

Our thanks to Mr. Farnell, who led the excursion to Woodcocks for a most interesting account of a very pleasant trip.

Recently some 38 optimistic members set out on a botanising and sight-seeing trip in the lower North and they were not disappointed. First stop was to see "Simpson's" Kauri tree near Warkworth. Of course, it is rather puny compared with the Waipoua forest giants, but nevertheless well worth seeing. The tape gave it a girth of 31 feet some 6 feet above ground level and its magnificent head approx. 120 feet in diameter N. to S. Mr. A.D. Mead, who we were very pleased to see in the party and who of course really knows his Kauri trees, remarked on the unusual or almost unique amount of taper in the lower 6 or 8 feet of the barrel. Mr. Farnell our leader, gave us an interesting account of the Rev. Robt. McKinney who first saved this tree and of the nearby once famous Morrison's orchard and nursery at Red Bluff; but probably what was most interesting, he showed us the minute female flowers of the Miro, that seemingly none of the party had ever seen before. Strangely, as members were gathering and examining these specimens, a native pigeon flew by, as if to protest at the loss of a future meal.

With some wet and muddy boots we journeyed on to Woodcocks, where a descendent of the original settler of that name met us to escort the party through his bush. This is a really amazing patch of regeneration and rather difficult to understand, entirely different from what we find in our Waitakeres - age 50-100 years? No sign whatever of an older generation, Rimu outstandingly dominant tree, Kauri only three seen, Kauri grass abundant, Kawaka most plentiful and remarkably dominant as seedlings on forest floor of moss, overhead canopy rather heavy owing to density of tree population, floor rather sparsely covered and very notable scarcity of undergrowth. Our leader explained these peculiar characteristics as the result of damage done by cattle some years ago, from which the area is now recovering.

Another very noteworthy find here, such as we had not seen before was Thesipteris tannensis growing in almost unbelievable profusion on several Cyathea dealbata ferns, while adjacent similar ferns were entirely destitute of this queer ancient plant. Our sojourn here was much too short, as usual one would have loved to have had double the time to spend in such an interesting area.

Before long the bus was climbing the East-West divide with the railway line and tunnel entrance looking ridiculously small away in the valley below. Thence we followed the Araparera Stream to the Kaipara Harbour immediately South of Glorit, stopping on the way to examine a most ancient dilapidated Turepo (Paratrophis microphylla) probably larger and older than any that members had previously seen. As usual its inflorescences were diseased and showed those peculiar

characteristic bunches of abortive growths which, when examined under the glass show the peduncle continuing to grow and divide to form those close panicles without the vestige of a flower. The healthy inflorescence is a spike only about half an inch long which can easily be overlooked unless carefully searched for.

Two farms owned by Mr. Neil Barr extensively planted with trees and shelter belts and beautifully kept, contrasted sharply with neighbouring neglected properties and Maori farms.

Having passed through the Maori settlement of Kakanui with its meeting house and "loud" signs we came to Makarau with its deep meandering river and seemingly endless tidal flats and mangroves. Less than a mile further on we stopped on the roadside to visit quite a surprising spot, Waitangi Falls. In this case Falls are plural, for there are six of them, quite pretty, but only the top one is of any size. It was unfortunate that only a few of the party could get across the second stream where in spite of severe damage by stock we found Asplenium bulbiferum var. tripinnatum and hanging over the falls was Metrosideros carminea. Adiantum diaphanum also grows but shortage of time precluded a search for it.

On returning to the bus the weather closed down and we realized how fortunate we had been all day, however, we missed the extensive views of the lower half of the Kaipara Harbour which could have been seen from hereabouts. South of Kaukapakapa on the tidal flats were several acres of Cotula coronopifolia in full bloom, appearing in such a mass as to resemble fields of buttercups.

Arriving back in town soon after 5.30 p.m. all seemed to agree that they had had a most interesting and successful day.

ART AND NATURE

On September 3rd., the usual monthly meeting took a rather different form. It was held at the Art Gallery and the Director, Mr. P.A. Tomory, was the lecturer. This time the subject was Art instead of Botany. With the aid of the epidiascope reproductions of paintings from very early times up to the present day were projected on to the screen and showed how nature had gradually been introduced into pictures by the old masters, until now the present day modern painters use nature as the subject matter of their paintings. Thanks are due to Mr. Tomory for this interesting lecture.

Ruth Coyle.