

and a long, well-laden cavalcade set off along the track which leads through the tussock to the Waipahiki River, about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 miles. The track ends with a steep drop to the river where base camp was made. Here in the tea tree scrub some of the children found magnificent specimens of Botrychium australis, the Parsley fern, Corokia cotoneaster was also found, a very scarce plant in that locality.

I was interested to see Schizeilema colensoi, a small herb only an inch or so high, literally covering the ground under the beech trees. This belongs to the Umbelliferae family and its dainty carrot-like flowering heads will lead to its identity. Two other species of this genus were found: S. nitens on the river flats and an un-named species at the bush limit on Patutu. Generally speaking I find that members of our Society are inclined to overlook the small herbs when out on trips, especially if the flowers are not showy whereas an appreciation of them would add spice to the day's adventure.

Later in the afternoon a good number shouldered packs once again to travel up the river. The exceptional heavy rainfall early in the year had washed away much of the grassy flats but still many a wee plant was found to halt our steps.

After many crossings we camped for the night. This advance camp enabled us to take our time next morning in the climb up Patutu, 5,600 ft., one of the highest points in the Kaimanawas. The alpine meadow was reached at mid-day and the final camp made just above the bush line at c. 4,600 ft. The afternoon was spent in botanising up to the summit, unfortunately mountain mist swirled all around us and it was considered inadvisable to go further on as had been planned.

It seems that the plants of the Kaimanawas are akin to those of the Ruahines so it was not surprising to find several plants there which are missing from the Tongariro National Park area, such as Senecio lagopus, Phyllache colensoi, one of the cushion plants, Myosotis australis, several Epilobiums etc. Also Leucogenes Tecontopodium, the North Island edelweiss, is more at home on the slates of Patutu, in fact is the dominant plant in places, whereas it is found only in one small spot on Mt. Hauhangatahi in Tongariro National Park.

Late afternoon saw us all back at base camp when the weather really deteriorated and the trek out to the Desert Road next morning was taken under unpleasant conditions. However, in spite of a somewhat damp ending, to me the trip had been a rich experience. Mr. A.P. Druce was the leader and no words could do justice to his abilities as camp organiser and botanical adviser.

P. Hynes.

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(I was greatly interested to read Mrs. Hynes' account of Schizeilema colensoi. This rare plant has not been recorded since Colenso found it over a hundred years ago on crags on Titiokura, Hawkes Bay - it must have been a surprise to find it covering the ground in quantity. The parsley family is well represented in

New Zealand (14 genera and about 78 spp) particularly in alpine and sub-alpine regions, varying from the great spaniards (species of *Aciphylla*) to little herbs like *Schizeilema*. *Schizeilema* is derived from the Greek schizein, to split or cleave and eiluma, cover clothing, seemingly an allusion to the 3-5 fid involucral covering the umbel in *S. trifoliatum*. The genus includes 13 species, 10 of which are endemic, the other three extending to Victoria, Patagonia and the Falkland Islands. *S. nitens* has not been reported from the North Island. We look forward to hearing from Mrs. Hynes the identity of the third species collected. For those interested there is an excellent drawing of *S. haastii*, figured under the name *Azorella Haastii* in Cheeseman's Illustrations to the New Flora, (Vol.I, plate 59). Ed.) (Records according to Cheeseman).

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We are indebted to one of our junior members, David Given of Nelson, for the following record of *Gastrodia cunninghamii*.

#### AN UNUSUAL OCCURRENCE OF GASTRODIA CUNNINGHAMII HOOKER

While camping on the banks of the Anatoki River near Takaka in the Nelson district during January 1959, I noticed a number of *Gastrodia cunninghamii* plants growing under what were to me, unusual conditions.

The plants were growing in alluvial soil on the river bank close to the trunks of willows. The nearest native forest area was some miles distant and the only tree other than willows in the vicinity was a solitary plum. It is quite certain that if, as is supposed, *Gastrodia* is an obligatory root parasite, then the willows must have been the host plants for this community.

A total of 80 flower spikes was counted along less than a chain of river bank but it is likely that the total population in the area was considerably greater than this.

It would be interesting to know of other records of this orchid associated with exotic trees and in such unusually large numbers.

D.R. Given.

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(I hope any members having relevant information will forward it. *G. cunninghamii* is the commonest of our *Gastrodias*, of which we have three species. It can scarcely be described as beautiful. It is leafless and the many flowers of its long peduncle are brownish-white. It stores its ill-gotten gains in a large starchy tuberous root, at one time eaten by the Maoris, hence the name "Maori potato". Ed.)