

BOOK REVIEW

A Handbook to Plants in Victoria. Vol. 1. Ferns, Conifers and Monocotyledons. J. H. Willis. Melbourne University Press, 1962. Price 45s. 0d. net.

With the steadily increasing interest of Australians in their native flora the provision of up-to-date Floras covering different parts of the country is becoming an urgent necessity. Floras of most of the States of the Commonwealth have been published in the past but the great majority of them are now out of date and out of print. This is true of Victoria, Ewart's Flora having appeared over 30 years ago. There is therefore a great need for a new Flora embodying the research carried out during these intervening years and correcting the errors in the previous account. The work here reviewed is designed to fill this gap. It will be published in two volumes, the first one of which deals with the Ferns, Gymnosperms and Monocotyledons. The Dicotyledons will occupy a second larger volume.

The present work is intended to be more of a pocket handbook for use in the field than Ewart's account. The author, who is a member of the staff at the Melbourne Herbarium, has an extensive knowledge of Victorian plants, both in the field and in the herbarium. He has also been able to examine many important historical specimens in this country while acting as liaison officer at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. The Flora is in the form of a key, separate descriptions of the species being furnished only for species of genera which are monotypic in the State. In addition to synonymy, references to illustrations are included with each species and the distribution within Victoria and other parts of Australia is given.

Many British and European plants have been introduced into Australia, a large proportion of which have become quite naturalised, sometimes locally even replacing the native flora. The English botanist will encounter many old friends in the pages of this Flora; he will also find species which he has seen as introductions in this country but which are native in Australia, for example, *Juncus pallidus*.

Altogether Mr. Willis has provided a very useful book for the field worker in Victoria and adjacent parts of the neighbouring States, and its publication will no doubt stimulate further work on Victorian plants. It can be recommended to any plant lover visiting this State and wishing to name the plants which he encounters. The appearance of volume 2 will be looked forward to with interest.

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