

*Flowering Plants of the Northern and Central Sudan.*

By Grace M. Crowfoot. Forming a Companion Volume to the List of Sudan Flora. Pp. xxv + 172 plates. (London: Wheldon and Wesley, Ltd., n.d.) 7s. 6d. net.

MRS. CROWFOOT'S illustrations of the Anglo-Sudan flowers come at a very opportune moment, when tourists are visiting that country in increasing numbers every year. The 163 outline drawings depict the characteristic leaves, flowers, and fruits of the plants generally met with, and the thumbnail sketches of the outline form of some of the more typical trees are a convenient aid to identification of the common objects of the landscape. Each drawing is accompanied by the botanical name, family, vernacular names, and a few lines descriptive of the plant, with a note as to its general occurrence.

The outline figures are followed by eight plates which give a little idea of some parts of the country, whilst two typical plants are shown in the frontispiece. A sketch map shows that the part of the Sudan to which this work refers is that bounded by the Egyptian frontier on the north and the Red Sea and Abyssinia on the east, with an equal distance west of the Nile, and southwards to the beginning of the Sudd region. It pays particular attention to the little known and very interesting vegetation of the Red Sea hills around Erkowit.

Mr. A. F. Broun, lately Director of Woods and Forests of the Sudan, contributes nine introductory pages, in which he gives a useful and interesting sketch of the general features of the vegetation of the northern and central Sudan.

This useful little volume will be welcomed not only by visitors to the country but also by those many residents who find pleasure and relaxation in studying the local flora, to which hitherto there has been no popular guide.

*Letters from the Steppe: written in the Years 1886-1887.* By William Bateson. Edited, with an Introduction, by Beatrice Bateson. Pp. xvi + 222. (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1928.) 7s. 6d. net.

IN 1886, William Bateson, then a young man of twenty-five years, set out for the Steppe of Asia to test two definite problems of evolution which had stirred his imagination, one distributional, the other adaptational. He summarised these aims in a letter written from Omsk to Sir Sidney Harmer towards the end of his journey on Sept. 8, 1887: "I came to look for two things: firstly, beasts which had lived in the *Asiatic Mediterranean*, and which might be lingering on here; and, secondly, to get the fauna of a great variety of isolated waters in order to ascertain whether these differences of environment produce constant change of form in their fauna." In the first aim he failed, for he found no trace of the gradual extensive shrinkage which had been postulated for the Sea of Aral, but he found great variety of lakes from which he made extensive collections, and he sent home a series of lively letters which, along with extracts from his field note-books, make up this volume.

The letters do not bear much upon Bateson's scientific work, but they give a vivid account of the difficulties, discomforts, even dangers of his journey, and of the Kirghiz peoples amongst whom he lived on terms of equality. Throughout they breathe the enthusiasm, dogged perseverance, and buoyancy of spirit which characterised their writer in later years. The letters and field-notes have been well edited and collated by Beatrice Bateson, who, in a short introduction, sets the stage for the traveller's tale.

*The Plant Lice or Aphididae of Great Britain.* By Fred. V. Theobald. Vol. 3. Pp. vi + 364. (Ashford and London: Headley Bros., 1929.) 30s.

WE welcome the appearance of the third volume of this important work, and congratulate its author upon the completion of so laborious a task. It concludes the description of the British Aphides so far as known at present, and will unquestionably form an indispensable aid to all students of the group for a number of years to come. Many more species will no doubt yet be found in Great Britain, and the existence of Mr. Theobald's treatise cannot fail to prove a great stimulus in bringing them to light. The importance of the study of Aphides is increasingly recognised the world over, not only on account of the injurious propensities of these insects, but also because they are now known to be important vectors in the spread of virus diseases from infected to healthy plants. To the general biologist, their reproductive phenomenon, alternation of hosts, and other features have long been of outstanding interest.

The difficulties and expense involved in producing a three-volume book, which can only appeal to a relatively limited circle of buyers, are such as to render all entomologists under a debt of gratitude to the author in seeing it through to completion. In this connexion it is gratifying to note that, through the Ministry of Agriculture, the Development Commission granted the financial assistance necessary to enable this last volume to be printed—a fact which, in itself, testifies to the value of such a book to horticultural and agricultural progress. Like its predecessors the volume is well printed, profusely illustrated, and separately indexed.

A. D. I.

*Spitsbergen Papers.* Vol. 2: *Scientific Results of the Second and Third Oxford University Expeditions to Spitsbergen in 1923 and 1924.* 25 papers. (London: Oxford University Press, 1929.) 30s. net.

THE first volume of Spitsbergen papers which was published in 1925 contained the collected results of the Oxford University expedition of 1921. The present volume serves a similar purpose for the two Spitsbergen expeditions under the successful leadership of Mr. F. G. Binney, the Merton College expedition of 1923, and the Oxford University Arctic expedition of 1924. Some papers remain over to form a third volume. All the papers are reprints from various journals and proceedings of