

In a letter to the Editor he remarked:

"I'll try to put down the things that gave me the greatest pleasure on the trip. The first was to see the huge columnar cacti at Santiago in the latitude of our North Cape. And further to see the stems decorated by bunches of red fruit of the parasite Phrygilanthus aphyllus. I saw the south Chilean sophora growing in only two localities as my expedition only collected near the northern extremity of its range. But I obtained specimens and above all, seed, from which I have five month old seedlings growing alongside some of our own kowhais of similar age. The kowhai there overhangs the streams just as it may do with us. In the same district I saw the South Chilean species of Coriaria which is very like the species we were taught to call C. ruscifolia. In Southern Chile, however much the plants may remind one of home, one can't escape the fact that to the north the land stretches uninterruptedly to the tropics of the New World. While looking at the kowhais I saw tiny green humming-birds visiting the flowers. And I saw groves of Nothofagus dombeyi (in almost the same latitude as Blenheim) alive with flocks of green noisy parrots.

Another curious assemblage was a Nothofagus nitida forest with an undergrowth of almost pure samoo whicket.

Between 41° and 48° in Southern Chile the forest is of two main kinds. The Eucryphia-Weinmannia-Laurelia forest is equivalent to our Podocarp-dicotylous forest, and there is also Nothofagus forsteri. This latter type increases in importance as 48° South is approached, and N. dombeyi is the dominant tree. South of 48° the country becomes desolate with much bare rock and bog, and with only patches of N. betuloides forest in sheltered gullies or along the shore.

There the bogs are the most fascinating association of plants. The genera here are just those found in New Zealand - cushion bogs Astelia pumilo, Donatia fascicularis, Gamardia australis, Oreobolus obtusangulus, sometimes Phyllachne colensoi, Drosera uniflora and Dacrydium fonckii. Here, if there exists such a thing, is a group of genera which could be imagined to have existed on the fringe of the Antarctic in just such conditions as we see them growing now. There is one puzzle however - Donatia does not occur in our own sub-antarctic islands.

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Mr. A.D. Mead, who earlier in the year gave us a talk with colour slides, of his Christmas trip to the Ruahine Range, supplies the following note of the botany of the area.

The range was approached from the west via the valley of the Kawatau River, a tributary of the Rangitikei, and the party was under the leadership of Mr. A.P. Druce of Wellington, who was engaged on a listing of the complete flora of the Ruahines.

The range has a steep western slope from a base at 2000 feet above sea to 4000 feet, above which the slope eases into rolling ridges up to the highest point of 5687 feet. This flank of the range is intersected by the profound gorges of the Kawatau and its tributaries.

Mixed forest, from which most of the heavy rimu, matai and totara have been removed for milling, covers the lower flank of the range up to 3000 feet, with beech (Nothofagus fusca and N. solandri) along the stream margins. At 3000 feet one enters an almost pure stand of red beech (N. fusca), and on one of the faces climbed there was a dense floor carpet of Dicksonia lanata. At 3700 feet the forest changes suddenly to Librocedus bidwillii, with some Dacrydium biforme. Above this is a narrow zone of leatherwood (Olearia colensoi) and mountain flax, and one comes out suddenly into open snowgrass (Danthonia flavescens) at 4100 feet.

The vast fields of alpine flowers which so thrilled Colenso are no more, owing to the ravages of deer; the following list while far from complete illustrates what can readily be found alongside the track from the bush-line to the summit about this time of the year.

<u>Senecio bidwillii</u>	:	<u>Hebe astoni</u>
<u>Bulbinella hookeri</u> (in flower)	:	<u>Whipcord hebe</u>
<u>Coprosma cheesemani</u>	:	<u>Caltha novae-zealandiae</u>
<u>C. pumila</u> (orange berry)	:	<u>Drapetes dieffenbachii</u>
<u>Astelia linearis</u> (large red berry)	:	<u>Anistome insignis</u>
<u>Senecio logopus</u>	:	<u>Pimilea buxifolia</u>
<u>Phyllachne colensoi</u> (cushion plant)	:	<u>Ranunculus insignis</u> (in flower) on steep slope inaccessible to deer.
<u>Leucogenes leontopodium</u> (eidelwiss)	:	
<u>Celmesia spectabilis</u> (in flower)	:	
<u>Celmesia glandulosa</u>	:	<u>Celmesia incana</u>

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Our thanks to Mr. Mead for his informative account of his trip.

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