

AUCKLAND BOTANICAL SOCIETY

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On the cover of our timetable for the year, which goes to all our members, included in the aims of our Society it is stated that it exists "especially for the appreciation and protection of our native flora."

I wonder if all our members who must have read these words many times have appreciated their full significance. Undoubtedly our Society has a fine record as regards scenery preservation - Walker Bush, Smith Bush, Rangitoto, Kirk Bush, the Botanical Block - as regards all these places the Society has done admirable work. But when we have worked for the preservation of native trees and plants en masse, do our responsibilities end there?

We have, I think, a further responsibility, one which may seem trivial at first, but which is of great importance in the long run, namely that of protecting the individual plant.

Round about Auckland grow a number of rare plants and trees, but if in a moment of misguided enthusiasm, such plants or seedlings therefrom are dug up and removed, in due course still another rarity will disappear, and "the place thereof know it no more". Some years ago, Lucy Cranwell, then at the Museum, and the Auckland Botanical Society were instrumental in saving a fine specimen of manoa (Dacrydium kirkii) in the Titirangi area. There are not many specimens of this fine tree with its beautiful juvenile foliage to be found on the ranges. But there is little use in preserving parent trees if seedlings come to grief. I am convinced that most people who indulge in what might be called "predatory practices" do so from sheer thoughtlessness. "There were plenty there", they say "and I only took one". I remember in the days of my youth the young were often treated to pungent proverbs, one being "Just once more is the devil's best plea". Peculiarly irritating on occasion but one sees the point.

A few years ago, a friend of mine from England, a temporary member of our Society, spoke sadly of England's disappearing wild

flowers. "Near my home was a most lovely spot, beautiful in spring with masses of wild primroses. I revisited the place after some years in London and could scarcely find a plant. I went home raging, demanding who had taken them? I was told 'Oh no one in particular, just one person and another kept taking them, they said there were plenty!'"

We have no primroses near Auckland, but we have rare orchids, such as Pterostylis barbata, or ferns such as Loxom cunninghamii or Doodia caudata and in regard to all botanical rarities of any species we have a responsibility concerning which, if I may quote another pungent proverb, "Example is better than precept". It is, I think, of great importance that a society such as ours should set a very high standard where all matters of plant protection are concerned.

In this connection I might mention a rather sad experience that befell me a few months ago. Visiting a very beautiful spot of considerable botanical interest, and thinking of it in terms of a future botanical excursion, I learned that botanists were not allowed on the property as they were liable to damage the bush. Actually I do not think our own Society was guilty in this matter as I do not imagine the owners are at all familiar with the various groups in Auckland that might be interested in nature study - for all I know the trouble might have been caused by some group of private individuals who had visited the area to "study the bush". But whoever was at fault it is not surprising that the property owners are not enthusiastic about people who "study" plants by doing them damage nor that this delightful area is now strictly private.

I have spoken of this matter at some length because I consider it a vital one, and I put these considerations before members believing that their sympathy and co-operation is assured.

Editor.

Our untiring friend, Mrs. Hynes, has very kindly forwarded an account of a very exciting Easter trip to the Kaimanawas. By all accounts the going was very strenuous and it is good to have reliable reports from these difficult places.

KAIMANAWAS

Easter, 1959

This year the Wellington Botanical Society's Easter trip was into the Kaimanawa Range on the eastern side of the Volcanic Plateau, and I gladly accepted the opportunity to join them.

Linking up with the party at Taihape early on Good Friday morning I continued with them to the Desert Road. Here we alighted