

Talks and film shows given in members' houses have been a feature of our activities recently. The series was started the year before when Dr. Greenway gave a party at his house for members to meet Mr. Milne Redhead and Mr. Peter Taylor, both of Kew. These parties entail much less work and anxiety for Committee than a formal lecture, all the work being thrown on to one person (or two people) each time, and though we make a point of having a collection to cover the cost of the food, this does not begin to pay for the time and trouble taken by our hosts and hostesses in making these parties the success they have undoubtedly been. Neither can we have distinguished visitors every month, and local talent has also provided parties—at Dr. V. R. Patel's house, where besides the lovely rose garden, we saw excellent films of the Uganda National Parks, and at Mr. North's, where we listened to records of bird songs.

In this connection I might mention the meeting held under the humble and leaky roof of the Vice-President (luckily it was not raining at the time), at which the Society exercised its right to put forward the names of two people to sit on the Museum Board of Trustees. Mr. W. H. Hale and Mr. R. W. Rayner were chosen at this meeting in the places of Mr. H. Copley and Mr. Gedye, both now retired. (Mr. Hale is Game Warden and former President of the Society. Mr. Rayner is President at the time of writing). The austerity of this meeting was lightened by a showing of some very interesting colour transparencies by Mr. Collins.

I seem to have said more about bird study than about anything else. It has been in the ascendent during the past year, partly, no doubt, owing to the Congress, but mainly because of the presence of some members who combine learning with public spirit and of a fairly reliable body of followers. The botanical rambles almost came to an end at one point in spite of the President's efforts. They seem to be reviving again now, but are in need of a stiffening of keen people who are prepared to do some work. Beginners are always welcome, but it gets boring for the leader to have to show you *Achyranthes aspera* every time.

Those interested in geology have mostly forked out the extra 10/- to join the new Geographical Society (whose President is also a member of our Society), which has been organising first-class expeditions much enjoyed by those of us who belong to both. However, now that we hope to have a geologist on the Committee we shall have to do some more work in that line ourselves.

BOOK REVIEW

Flora of Tropical East Africa. Orobanchaceae

By DR. P. J. GREENWAY

Published under the authority of the Secretary of State for the Colonies by the Crown Agents for Overseas Governments and Administrations, 4 Millbank, London, S.W.1. Price Sh. 1/6.

A further part of this Flora has now been published, a parasitic family containing the 'Broomrapes'. It consists of seven pages with one full page plate and two genera are represented *Cistanche* and *Orobanche*.

The first looks like a giant 'broomrape' with bright yellow flowers. This is found in dry country, especially on saline soils and is often met with on the margins of the Nairobi—Magadi road below the scarp, just before and after the rains.

The second, *Orobanche*, contains three species, the most common the English broomrape *O. minor* Smith, with a dirty yellow or purplish flower spike up to 2ft. tall, should be known to all gardeners throughout East Africa, as it is found from 4,700ft. upwards, appearing most suddenly after heavy showers among one's flower beds, especially among annual flowers such as petunias, African marigolds, tobacco, etc. etc. The other two species in this genus are less common, both of them so far only known from Kenya and Tanganyika.

The Flora commences with a full description of the family, then a key to the two genera which should enable one to distinguish one from the other.

In *Cistanche* there is only the one species, *C. tubulosa*, so no key is needed for this, but a full description of the plant is provided along with its distribution in Kenya and Tanganyika in which collectors' specimens are quoted, as well as its geographical distribution in other parts of the world, by which we learn that it is found along the southern Mediterranean coastal areas from Morocco to Egypt, eastwards to Socotra and India, and southwards through Ethiopia to Tanganyika. It is also recorded in Senegal.

Orobanche is treated similarly, but as there is more than one species in this genus a key is provided for the three that are found in East Africa.

The plate consists of line drawings by Mrs. Milne-Redhead, of which there are six, five of them illustrating the full habit of *Orobanche*. Unfortunately there is only one flower drawing for *Cistanche* and that does not show very much.

These plants are parasitic, that is they contain no green colouring matter, chlorophyll, in their stems nor do they have leaves, so they are dependent for their sustenance to carry out their life cycle on what they can obtain from the roots of green plants. We have still to learn more about the host plants of these two genera. It is recorded that *Cistanche* grows on the roots of *Acacia*, *Pemphis*, *Commiphora*, *Suaeda*, *Atriplex*, *Tamarix* and *Salsola*, all trees and shrubs; whilst *Orobanche* does not seem to be very selective, being found on a great number of annual plants such as Legumes, Compositae and Solanaceae.

The author, R. A. Graham, a Colonial Office botanist, and Mrs. Milne-Redhead, the artist, both working at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, are to be congratulated on their work in the production of this part of the Flora which can be bought for the sum of Sh. 1/6 from any Government Printer in East Africa, the Uganda Bookshop, Kampala, Uganda, or the Crown Agents in London.

The following parts of this Flora have been published:—Alangiaceae (Sh. 1/-); Canellaceae (Sh. 1/-); Caryophyllaceae (Sh. 3/-); Chenopodiaceae (Sh. 2/-); Connaraceae (Sh. 3/-); Gymnospermae (Sh. 2/-); Hypericaceae (Sh. 1/8); Marantaceae (Sh. 1/3); Menispermaceae (Sh. 3/-); Oleaceae (Sh. 2/9); Onagraceae (Sh. 2/-); Orobanchaceae (Sh. 1/6); Pedaliaceae (Sh. 1/10); Polygonaceae (Sh. 3/-); Ranunculaceae (Sh. 3/-); Rhizophoraceae (Sh. 2/6); Trapaceae (8d.); Turneraceae (Sh. 1/6); besides a Foreword and Preface as well as a Glossary of Botanical Terms (9d.).