an appealing atmosphere about some of the pictures which goes straight to the heart.

It is a pleasure to look through this book in tolerant mood, and, to this reviewer at least, it leaves an abiding impression of a man who was a great photographer and a sincere lover of New Zealand plants.

—M.H.B.


Dr. Cone, here writing under her maiden name, says in her introduction that this book “is intended for beginners, particularly children, who will find it easier to refer to than a large technical book, and handy to use either at home or in the field.” A professional botanist is perhaps inclined to take too strict an attitude towards a book like this, but, since it is intended for beginners, the reviewer may be included among those for whom it was written.

It is a somewhat misleading book. The title is ill-chosen: one has to turn several pages before learning that it is primarily concerned with the systematics of certain New Zealand ferns. One is told (p. 8) that “the ferns have a distinctive leaf pattern, so that each one can be recognised at any time of year”, but, if this were true for the beginner, other characters would not be so much relied on for identification. On the same page it is stated: “One is able to identify a fern with confidence by matching it with an illustration.” Against this may be quoted H. H. Allan’s remark about the classification of ferns: “All [students] have found the subject fascinating, but beset with difficulties.” These difficulties remain, and will not be obviated by attempts to match specimens with illustrations.

On p. 23 the author alludes to Professor Copeland’s recent revision of the classification and to Miss Crookes’ acceptance of it, and then reverts almost entirely to the classification as presented in Cheese-man’s flora in 1925; Copeland’s names are given in parentheses as synonyms. Only an expert pteridologist can discuss the justice of this course, but, in view of the imminent publication of a new, revised flora of New Zealand, it is a pity that Dr. Cone’s work should have been published at this time.

The typography and reproduction are good, although one is annoyed to find Blechnum minus for Blechnum minor in three places. The cover is far too flimsy for a book of reference. The book appears to contribute little, if anything, original to our knowledge of ferns, and yet one looks in vain for proper acknowledgement of the author’s sources of information.

She is to be commended for her enthusiasm and industry, and particularly for some of her line drawings, but the forester at least, who wishes to learn something about his ferns, would do better with Dobbie’s “New Zealand Ferns”, 4th ed., revised by Marguerite Crookes, than with this book.

—M.H.B.