

retraced our journey once more.

Twelve miles from Collingwood situated beside the Aorere river is a small village called Bainham. We crossed the river by the suspension bridge and explored the river bank. There, several beeches supported masses of mistletoe, Elytranthe colensoi and the pale pink climbing ratas, Metrosideros diffusa (Forst) W.R. Oliv., syn M. hypericifolia were flowering heavily. Hebe leiophylla was found growing in the rocks on the river bed and masses of heavily flowering Kanukas, Leptospermum ericoides grew in that area.

Three days in the Collingwood and Takaka areas were not sufficient for detailed botanical exploration and no doubt we missed many plants of interest. However, a little more was added to our store of impressions gathered on an even more rushed visit made six years earlier.

K. Wood.

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#### ON THE SLOPES OF PIRONGIA

It would have been pleasant to spend more than the few hours available on Mount Pirongia. As it was we found much to interest wandering up a spur on the northern side. We entered the bush from Mr. Firth's farm at a height of about 600 ft., and wandered up to a height of about 1500 ft. Some of the larger trees had been milled from the lower part of the bush, but Mr. Firth had carefully fenced the area so it was protected from marauding cattle, and Mr. A.C. Caldwell who was our guide tells me that as a consequence the bush has improved greatly since. Would that all farm owners were so far-sighted!

Owing to the previous milling there were numerous log-runs in this part of the bush bordered by a luxuriant growth of Histopteris incisa and Pteris scaberula. The Histopteris was taller than is usual on the Waitakeres, being well over my head, while I thought the Paesia distinctly outside. I measured a typical frond from one clump and found it well over four feet six inches long. Here and there among these typical roadside ferns were clumps of Hypolepis rugosula, a fern which I have not myself collected on the Waitakeres, though Katie Wood, who accompanied us has found a clump here and there. The Parsley Fern, Botrychium australe var. millefolium had been observed by Mr. Gudex, near the entrance to the bush, but we were not able to locate it.

We soon passed through the more open part of the bush and entered the reserve proper. Here as we ascended the character of the bush altered. Though there was still little undergrowth, the

ground became carpeted with Mecodium demissum and somewhat higher also with Cardiomanes reniforme and Meringium multifidum.

The main object of my visit was to find Microsorium novae-zelandiae, which I had not previously collected. At a certain point of the track Mr. Caldwell called a halt, and we all separated to search that particular area. Eventually we found about six clumps. The thick covering of beautiful golden-brown chaffy scales on the rhizome at once separates this fern from the closely related Microsorium diversifolium whose green rhizome is spotted with black flattened scales. The stipe is also very much longer in proportion to the frond which is thinner in texture, wilting rather quickly after picking. While seeking the M. novae-zelandiae, it was pleasant to encounter a few plants of Paterson's Blechnum (Blechnum patersoni) though we did not find B. vulcanicum which also grows on the mountain.

As mentioned the "filmies" on this part of the mountain were plentiful but there were not a great many species, - Hymenophyllum revolutum, Polyphlebium venosum, Mecodium dilatatum, M. sanguinolentum a little Mecodium flabellatum and M. rarum. Mr. Caldwell provided mouth-watering accounts of M. pulcherrimum three feet long to be found in the deep gullies, and doubtless such places would provide many treasures.

A "tree-fern" found plentifully in one area was Dicksonia lanata, which is not strictly speaking a tree-fern on Pirongia; since it is only from Whangarei northwards that it forms a short trunk. However, we found some very fine specimens, and the triangular shape of the frond and the great length of the stipe at once distinguish it from our other two species of Dicksonia. Like the familiar Wheki (Dicksonia squarrosa) it has stoloniferous habits and in the Kauri forest south of Russell I met it in quantity cascading most attractively down hillsides.

That fine climber Rumohra adiantiforme was abundant, not only on trees and fallen logs but also on clumps of humus and I was delighted with the size and beauty of its fronds.

Other ferns met were those seen commonly in the Auckland forests, Asplenium lucidum, A. bulbiferum, A. falcatum and A. flaccidum, Blechnum filiforme, Microsorium scandens, Comb Fern (Ctenopteris heterophylla) Grammitis billardieri, Anarthropteris dictyopteris and Pyrossia serpens, the common local Blechnums, Cyatheas, etc.

Apart altogether from ferns the bush was delightful though little was noted not seen about Auckland. Katie Wood collected Coprosma foetidissima and a small tree was seen which we took for C. tenuicaulis, though in the absence of flowers and fruit the identification was tentative. Pseudowintera colorata was seen and Ixerba and Quintinia found as with us above about the 1000 ft. mark.

Pukatea (Laurelia novae-zelandiae) was extremely common and I was impressed by the veritable nurseries of its seedlings. Tawa and Kohekohe were trees of great size and beauty.

The coming of rain slightly shortened our all too short day, but the few hours spent were most rewarding, although the thought of those ferny gullies was a little tantalising. Still perhaps "some other time...."

M. Crookes.

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Vertical banks by the roadside often provide an intriguing weed population but one does not expect to collect much in the way of ferns from them. Recently in a built-up area in Mt. Eden I noted on such a bank three species of young tree-ferns, Dicksonia squarrosa, Cyathea dealbata and C. medullaris. Adiantum sp. (probably affine, but it was out of reach) Doodia media, Pteridium esculentum, Blechnum procerum and Paesia scaberula. The ferns would not survive very long I imagine. Obviously the tree-ferns would not be able to develop much and most of the others would soon be submerged by large and aggressive weeds though I imagine the bracken may hold its own. It will be interesting to see what happens.

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✓ We welcome a most interesting communication from Clevedon. Our thanks are due both to Mr. N. Potts for his information and to Mr. McKenzie for forwarding it.

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Dear Miss Crookes,

Re "The Distributional Overlap of Weinmannia sylvicola and Weinmannia racemosa", Quarterly News Letter, Vol.15, No.3, Aug.1958

Mr. Norman Potts of Opotiki has replied as follows:

"Here we have only Weinmannia racemosa. I have made sorties into the Urewera and do not know it well, being more familiar with the volcanic plateau and am intimately acquainted with the vegetation between Ohiwa and Te Kaha and our hinterland here (for miles south). I have never met with Weinmannia sylvicola and do not think it is here. Weinmannia racemosa is not plentiful at low elevations but is abundant on high cold gloomy ridges, old trig stations and miserable places of the sort. A friend (part Maori) tells me (the name) "Kamahi" is not used in this district, only "Tawhero". I have not investigated this point but have always heard of it as "Tawhero". "