

notice, omitting entirely the ingenious and subtle suggestions of Saha (1930-31) and the work that followed them. The format, too, is not very attractive, with its cramped setting, which makes the otherwise valuable tables difficult to follow.

It is tempting to compare the outlooks displayed by these two books. The Cambridge view of crystal chemistry is something like this. Here are the 'things', and here is a copy of the rules according to which the game is to be played. It now

rests with the players, and the degree of skill which they have achieved is of no mean order. The American approach is otherwise: chemistry as usually taught is not altogether satisfactory; let it therefore be impregnated with a new and active principle, but the way will be long and the wind cold.

A profound study of the solid state is a first-rate intellectual pursuit in either case. For Dr. Evans, however, it is—probably subconsciously—great fun: one doubts whether it is quite that for Dr. Stillwell.

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SOME EASTERN AUSTRALIAN WILD FLOWERS

Wild Flowers of Australia

By Thistle Y. Harris. Pp. xviii+198+65 plates. (Sydney and London: Angus and Robertson, Ltd., 1938.) 8s. 6d.

AT a moderate computation, the flora of Australia contains some eleven thousand species of vascular plants. These are found over an area about twenty-five times the size of Great Britain and Ireland, in an island continent which extends through more than 28° of latitude. It is no easy task to select for illustration a fair example of such a flora. In spite of its title, the present book can scarcely be said to have done so. About ninety per cent of the plants figured and described in it come from the coastal district of New South Wales or the adjacent highlands. It is true that many of these same species do extend into Queensland, and a smaller number south into Victoria, but the representation of the floras of Tasmania or South Australia is slight. The small number of Western Australian plants included gives no useful impression of the peculiar flora of that State.

The author says that her book is an attempt to meet the demand for a popular guide to Australian wild flowers. No claim to completeness is made, but it is unfortunate that no space was found for any eucalypt and that not a grass nor a sedge is mentioned. Some of the figured species are uncommon plants, whilst others, quite as beautiful and far more widespread, are omitted.

The book is divided into two parts. The first contains illustrations of 248 species, reproduced by three-colour process and grouped in sixty-five plates. Although the individual blocks are small (2¼ in. × 1½ in.), in many cases the pictures are successful in giving a true impression of the form and colour of the plant illustrated. In other cases the artist has made the limit of the block a sort

of Procrustean bed and taken unwarrantable liberties with the length of flower stalks to make the plant fit the picture. The result is a travesty of the plant, as in the figures of *Brunonia*, *Dipodium*, or *Drosera binata*. Much of the colour work is good and the figures of many of the Proteaceæ, Myrtaceæ and Epacridaceæ do give a real impression of the plants depicted. The blue tones have reproduced least satisfactorily; the figures of *Cheiranthra* and *Stenochilus* are quite misleading. For technical reasons in printing, the blocks on a plate have been grouped according to predominant colour, not affinity of the plants. This has led to a haphazard association of plants which, in some cases, might have been avoided. Each plate is accompanied by a popular description of the plants, their distribution in the different States and their flowering season. By some irritating mischance, only once does this account face the plate to which it refers. There are some inaccuracies: one in this section should be corrected. *Dipodium punctatum* is not a parasite, but a holosaprophytic orchid.

The second part gives a systematic account of the families with keys and a brief technical description of the species figured. As there have been inevitably so many omissions of the genera and species, these keys would be very misleading to a stranger trying to run down a plant. A visitor to the 'bush' near Sydney is as likely to find a *Leucopogon*, *Woollsia* or *Monotoca* as an *Epacris*; but there is no warning in the key to the Epacridaceæ that such genera exist. In any future edition, the derivation of the generic and specific names given in this part requires careful revision. One error cannot be passed. The Smith commemorated in the species *Zieria Smithii* was not "an Australian biochemist". Sir E. J. Smith deserves better of Australian botany than to be so forgotten.

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