

minds could absorb no more. The only answer is the tin of small change already placed in my drawer and labelled "Mt. Arthur Return Fund".

A TRIP TO NORTH-WEST NELSON

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When we arrived at the Cobb, finishing touches were being made at the Dam, workers were being drafted elsewhere and buildings were being demolished, but we were fortunate in having a hut placed at our disposal. The Cobb Valley extends 19 miles back to Lake Cobb, and the lake behind the Dam is 5 miles long.

The vegetation along the lower levels of the Valley is quite interesting. There I found Traversii baccharoides, easily mistaken for a Senecio, so great is the resemblance. The bog lily, Chrysobactron hookeri is abundant and also Arthropodium candidum, the dainty little sister of the rengarenga lily. Olearia virgata was a mass of white bloom, its fragrant scent noticeable long before we came to the trees. Botrychium australe was common under the tall teatree scrub, and Clematis australis, so attractive in both flower and seed, adorned the harsh shrubs of Pittosporum divaricatum and Aristotelia fruticosa.

One enjoyable day was spent in walking back down the road and along to the Asbestos mine. The only exciting find was Pittosporum dallii, and in view of our subsequent movements that day would have been spent more profitably on the Cobb Ridge.

Then an easy morning's-walk took us through the stunted beech forest to Lake Sylvester, 4,300 ft., where we spent two nights. Here in the open tussock the most striking plant was Celmisia traversii. The stems and bracts are covered with a rich brown tomentum, as is the back of the leaves, while the petiole and mid-rib is dark purple. We were enraptured with the abundance of Gentians, which were then, in late January, flowering at their best. The silvery leaves of Astelia cockaynei, glistening in the sun, made a pleasant contrast to the uniform colouring of the tussock grasses. In exposed places large matted patches of two cudweeds would catch the eye. These were Gnaphalium traversii var. mackaya, and G. collinum, the whole plants being covered in white cottony wool. Large rocks would be covered with the hard interlaced branches of the porcupine plant, Hymenantha dentata var. angustifolia. We came across one small colony of vegetable sheep. It was not in flower and then looked like cushions of blue-green velvet. The dainty fern, Cystopteris fragilis was found in crevices of rocky outcrops as was Schizaelema haastii.

We climbed Iron Hill, 5,500 ft. and from there looked across to the Lockett Range with Lake Lockett in the foreground. The summit ridge produced the usual alpinines. Haastii sinclairii, Helichrysum microphyllum, Drapetes, Hebe ciliolata syn H. gilliesiana, etc. One plant

new to us was Senecio adamsii, a small shrub, the inch long leaves covered in white tomentum except for the prominent dark mid-rib, and surely the most viscid plant I have ever touched.

Returning to the Cobb we decided to go out via the Flora Track, which runs over the Mt. Arthur Range. We were told that it was a three day trip. So armed with a map, and a strong hope that an adverse weather report would be wrong, we followed the lake for four or five miles often pushing our way through high teatree scrub. Then we made a steep climb straight up out of the Cobb Valley, up through the limit of the beech forest and on to the tussock plateau which leads up to Mt. Peel. It was now past mid-day and behind us the Cobb was shrouded in mist and before us a curtain of mist rose and fell on Mt. Peel. Later we negotiated with care the steep drop down to the valley near Lake Peel and slowly toiled up to the 5,00 ft. level on the opposite side. Once again we were amongst a different flora. It was on the Mt. Peel ridge that we first saw Celmisia dallii, a handsome daisy, now mostly spent, but still very noticeable by the large bracts on the stem and around the head. We dared not linger as the mist was overtaking us, so hurrying over scree and then tussock we reached Balloon Hut just before visibility was blotted out.

The next day started fine and with the lovely Gentians and Celmisia dallii to cheer us on our way we kept to the tableland, lunching at Salisbury hut. From there we followed the track to the Flora hut. This delightful old track has been cut out of a mountain gorge and for nine miles it gently winds up and down with the river rushing, sometimes far, sometimes close, below. Prior to the Cobb Road being opened this track was used by the settlers to take their cattle to graze on the Cobb river flats. The tall trees of the mixed forest, Beech, Rimu, Totara, Quintinnia, Pokaka, etc. were a change from the pure beech of the higher altitudes.

The Flora Hut was a welcome sight and it was especially cheering to find in residence three of our Arthur's Pass party, and to hear that they had just climbed Mt. Arthur.

Next morning another nine miles out to the road was done in good time, steady rain discouraging any ideas of botanising, but we were fortunate enough to spy the wee Asplenium trichomanes along the track.

Looking back we realise that so long as there is good visibility on Mt. Peel that this is not a difficult trip but that an extra day is needed to gain a better knowledge of the plants, hence our resolution 'Return we must'.

Miss Joan Dingley's enthusiasm often leads her to prowl in damp and chilly woods in winter where "down from your heaven or up from your mould" develops those odd shaped plants sometimes noisome, sometimes beautiful, so dear to her mycological heart. We on our part are glad to digest in comfort some results of her observations.

But, it might be said, why not collect fungi in spring or summer?