The neglect of Michel Adanson (review). The acquisition of the library, correspondence and manuscripts of Michel Adanson by the Hunt Botanical Library in 1961 and 1962 opportunely just preceded the bicentenary of the French botanist's *Familles des Plantes* published in 1763-64. The double event led to a symposium being held at the Hunt Library, and the present volume* is one of two being issued to commemorate the event. It contains two memoirs, "Adanson, the man" by Jean-Paul Nicholas, and "Adanson and his Familles des Plantes" by Frans A. Stafleu, together with a catalogue of the books and papers now at the Hunt Library by William D. Margadant. It is a prestige volume: beautifully printed on fine paper with lavish illustrations—lavish, that is, in the sense that portraits of other botanists and title pages of their books are barely relevant to the subject. It is a pity, however, that facsimiles from *Familles des Plantes* are restricted to 2 pages, one from the preface and one showing part of the treatment of Malvaceae. Several pages of text, enough to give the real flavour of Adanson's thought, would have been well worth while. For Adanson is, to many of us, just a little known figure of the early days of post-Linnaean taxonomy—yet even in the shadows he looms awkward, angular and uncompromising. Here, in these two long memoirs, lies the detail from which his truer page in the history of botany can be distilled.

Adanson's achievement was in his family concepts and descriptions, which in their detail and attention to all parts of the plant were far in advance of anything written for many years. Is it fanciful to see in them the only forerunner to Rendle's *Classification of Flowering Plants*? The memoirs give us the clue to his attitude: the passionate botanist amazed and captivated by the sheer diversity of plant life, and particularly by its intemperate variety in the tropics. It was not the technical difference in stamen or carpel that usurped his imagination, but the novel growth-patterns of whole plants. Adanson was a far finer botanist than has usually been allowed and it is well to remember how much the qualities we now praise stemmed from his early tropical experience in Senegal. The authors of these two memoirs have successfully broken through the prickly hedges of Adanson's "reformed" spelling and (to us) uncouth nomenclature and displayed, to our shamed ignorance, Adanson the botanist.

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* Adanson. The Bicentennial of Michel Adanson's "Familles des Plantes" Part one, The Hunt Botanical Library, Carnegie Institute of Technology, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. 1963. Price 15 dollars for the two parts together.