

REVIEW

C. LINNAEUS, *Species Plantarum*. Facsimile of the first edition, 1753. — Vol. 1, with an Introduction by W. T. Stearn; pp. xiv + 176 (Introduction) + 560 (Facsimile); 1957; price 50 s. — Vol. 2, with an Appendix by J. L. Heller and W. T. Stearn; pp. xvi + 640 (Facsimile) + 148 (Appendix); 1959; price 60 s. — Bernard Quaritch, Grafton Street, London, for the Ray Society.

The well-known Ray Society undertook the publication of this new facsimile of Linnaeus's most famous and still indispensable botanical work and had it reproduced photographically from an original copy in Linnaeus's library, later owned by Sir James Edward Smith. It represents the third facsimile edition of the work and, in spite of the earlier Berlin (1907) and Tokyo (1934) editions, which are no longer obtainable, it will certainly fill a real need, were it only to save copies of the rare and expensive original from wear and tear.

Although much has been written about Linnaeus and his numerous publications, the delightful frame provided by W. T. Stearn and J. L. Heller makes the new edition all the more valuable and useful, not only since the supplementary chapters enliven the book as a cultural product of its period but because the introduction and much of the appendix have been very ably written by a working taxonomist primarily concerned with Linnaeus's works for their relevance to modern botanical nomenclature, who has thoroughly studied history, method and bibliography and also, to some extent, the life and psychology of the author and the scientific attitudes of the period. Stearn has also aimed at avoidance of the misunderstanding and confusion, which follow from treating 18th century publications as if they were 20th century productions. Emphasis is laid on what may well be the most important conclusion for Linnaean typification in the whole work (cf. p. 97), viz. that within every main entry in *Species Plantarum* there is, or was at some stage of its development, an illustration or a specimen seen by Linnaeus and not simply a description by a pre-Linnaean author, the exceptions being definitions or descriptions by Van Royen, Gronovius, or Boissier de Sauvages, his disciples, so to speak, in the Linnaean method, whose work was therefore acceptable.

The alterations in terminology made by Linnaeus and his emphasis on floral and fruiting characters often ignored by earlier authors obliged him to look for these with his own eyes in illustrations and specimens, quite apart from the mental difficulty of dealing simply with words. This matter of the visual element in Linnaean concepts, which presumably has a connection with his aesthetic sensitivity (cf. Appendix p. 95), seems not previously to have been well understood, just as the importance of the phrase-name, the keystone of *Species Plantarum*, based on this element, has likewise not been much appreciated as giving a significant indication of his intent (p. 126).

The Introduction to Vol. I contains 18 chapters as well as a General Bibliography and an Index. Their contents are diversified and most of them have been written in a very lively style and provide delightful reading. Some topics are an epitomized biography, a survey of Linnaeus's major publications, essays on *Genera Plantarum* (and typification), *Hortus Cliffortianus*, *Amoenitates Academicæ*, the authorship of Linnaean dissertations, the history of *Species Plantarum* in its many aspects, including sources, method, language, geographical names, typification, various editions, Linnaean herbaria (in London, Stockholm, Uppsala, Paris, and Oxford), and Linnaeus's species concept.

Rickett (in Bull. Torr. Bot. Club 85, 1959: 492) made an amusing reference to the inclusion of a chapter on the reception of *Species Plantarum* in England. Mr. Stearn informs me that the reason for this was that the Ray Society exists for the publication of learned works, primarily on the natural history of the British Isles, and secondarily of Europe, wherefore it seemed desirable to pay some regard to the Society's traditions in this way.

The Appendix is essentially an addition to the introduction and was placed at the end of Vol. II in view of the desirability of giving the two volumes approximately the

same size. It contains Heller's very useful annotated list (60 pages) of authors and works quoted by Linnaeus as well as Stearn's notes on the 22 mostly little known illustrations, and on four supplementary Linnaean publications with facsimile pages, an Index to the Appendix, and another one to taxa mentioned in the two Volumes. A feature of this index is the indication, by italic type and signs, of species which have been chosen by various authors as the lectotypes of Linnaean genera. The attention of those interested in the history of taxa is called to a note (on p. 93—96) on natural and artificial systems of classification and to Artedi's part (p. 74) in the creation of Linnaean method.

It is pleasant to note the many references to Dutch activities and publications in this work, to read how Linnaeus enjoyed in Holland "the material prosperity" as "made good use of the fine collections resulting from the 'Golden Century' of the Dutch Netherlands" (p. 6), that "Linnaeus's most fruitful years as an author were those spent in Holland" (p. 9), to find emphasized "the generosity and unselfish co-operation of his Dutch friends" (p. 10) and to have tribute paid to Dutch cartography (p. 143) and printing (p. 75). Citations of publications by Boerman, Engel, Danser, Lotsy, Van Steenis, and De Wit also indicate that the work of Dutch scholars has been by no means neglected, while Swedish publications on Linnaeus and his time have been consulted to an extent unusual for a botanist who is neither Dutch nor Swedish.

The whole work is admirably produced and the fact that it has been published by a learned Society has undoubtedly exerted a favourable influence on the price, which, for a work like this, is unusually low. Unfortunately, printing errors in the Introduction are none to rare; these errata have, however, been corrected and additions inserted in the first pages of Vol. II. An obvious, not corrected one is 1954 for 1754 (p. 45, line 10). The paper by Stearn on "Botanical exploration to the time of Linnaeus" listed on p. 150 of the Introduction as 'ined.' has now been published in Proc. Linnean Soc. London 169: 173—196 (1958). In the Index of the Appendix (p. 111) under *Barleria Prionitis* the sign † should be ‡ referring to Britton and Wilson and not to Britton and Brown.

These, however, are minor points and I think there is no doubt that this new edition of one of the most renowned botanical works of all time will, in its present form, not fail to raise new interests and to meet with an eager reception in many institutional and private libraries. It is certainly indispensable for all students of Linnaeus's works, his personality and his period.

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