BOOK REVIEW

Flora of Egypt. It is one matter writing a Flora at one of the major European institutes where there are great resources of herbarium material and reference works close at hand; it is quite another writing a Flora in Cairo where facilities are strictly limited. All credit and congratulations then to the ageless Professor Vivi Täckholm on producing a much revised edition of her *Students' Flora of Egypt.** Expanded from 649 pages to 888, with numerous useful new line-drawings and the addition of 64 excellent colour plates, it is a much sturdier volume, better bound and more clearly printed than its predecessor. A major change has been made in the order of families by adopting the sequence of orders in the twelfth edition of Engler's *Syllabus der Pflanzenfamilien.*

Somewhat over 2000 species are dealt with including some of the more commonly cultivated and naturalised species. Only two families, the Compositae and Gramineae, are generically well-represented, each with over 90 genera, and only a few genera of the whole flora can be classified as large. It is thus not, in comparison with most SW Asiatic countries, a rich flora. Furthermore, a high percentage of the native species are indicated as being rare or very rare. The taxonomic treatments are basically the same as those in the first edition but as far as possible have been brought into line with recently published works. As indicated above, it is not easy, away from the European taxonomic centres, to be aware of all relevant literature and this is clear from the fact that throughout the Flora there are quite a number of outdated or superseded names; many instances could be cited. An example of a genus placed in the wrong family is provided by *Dipterygium*, dealt with here in the Cruciferae yet certainly a member of the Capparaceae. Many new specific names, varieties and combinations make a first appearance (there are five in *Kickxia* alone) but these all appear to be invalidly published; there is also no indication which are the new names. Only a small footnote on p. 20 indicates that "All names with myself as author will be published with Latin diagnoses in Publications from the Cairo Herbarium (unless not already published earlier)". It would have been helpful if these provisional names had been clearly indicated as such or else listed separately. The proof reading throughout has not always been as accurately done as one could wish for and quite a number of faults have slipped through.

Although there is much that can be criticised about this book, it is, as its title implies, essentially a students' Flora, and from this point of view it has much to commend it. Indeed, few other countries of SW Asia have anything comparable for teacher or student. It is succinct, well-illustrated and easy to use.

Over a long period of time, Professor Täckholm has done a great deal of work concerned with a better understanding of Egypt's vegetation and flora, and it is to be hoped that some of her enthusiasm and knowledge has rubbed off onto her students, so that future publication of the more definitive *Flora of Egypt*, which she was largely responsible for initiating as long ago as 1941, can be assured.

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* Täckholm, Vivi. Students' Flora of Egypt. Second Edition (Cairo). Cairo University. Printed in Beirut. 1974. 888 pp. 292 plates, 64 colour plates. Price not quoted.