

The editor has great pleasure in drawing the attention of members to the latest Handbook published by the Auckland War Memorial Museum. This is:

New Zealand Medicinal Plants by S.G. Brooker and R.C. Cooper  
(Price 15/-)

The book consists of forty-six quarto pages, plus twelve beautiful plates reproduced from the Banks and Solander illustrations in the Museum Library.

Into this comparatively small space, however, the authors have condensed a remarkable amount of recondite information. The publications that have been ransacked come from many sources, apart from standard botanical and chemical works and authorities on the Maori, many old records by early missionaries and travellers have been studied.

With each plant discussed the botanical and Maori name is given, there are brief botanical notes, then the medical use (or uses) is noted with (frequently) references to related pharmacology and chemistry. The authors have cast their net wide and the six and a half pages of references is itself a work of value.

It would be pleasant to add that the book would enable one to compile a "native medicine chest" suitable for the out of the way bach, but the authors state that they "cannot accept responsibility for the popular remedies mentioned" and they "stress the advisability of using orthodox medical services in preference to these fascinating and dubious specifics."

In spite of the solemnity of the subject the book is not without its human touches. The editor rejoiced in the quotation from Cook's Diary (April 13th, 1769) in regard to Sour Kroutt (Tetragonia expansa).

"The Sour Kroutt the men at first would not eat it until I put it in practice - a method I never knew once to fail with seamen - and this was to have some of it dressed every day for the cabin table, and permitted all the officers without exception to make use of it, and left it to the option of the men either to take as much as they pleased or none at all; but this practice <sup>was</sup> not continued above a week before I found it necessary to put everyone on board on an allowance."

It remains only to wish this admirable Handbook the success it deserves.