus*. Two of the 12 sections of this subgenus, *Suberecti* and *Corylifolii* are removed to new hybrid subgenera *Idaeobatus* × *Rubus* and *Glaucobatus* × *Rubus*. These are placed between the subgenera *Glaucobatus* and *Rubus* and the *Corylifolii* included in the section *Triviales* P. J. Muell. This might be more accurately cited as sect. *Triviales* P. J. Muell. pro parte, as Mueller and later authors included *R. caesius* in this section. The remaining ten sections are dispersed in the subgenus *Rubus* which now contains only 5 sections. Of these sections *Sylvatici*, *Discolores* and *Sprengeliani* remain basically unchanged, section *Hystrices* is united with the *Glandulosi*, and the remaining 5 are incorporated in section *Appendiculati* Gonev.

Throughout the text a general indication of the wider distribution of species in western Europe is given, in addition to the vice-comital distribution in the British Isles, as verified by the author. Mr. Watson has also mentioned the vice-counties in which he himself collected. It is a matter for regret that he was not personally acquainted with the Scottish *Rubus* flora, apart from herbarium material available to him in the south, and one feels that there is a wide field of investigation of the genus open in Scotland and the north of England. About 80 species have been authenticated by him as present in Scotland many of them based only on records from one or two vice-counties. Now, with the assistance of this valuable accumulation of experience, botanists in the north may be encouraged to investigate the distribution of species in Scotland more fully.

In addition to the descriptive text, analytical key and the very fine drawings which illustrate the work there are introductory chapters of general interest on the variation, genetics and distribution of *Rubus*; also useful advice on the collection of material for the herbarium. It is inevitable perhaps in the publication of uncompleted work to feel that ill-health prevented certain final adjustments and we can only be grateful to the editors and publishers for their clear presentation of this highly individual and vital contribution to the taxonomy of the genus. As Mr. Watson himself has said "If the classification here adopted is found to be involved and hard to grasp, well and good" for then it reflects the situation which exists in nature.

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* Handbook of the Rubi of Great Britain and Ireland, by W. C. R. Watson. Cambridge University Press. 1958. Pp. xi+274, 50 figs. Price: 63 shillings.