

He was a delightful companion on a ramble. It was little that escaped his searching eye. From his background in the humanities often came fascinating scraps of information. He was moreover well supplied with diverting anecdotes.

His use of the apt word often delighted one. I remember he once said, commenting on the activities of some small birds "The movements of birds are so neat," a comment I have often remembered when watching birds.

He was always ready to give freely of his knowledge. He would have heartily agreed with Pope's saying that "The worst avarice is that of sense." His knowledge was passed on to a wide public, but it was given just as readily to the most humble private enquirer. I am sure that in the early days of our society, when he was with us on a ramble our members all appreciated this, and we all felt deprived when he returned to Christchurch.

But he left something behind him. Our society as a whole was richer for his sojourn with us, and this was especially so for those of us who knew him best.

Marguerite Crookes.

SOME IMPORTANT BOTANICAL WORKS BY PROF. A. WALL

The Botany of Christchurch	Christchurch Revised edition 1953
The Flora of Mount Cook	Christchurch 1925
Some Problems of Distribution of Indigenous Plants in N.Z.	T.N.Z.I. 57 (pp 94-105) 1926
The Botany of Auckland (with L.M. Cranwell)	Auckland Ed.2. 1943

NEW PLANT RECORDS?

KING FERN and KAURI

I would like to start some discussion to which all can contribute - the distribution of some of our plants - so please let me have your notes. I will start the ball rolling with two of our best known, and amongst our most ancient plants - the King fern (Marattia salicina) and the Kauri.

Continued:-

Recently, several sightings of the King fern have come to my notice which may not be generally known - indeed it is a magnificent plant which we must protect, and I am therefore giving general localities only (and would expect others to do the same). Much of the distribution of this fern has been recorded for the western parts of the North Island. It is therefore interesting to note that it thrives in the Bay of Plenty - in at least three localities - near Te Puke, near Whakatane (no doubt Mr Potts knows of more there) and in the head of the Kaituna River. One cannot of course rule out the possibility that it was planted at one time by the Maoris, as it was often prized by them as a food and they have several names for it - "para" being the best known. The massive starchy rhizomes were used. Two of these colonies at least occur in very natural looking spots and are in rich sheltered soils.

The King fern is also still known from several gullies in the Coromandel Range in the vicinity of Thames, though pigs are said to like it and could account for its disappearance in places - besides avid fern-growers of course! One spot in the Waitakeres is known to some of our members as the "Valley of a Thousand King Ferns," but this must be about the only colony remaining there.

The kauri is similarly more widespread than is generally known, and the present limits of its southern distribution have received much attention, in view of its much more southerly distribution in warmer times, being pushed north in the ice-age. It cannot now compete with the much stronger broadleaf trees, but it does however occur isolated amongst them as far south as the Mamakus, near Rotorua, where the Forest Service have mapped its distribution. Local people also report seeing it in the hills behind Te Puke, and it may at one time have occurred near Maketu, where Maori place-names mention it. On the west of course it occurs as far south as the Kawhia area.

As for altitudinal limits the record must surely be on Mount Moehau, at the tip of the Coromandel Peninsula, where Lucy Cranwell noted it at a maximum of 810 metres (say 2500 feet) - though seldom attaining much height in such an exposed setting. It does show however how it is able to withstand severe conditions in this refuge, on which I hope to write later. I refer you to her paper in the N.Z. Journal of Science and Technology (Vol. XVIII, No.6, pp.531-43, 1936) on Kauri in montane forest on Te Moehau.

A yarn with the old kauri bushmen can lead to a lot of information - which will be lost if not recorded now. I am presently looking at the history of kauri on the Coromandels, and would appreciate any notes or references members may have, including any botanical notes also. The efforts of such botanists as Kirk, Adams, Townson, Hall and Petrie in these ranges is difficult to match today - though the changes have been great in the vegetation since they were active.

J.H.