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 attibutes largely to the agricultural activities of man, burning and cultivating. The weeds he regards as largely intoduced and pantropic. The description of the secondary and

primary forests are particularly interesting, and it is the secondary forest which he likens to the popular conception of a "jungle" with twining vines of strangling figs and the predominance of one or two quickly established species of tree. He stresses the prevalence of endemism amongst the tropical trees and the absence in the dim interior of the primary forests of conspicuous flowers. He also describes the cyclic flowering of tropical plants where the seasons do not vary, the winged seeds of the "dipterocarp forests" and the co-operative symbiosis of ants with plants, in leaves, stems or roots. Mossy forests do not start until about 3,000 feet and it is in these higher regions that one finds genera known in the temperate countries of the Pacific.

One chapter is a discussion on plant distribution in the western Pacific and the theory is advocated that the evidence proves that emendations are necessary to Wallace's line, and that the spread of plants has been north and south, rather than east and west. No absolute line can be drawn between the continental shelves of Asia and Australia.

Other groups of islands, Hawaii, Aleutians and others are dealt with summarily, in almost note form, and their affinities with the western Pacific vegetation outlined. There is also comparison between the botanically uninteresting low islands and the examples of high islands, mountain peaks, in the Pacific. Local plant names are used as evidence of the spread of certain species and genera of plants.

The book concludes with historical notes on the botany of the western Pacific, a chapter which would have made a more convincing opening to the book than the almost playful references to false popular ideas of the poisonous upas tree and man devouring plants.

- Nancy Bamford.

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NEWS OF MEMBERS

Heartiest congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Watson Smith (née Lucy Cranwell) on the birth of their son!

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