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OUTINGS

ORERE

20th June.

A.D. Mead.

The Oরে River flows into the Firth of Thames on the bend of the coast where the Waiheke Channel joins the Firth. To reach the mouth of the stream the road goes through Clevedon and follows the south coast of Waiheke Channel to Kawakawa Bay, where it turns inland, crosses a saddle with a substantial bush remnant, to the Oরে Valley which it follows down to the coast. The valley ends in a gravel terrace about 50 feet above sea level, on which are a number of handsome Olearia albida trees. This species is confined to the northern half of the North Island and is coastal and of local distribution. Its leaves are greyish-green on the upper side, giving the tree its light coloured appearance whence its specific name (albida, whitish). A mangleo among these was well covered with berries.

After admiring these we walked down a steep track to the beach, which is backed by a cliff of consolidated river gravel overhung with pohutukawas and carrying the usual coastal cliff vegetation. After a pleasant walk along the beach with its attractive views across the Firth of Thames to Moehau and the peaks of the Coromandel Range we lunched and then took the bus back to the Ngakerepuku Reserve on the saddle in the ridge between the Oরে and Kawakawa Bay.

A trail on the ridge line leads first through light second growth bush, with regenerating kauri and tanekaha and ground orchids Pterostylis trullifolia, P. alobula, Acianthus fornicatus var. sinclairii and Acianthus reniformis var. oblongus (the last not yet in flower). Further along the track the bush is heavier, with a good many medium sized kauris, large puriris and a fine stand of beech, Nothofagus truncata.

We returned by the same track to the saddle and on the way down towards Kawakawa Bay stopped the bus for a minute at the solitary Weirmannia tree on the roadside. Identification of the species proved somewhat of a puzzle. The two species of Weirmannia, namely silvicola (the North Auckland one) and racemosa (inhabiting the remainder of New Zealand), meet at about this latitude. Adult leaves are not greatly distinct and the difference becomes more blurred near the meeting zone. This tree had single leaves only, with no trifoliate leaves which are a usual but not universal characteristic of silvicola, and on this and one or two other features of the leaves perhaps the tree should be classed as racemosa (kamahi).

Since the trip Ross McKenzie of Clevedon has advised me that he has seen juveniles in the vicinity of the racemosa type, leaves of which are more distinctive than those of adults.

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