

## PREFACE

WHAT is known as Engler's System of the Classification of Plants embodied in the *Natürliche Pflanzenfamilien* and in the successive editions of the *Syllabus der Pflanzenfamilien*, in the opinion of many modern systematic botanists represents, as a whole, the nearest approach to a natural system that we possess.

While specialists may criticise it in one detail or another, and while it is certain that we are as yet far from finality, owing to the numerous lacunae which still exist in our knowledge of different groups, there can be little if any doubt that no other published system of classification rivals Professor Engler's in broad grasp of principle and masterly treatment of complicated detail. It is the conspicuous merit of Professor Engler and his collaborators that they have kept constantly presented to botanists in the successive editions of the *Syllabus* the best scheme that could in their judgment be devised at the moment.

The present work is intended to familiarise students of British Vascular Plants with Engler's system in its latest form and thus both to habituate British floristic students to the use of a more natural system than that

to which they have been accustomed in the British Floras that have hitherto appeared, and to serve as an introduction to the use of the *Syllabus*, the *Natürliche Pflanzenfamilien* and the *Pflanzenreich*.

The major divisions of the vascular plants with their diagnoses are taken, to a large extent, *verbatim* from the *Syllabus der Pflanzenfamilien* (7th Edition 1912).

Professor Engler and his publishers have most kindly and readily accorded their assent to this very free use of their publication.

In a few cases Engler's arrangement has been departed from.

Thus the nomenclature of the larger divisions of Pteridophyta has been somewhat modified in order to secure uniformity in the terminations of the names of Orders (Reihen). Prof. Bower's arrangement of the Leptosporangiate Ferns into Simplices Mixtae and Gradatae has been adopted as representing the most rational grouping, though the distinct suborder of Filicales, Hydropteridineae, has been retained owing to the difficulty of assigning with certainty the Marsiliaceae and Salviniaceae to their proper places in the Eufilianeae series.

The Family Polypodiaceae, practically equivalent to the Mixtae of Bower, has been retained and divided into tribes according to the arrangement of the *Syllabus*, since our knowledge of the Systematics of this intricate

group is not sufficiently advanced to admit of a grouping of the Mixtae into Natural Families. In dealing with the British Genera alone this arrangement does not appear to do much violence to natural affinities so far as they have been ascertained.

Among the Flowering Plants Warming's arrangement of the Urticales has been followed mainly because of the difficulty of defining the Family Moraceae so as to include *Cannabis* and *Humulus* (subfamily Cannaboideae of Engler).

In all the other Orders the arrangement of the *Syllabus* has been closely followed, though the actual diagnoses, especially in cases where an Order or Family is poorly represented in Britain, have been to some extent modified.

The Characters of the Genera have either been obtained from various sources, such as Hooker's *Student's Flora* and Garcke's *Flora von Deutschland*, or are original, and they will, it is hoped, prove useful to students.

The following books, besides the *Syllabus* and *Pflanzenfamilien*, have been constantly used by me during the compilation of this work.

Ascherson and Graebner. *Flora des Nordostdeutschen Flachlandes*, 1898-9.

Blytt. *Haandbog i Norges Flora*, 1906.

Garcke. *Flora von Deutschland*. Edited by Dr Franz Niedenzu, 1908.

Hooker, Sir J. D. *The Student's Flora of the British Islands*, 1884.

Rendle. *The Classification of Flowering Plants*. Vol. I.

Warming. *Frrpplanterne*, 1912.

Willis, J. C. *Flowering Plants and Ferns*, 1908.

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