

LECTURES AND EXCURSIONS

On Wednesday, July 4th, Miss Molesworth discussed salt marshes with us. She pointed out that Salt marshes were occupied by a variety of plants, some of which were specially adapted for life in localities where salt was present. These salt loving plants or halophytes (from the Gk hals, salt, and phuton, a plant) are frequently succulent, and although they live in moist or actually wet conditions, the excess of salt in the water creates a situation which is physiologically speaking "dry". Surrounded by water, they must nevertheless conserve their water supply, hence the succulence of such plants as Salicornia, Mesembryanthemum etc. Not all salt marsh plants are natives, the lecturer, who has visited such localities in many parts of N.Z. mentioned that the Stagshorn Plantain (Plantanus Coronopus) has become a turf-forming plant in both north and south.

The lecturer dealt at some length with the mangrove swamp, and discussed the peculiarities of the mangrove both as regards its germination and its rooting.

She also told us of sedges and other plants, which while not confined to the salt marshes are at home there. Lantern slides were shown, then the lecture concluded with a hearty vote of thanks to the lecturer.

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On Saturday, July 28th, the Society visited the salt marsh at Shore road, where members were able to identify typical marsh plants mentioned by Miss Molesworth in her lecture. Where conditions were too dry for the mangrove, we found at the tide's edge a number of characteristic plants - N.Z.'s only native primrose (Samolus repens) - not yet bearing its pretty white flowers; Selliera radicans, with its somewhat fleshy leaves and one-sided flowers (not yet out); Bachelor's Buttons (Cotula coronopifolia), and last but not least the glasswort, or marsh samphire (Salicornia australis). In the Old Country, the English glasswort is pickled and used in salads - perhaps some member would like to experiment and report back to the Society!

Sedges and rushes, marsh plants par excellence, abounded. The maritime rush (Juncus maritimus var. australiensis) grew

everywhere at the edge of the sand, oi oi, the jointed rush (Leptocarpus simplex) was common, and clumps of cutty grass (Mariscus ustulatus) were in evidence. Near the road we saw the maritime Scirpus (Scirpus maritime var. fluviatilis) though, as this is an annual only the withered remains of last year's plants were seen, while in the wet mud the tiny Scirpus cernuus was seen. Growing alongside of it was the longer leaved sedge-like arrow grass (Triglochin striata). The lovely golden brown tussocks of a native shore grass (Stipa teretifolia) were found on a small island, where also the sea-blite (Suaeda maritima) abounded.

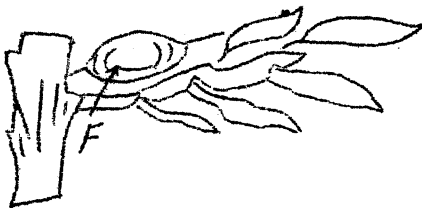
Some members were fortunate enough to find the little shore buttercup (Ranunculus acaulis) while the N.Z. celery (Apium prostratum) offered a challenge to adverturous cooks.

The afternoon concluded with a very sumptuous afternoon tea which was generously provided by our Treasurer, Mrs. B. Buddle, at her home in Burwood Crescent. Her hospitality was greatly appreciated by the members, and provided a warm and delightful conclusion to an interesting, if slightly chilly, afternoon.

In the absence of the leader, Miss Dingley, owing to an attack of influenza, the excursion was lead by Miss Crookes and Miss Molesworth.

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On Saturday, August 25th, the Society went seaweeding at Campbell's Bay. On the reef, which was easy of access, were many large pools, rich in species of brown seaweeds. We found abundance of Carpophyllum (two species) with its leathery leaf-like segments.

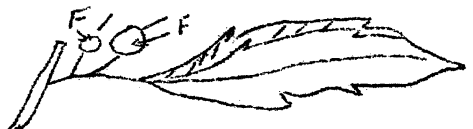


Cystophora retroflexa with its cylindrical segments (the young segments, by the way, are said to be very nice in salads).

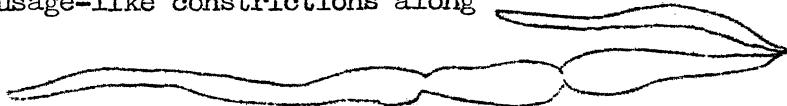


Sargassum sinclairii

with its segments, thin leaf-like and toothed.



Ecklonia radiata with its tough stalk and long strap-like segments, and the entirely different but intriguing little Halopteris hordacea, with its tufts of fine hair-like segments more suggestive of animal than of plant life. Common on the reef was the bladder like Colponemia sinuosa and the very similar, but much more leathery Leathesia difformis. Near the end of the reef, we noticed a luxuriant growth of Scytosiphon lomentarium with the quaint sausage-like constrictions along its segments.



The red seaweeds were represented more particularly by different Corallines, i.e. small seaweeds whose plant bodies are impregnated with lime, thus often stiff and brittle and of a whitish colour. Very unplant-like were the encrusting corallines, (Lithothamnion sp.) which form a pink crust spreading over considerable areas of the rock surface. Specimens of Gelidium (one of the edible gelatine forming seaweeds) and Plocamium, a beautiful species resembling crimson lace, were found washed up on the rocks.

The most striking green seaweeds were the dark irregularly shaped



Codium adhaerens spreading over the rocks, and the brilliant bright green Enteromorpha with its delicate tubular segments.



Some members also discovered Caulerpa sedoides with its collections of tiny grape-like structures - another weed for the salads!

After afternoon tea (for which hot water was kindly provided by Mrs. Taylor) some members repaired to the Domain.

The Domain consisted of typical scrub country and provided many characteristic examples of both rushes and sedges. Professor Wall, an expert on these matters, was able to help with identifications. The leader on the reef was Miss Crookes, and in the Domain Professor Wall.

(Line drawings diagramatic. F = float).