Book Review

Nomenclature without tears. The trouble with nomenclature is that it is generally treated as a terribly boring subject but one which, like all rules of conduct, we must perforce live with. That this book covers not merely botanical but the whole spectrum of biological nomenclature—zoological, botanical and bacteriological—might seem to compound the boredom, but with Mr Jeffrey's facility of putting things over simply, as those who know his *Introduction to Plant Taxonomy*, 1968, will appreciate, this is not so. This is a book that has been crying out for years to be written: witness the fact that it has been sponsored by the Council of the Systematics Association. Of course, as has been emphasised, this is an outline, nothing can replace the Codes for those who have to traffic in nomenclature, but a simplified version with explanatory notes is to be welcomed by students and readers of biological papers.

Although the information imparted is ultimately the same as that in the Codes, it is presented in a very different fashion. From a commonsense look at the philosophical background of nomenclature, the author proceeds to explain the purpose of names and codes and how they may be modified. The principles that govern and control the system are next explored and this is followed by two chapters that relate to subjects that often puzzle the uninitiated: "Name-changes and Synonymy" and "Authorities and their Citation". The formal text concludes with a consideration of nomenclaturally special cases such as domesticated animals and cultivated plants. Finally one must praise the very full glossary that gives further words of explanation and refers the reader to appropriate parts of the text; especially impressive are the 42 entries under "name" from "name: see names" to "names: vernacular".

Since this volume is aimed partly at the student, the reviewer gave it to his enquiring biologically inclined son (aged 15) to read. He found it very enlightening but objected that the examples from other disciplines made it, for him, rather heavy-going. For myself, I enjoy the comparative aspect of this work and have always had a hankering for the sonorous tautonyms that the zoological code permits.

*Biological Nomenclature. By Charles Jeffrey. Edward Arnold (Special Topics in Biology Series) London 1973. 23 × 15 cm, 69 pp. Price: hardcover £2; paperback £1.

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