

sometimes evoked to drown their enemies. In these legends there are ogres and ogresses, who meet with summary justice—some being destroyed by their own means of destruction; human folk climb into the sky as a place of refuge, others are carried there and become stars, some are turned to stone, others see through their noses; their dream spirits get stolen, and one gentleman, to prevent its leaving him, sleeps on his stomach, so that it should not escape from his mouth; there are even underground passages and a moral story, a fragment, of the flies and the bees, which reminds us of the ant and the grasshopper. Poetical justice, too, is not wanting, and in the plan by which Deereere frightened the widow into marrying him there is a touch of humour. Full of feeling are many of the stories. When the wicked magpie stole the children, “their crying reached the ears of the women as they were returning to their camp. Quickly they came at a sound which is not good in a mother’s ears.” The legend of Sturt’s Desert Pea, the Flower of Blood of the old tribes (*Clianthus Dampieri*), which, when once seen in its rich clusters is never forgotten, is worth reproducing.

Wimbakobolo, a warrior, falls in love with Purleemil, who is otherwise betrothed to the hated Tirlta, and the two take refuge with a friendly tribe. Before the winter had gone a son was born to them, and such a fine little fellow was he that “the tribe laughingly called him ‘the little chief,’ and brought him offerings of toy boomerangs, throwing-sticks, and such things until the eyes of his mother shone with pride, and the father already began to make him weapons, to be used one day against the enemies of the tribe who had sheltered them. And Purleemil sang new songs, which she said the spirits taught her, about her little son, whom she said was to live for ever, the most beautiful on the plains of the back country. Purleemil would sing her songs, and her baby would crow and laugh, and the father would say little, but bear so proud a look on his face as he glanced, from his carving of weapons with an opossum’s tooth, from time to time at his wife and child, that all would smile to see his happy pride, and their hearts were glad that the elders had not given up Purleemil to be the bride of Tirlta.” Then the mother, fearing trouble to themselves and ‘little chief,’ says: “Dark would our lives be without him; he is the sun that brightens our days; without him dark as a grave would they be for ever.” But the trouble does come. A night attack is followed by a general massacre. Little chief and his parents are slain, and from their blood arise masses of brilliant red flowers spreading over all. Tirlta revisits the spot to gloat over the slain, and is dazed by the sight before him. Suddenly from the sky a spear transfixes him, and a voice says: “Cowardly murderer of women and children; how dare you set foot on the spot made sacred for ever by the blood that you spilt, the blood of the little chief, his mother and father, which flowed in one stream and blossomed as you see it now, for no man can kill blood, for more than the life of the flesh is in blood. Their blood shall live for ever, making beautiful with its blazing brightness the bare plains, where are the salt lakes, the dried tears of the spirits whose songs Purleemil sang so sweetly, the salt tears which they shed when you, and such as you, poured out the life blood of their

loved tribe.” So Tirlta was transfixed and turned to stone, but the beautiful red flower lives for ever.

When once it is known that such pretty legends are to be gathered from amongst the Australian natives, there is little doubt but that other friendly squatters and officials will attempt to follow in Mrs. Parker’s footsteps. In the meanwhile her two little volumes will certainly run into further editions; and such being the case, we would point out that there are several printer’s errors, and that the glossary, excellent as it is, requires further additions. It is doubtful whether an average English reader will know what is meant by a “paddymelon” or a “humpy”—regarding the former word in the story of Mayamah, the printer has placed a comma between paddy and melon! The book is illustrated by some curious sketches made by an untaught local aborigine, supplied by Dr. W. H. Lang of Corowa, about three hundred and sixty miles distant from the Narran. May we ask, did this native ever see any European illustrations before he took to book illustration? Mr. Andrew Lang supplies a preface to each of the two books, in his usual happy strain.

H. LING ROTH.

OUR BOOK SHELF.

The Five Windows of the Soul; or, Thoughts on Perceiving. By E. H. Aitken. Pp. viii + 257. (London: John Murray, 1898.)

READERS of former books by “EHA” will turn with a sense of pleased anticipation to a new work from his pen. They know that they may expect to find a fresh and unconventional setting-forth of various matters of scientific interest, expressed in terse and vigorous English, illuminated by flashes of genuine humour, and accompanied by such comments on the relation of natural phenomena to the ordinary facts of life as suggest themselves to the shrewd intellect of a well-read philosopher and cultivated man of the world. Nor will the present work belie expectation. It is a popular treatise on the five senses—popular in the best acceptance of the word—for it is at once amusing without flippancy, instructive without dullness, and accurate without pedantry. The author has taken evident pains to gather the best and latest information on the subject of the organs of sense; and although it might be possible in a spirit of hypercriticism to point out certain errors and deficiencies, he has in the main succeeded so well that his work ought to mark a distinct epoch in the history of general comprehension and appreciation of the subject. In dealing with the various trains of thought suggested to him by the scientific facts in question, and involving problems of the greatest interest in æsthetics and ethics, he reaches and maintains a high level of literary and philosophical excellence. We should like to commend the whole book, and especially the fourth chapter, to the attention of certain puritan fanatics.

One piece of criticism we must allow ourselves. Mr. Aitken, it is true, could hardly be expected to have made himself acquainted, in time for the production of his book, with the recent striking interpretation of the gradual paling of colour on the under parts of animals. But in some other respects his treatment of the subject of colour is not thoroughly satisfactory, and on p. 219 he seems to steer dangerously close to the “photographic” heresy. Slight blemishes such as these do not, however, detract seriously from the value of a work which represents the honest and successful endeavour of one who is not a professed scientific worker to “see life steadily and see it whole” in its relation to the entire domain of natural knowledge.

F. A. D.