

On Friday, February 28th, the Society had an unexpected treat. Mr. Geo. Simpson happened to be in Auckland and was kind enough to give us - at extremely short notice - a most interesting lecture on Alpines, illustrated by lantern slides. As a photographer and a botanist, Mr. Simpson was able to provide entertainment of a high order.

It is possible to mention at random only a few of the beautiful or remarkable plants Mr. Simpson brought to our notice. It was interesting to see that little known plant of the rock slides Ranunculus scott-thomsonii, with its rosettes of queer greyish green fleshy leaves, that blend so beautifully with the background that it is possible to walk over the plant and not notice it. In the flowering season it is obvious enough, and it hybridizes freely with R. buchanani var multifidus common in its vicinity. Mr. Simpson showed both R. buchanani and var multifidus and the plants differ greatly in their form.

We saw splendid slides of Celmisias, Senecios and Ranunculi whose many and beautiful species contribute so richly to the beauties of our Alpine regions. In these species hybridism provides endless variety and interest to the botanist. Mr. Simpson mentioned, for instance, places where Senecio scozoneroides, with its large white flowers, hybridizes freely with the yellow flowered S. lyallii, producing hybrid flowers of every shade from the most delicate lemon to rich yellows.

Very lovely was a slide of that beautiful mountain primula, Ourisia sessilifolia with its rosettes of fleshy, very hairy leaves. Strange and beautiful was the mountain Cotula, C. atrata with its arresting blackish heads.

Many were interested to see a fine slide of Aciphylla scott-thomsonii whose validity as a true species botanists took a long time to recognise.

Of special interest were some remarkable pictures of the Marlborough limestone district, where in places the limestone formations penetrate high into the mountains. Among treasures flourishing on the limestone cliffs are that loveliest of our N.Z. shrub daisies, Pachystegia insignis and Hebe hulkeana with its long racemes of lilac flowers. Incidentally this lovely plant does excellently in our Auckland gardens, provided it is given its quota of lime. Other plants mentioned as growing in

limestone country were Haastia pulvinaris (on the slopes of Mt. Tapuaenuku) and Raoulia eximia (Mt. Torlesse). Unfortunately not all of Mr. Simpson's slides were a delight, some showed disfiguring damage wrought by erosion due to unwise burning etc. and the lecturer spoke about the havoc wrought among our Alpines by deer, goats etc. It is no wonder that our beautiful Ranunculus lyallii is now found in ^{only a} few places that are accessible to goats and deer. We were glad Mr. Simpson was able to obtain photos beyond the reach of these marauders or prior to their invasion.

The lecturer concluded with an exhibition of herbarium sheets illustrating hybridization. The evening finished with a very hearty vote of thanks to the lecturer. We hope Mr. Simpson will visit Auckland again someday!

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Miss Nancy Bamford has very kindly sent us this interesting book review which we publish with many thanks.

"Plant Life of the Pacific World" by E.D. Merrill, Arnold Professor of Botany, Harvard University (The Macmillan Company, New York - 23/6).

This is one of a series of books on the Pacific world intended for general reading, so its review by a general reader and not a trained botanist is surely permissible.

The title is misleading for it is very surprising to find that Australia and New Zealand are not included in the survey which describes chiefly Malaya and the islands of the western Pacific. The author lived for 22 years in the Philippines, and during that time named and described 4,000 new species of plants. His reserves of knowledge are obviously very deep but he makes his general descriptions of plant communities interesting without being too technical. The many drawings illustrate the species mentioned, all of which have to be given their botanical names only

Chapters are devoted to plants of the seashore, to the mangrove swamp, to parang areas of grassland and secondary forest and to the primary forests of the higher altitudes. The grasslands the author attributes largely to the agricultural activities of man, burning and cultivating. The weeds he regards as largely introduced and pantropic. The description of the secondary and