

NEWS OF MEMBERS

We are very glad to welcome Miss Ruth de Berg back among us once more. Miss de Berg has been working at Leland Stanford University, but during her year abroad has managed to travel widely in the United States and Canada. We are glad to know that she has returned with many beautiful lantern slides!

We are rejoiced to hear that Miss Barbara Menzies has been appointed to the staff of Bedford College, London University, where she will be doing research work in mycology in addition to some teaching. Miss Menzies, while abroad has botanized over a wide field, and it is rather interesting to note that while on a botanical expedition to Lapland, she ran into one of our foundation members, Miss Lucy Moore.

We are sorry indeed to learn that one of our past presidents, Dr. Eric Godley, is leaving us. Dr. Godley has taken up a position at Lincoln College, Christchurch, where he will be able to continue his research work on wheat genetics. Dr. Godley took a keen interest in the Society and his pleasant personality and constant readiness to share his knowledge will be certainly missed by us. We wish him every success and happiness in his new occupation.

* * *

Our indefatigable secretary, Mrs. Hynes, has just returned from a visit to Great Barrier Island, and we much appreciate her kindness in providing this account of her botanical observations on this beautiful island:

"On the island of the Great Barrier the same kauri forest vegetation is found as that which is so familiar to us on the hills around Auckland city. The Barrier has, however, some additions, easily recognised even by an amateur botanist

and the satisfaction of meeting these strangers more than compensates for what is often a nine hour or more wretched sea journey. The island is very rugged, its highest point being Mt. Hobson, 2,000 ft. Most of the kauri has long since been milled, nevertheless, there are still many heavily clad bush ridges and valleys.

From Port Fitzroy side Mt. Hobson, the Mecca of all botanists, is almost hidden by formidable rocky outcrops. Access to it is made up the north fork and the initiated will beware of those better defined tracks which so easily beguile many far from their objective. But our track-finding worries were left behind when we made our climb in mid November, for Miss LeRoy, a local resident, was our capable guide, so at the correct points we crossed the river the prescribed seven times reaching the summit without any annoying delays.

The first plant to claim our notice was the beautiful fern, Loxsonia cunninghamii, now rare around Auckland. On this island it is plentiful, in places covering the banks to the exclusion of all else, and it remained our companion to the last few feet of the summit. With it was Sticherus flabellatus (syn Gleichenia flabellata) the "two storied" umbrella fern. This fern is particularly happy around the hot springs found a little further south.

Reaching higher ground we saw Nothopanax sinclairii a small but nicely shaped tree with brownish 3-foliate leaves. Weinmannia sylvicola was very common and Wintera axillaris and W. colorata (the red horopito) added yet another colour to the picture. Here, too, was the toa toa (Phyllacladus glaucus) the large celery leaved pine and the kawaka (Librocedrus plumosa) and the honeysuckle (Alseuosmia quercifolia) with its variable leaves.

Ixerba brexioides was seen at its best, for on the high ridges we could look down upon its large waxy white flowers, surely the loveliest of our flowering trees. For company it had its cousin Quintinia acutifolia sometimes called the Westland Quintinia. The beautiful hinau was in full flower and the aromatic leaved mairehau (Phebalium nudum) very abundant and a mass of white blossom.

Among the *Dacrydiums* was seen the red pine, our common rimu; the silver pine (*D. colenso*); the yellow silver pine (*D. intermedium*) and the monoao (*D. kirkii*) with its soft persistent juvenile stage quite familiar to us as remnants of this can still be seen at Oratia.

We found *Pittosporum cornifolium* and *P. kirkii*, usually epiphytic, both happily growing from the ground. *P. huttonianum* was frequently seen also a variety of *P. virgatum* x *Matthewsii*, *Metrosideros albiflora*, a rata with very large leaves and large white terminal flowers, and *Archeria racemosa* a member of the *Epacris* family with racemes of pretty bell shaped flowers.

Of special interest was *Coprosma dodonaeifolia* W.R.B. Oliver, quite a stranger as it grows only in this locality. Flower and seed was found thus sealing its identity. A slender shrub it belongs to the *C. lucida* group but it is very different in appearance owing to its thin leaves which do not have a shining upper surface and the absence of a yellowish colour which *C. lucida* always shows in drying.

Our giant moss *Dawsonia superba* and *Lycopodium laterale* were noticed in their usual damp habitat.

A sharp climb took us to the summit and with exclamations of joy we found that *Metrosideros parkinsoni* was in flower. This rata is not found between Nelson and Mt. Hobson, - to quote Cheeseman 'a remarkable instance of discontinuous distribution'. But there it grows, on and around the small dome, a compact shrub of only a few feet high easily recognised by the reddish brown leaves and bright crimson flowers some of which are terminal but some also spring from the branches below the leaves, an unusual feature. *Epacris pauciflora* var. *sinclairii* is also growing on the summit.

My orchid eye did not spy any strangers, perhaps our walks were too hurried. Of the ground orchids we met *Caladenia carnica* as dainty as the star on a fairy's wand, the *Thelymitras* just waiting for a few sunny days to show their colour and *Orthoceras strictum* with its brown queerly shaped flowers.

Not to be overlooked was Chiloglottis cornuta with its green flower and two broad leaves close to the ground. Corybas macranthus with its silver backed leaves, purple flowers with long 'whiskers' was abundant.

Reported only from the Poor Knights and Great Barrier Is. is yet another ^{stranger} Sinclair's tea tree. Somewhat sparse on Mt. Hobson it is plentiful on the tableland below Mt. Young. Although growing in association with the ordinary manuka it is closely related to the kanuka, white tea tree. Its habit differs, sometimes it is quite prostrate spreading over the ground, or it reaches a height of 3 - 4 feet. Silky hairs give the leaves a grey appearance and the tapering branches are bent down with their heavy loads of blossoms.

Another rare species growing in the same area is Olearia allomii a short thick shrub with compact heads of large white flowers, a very handsome plant.

Over a large area of this tableland the vegetation is composed of only the two tea trees and the Olearia. It would be interesting to know what has taken place here since the late T.Kirk made his botanical survey in 1867. Has the balance between Leptospermum scoparium and L.sinclairii been maintained at the same level and why is L.sinclairii confined to one half only of the tableland, the southern slope? Is the answer tied up with the ryholite outcrop which is a geographical feature of the centre of the island?"

* * *