

FIELD'S BUSH - PARAPARAUMU.

The 2nd. November was a perfect day for a botanical outing; twentyfour members of the Wellington Society and six from the Levin Flora Club gathered at Mr. J. W. Matthews' residence on the crest of the saddle between Paraparaumu and Waikanae for a ramble through Field's Bush and the Government reserve adjoining.

After the train journey, morning tea, generously provided by Mr. and Mrs. Matthews, was most acceptable, and specially enjoyable in their spacious drawing room with one wall almost entirely of glass, the six foot square centre pane giving an extensive view of blue ocean, Kapiti Island, green undulating slopes of the mainland, and in the foreground the handsome trees and shrubs of the Matthews' garden. A side wall lined with books made one envious. Sketches of wooded scenes on the two other walls added the final touch to a perfect environment.

On our way to the bush we stopped beside a healthy plot of carnations while Mr. Matthews explained his treatment of them and hence their freedom from blight. The red and pink blooms of other exotics were specially noticeable for their clear brilliancy.

The bush, especially on the lower slopes, is largely composed of Kohokoho (*Dysoxylum spectabile*). The generic name refers to the bitter astringency of the leaves and wood and the specific name is expressive of the appearance of the foliage. The Kohokoho is our one endemic species of a genus of large forest trees of tropical Asia, Australia and the Pacific Islands. It belongs to the same family as the Mahogany of commercial fame and has the same quaint habit of hanging its floral sprays from its trunk and branches.

Amongst the Kohokoho are scattered tall handsome specimens of Nikau. In many places on the lower levels the ground is grassed with Nikau seedlings.

Lunch was enjoyed in a delightful spot - an opening in the forest with a view of islands and ocean framed by the great out-spreading branches of an antique Rimu, and surrounded by lesser trees and shrubs - Wairangi, in pastel green; Rama-rama, the crinkled leaves splashed with brilliant colour; Kaikomako in juvenile dress - one was emerging to maturity, most attractive with the symmetrical bunch of darker and larger leaved foliage rising from the frilly youthful garment.

Further up we came to more ancient Rimu, (one quite six feet through) veterans of the forest with their striated bark and giving in the great forks, some forty or fifty feet from the ground, elevated rooting sites for drooping Earinas, Dendrobiums and Astolias. The ground orchid, *Pterostylis Banksii*, was so plentiful that a collection of flower heads was made for class dissection at the University.

At the top of the hill we came upon a great Matai with twin trunks joined at the base - picturesque with the pinkish mottled effect where the flakes of bark had fallen. One trunk had apparently been injured about eight feet from the ground; a sugary sap was exuding from the wound. Microscopical fungi or fungal flora that form sooty moulds were feeding on the sweet sap and had formed a great black blotch on the bark reaching to the buttressed roots where a thick mass of the fungi was established.

K. C. McKeown in "Insect Wonders of Australia" has an interesting note on the subject of sooty moulds. He says - "Some of the scale insects so freely discharge this honey-dew (a secretion of sweep sap) as to coat the leaves with a glossy varnish, which is seized upon by the spores of a fungus, as a suitable medium in which to germinate, and rapidly cover the foliage with a sooty deposit, to the detriment of the tree."

Forms are not plentiful in the part of the bush that we explored, but we did find, on the higher elevation some specimens of the delicate *Leptopteris hymenophylloides*; it is closely allied to the crane-fern, *L. superba*. Another interesting discovery at the same elevation was a colony of *Mida Salicifolia* with the variable foliage. Our species is also found in Australia, the centre of the genus.

Porokaiwhiri (*Hedycarya arborea*) is fairly plentiful in this bush. The tree is dioecious - one specimen was laden with blossom sprays with the drooping plate-shaped male flowers, while others were well covered with green berries just beginning to colour. The tree has an extensive range - from the Three Kings to Milford Sound. Endemic in New Zealand, there are other representatives of the genus in Australia and some of the Pacific Islands.

Out from the bush we did full justice to the cakes so generously provided by our host and hostess.

M.M.J.

.....

TINAKORI HILL.

On the afternoon of Saturday August 3rd, a party of about twenty members and friends under the leadership of Miss Mathieson took a walk over Tinakori Hill. We started up among some older exotic trees under which is growing now an assortment of native shrubs and ferns. Fungi were still conspicuous; a number of fragile agarics were collected including large tiers of Hypholoma fasciculare from some old posts. Brilliant brackets of Trametes cinnabarina decorated several old stumps. In the deep, dry litter of the pine trees near the top there were here and there masses of Thelephora terrestris binding the needles together and several groups of toadstools pushing up their umbrellas. On the summit we looked out on the glassy harbour below and the colourful hills around and then back to the ugly blackness and charred sticks of the fire which swept across here some six months earlier. Already in the fertile ash green weeds were springing and gorse was shooting strongly from the old roots. On the northern slope of the hill we explored a cave thickly clad inside with a growth solely of Asplenium hookerianum and on the blackened rocks at its entrance innumerable sporelings and prothalli apparently also all of the one species. Some distance further down the hillside we scrambled through a small patch of scrubby bush in a gully. A particularly fine fern, Asplenium colensoi was quite common there although cattle had free access. We made our way back by the Wadestown tram terminus.

Greta B. Cone.

.....

EXCURSION TO THE BLUE MOUNTAINS, SILVERSTREAM, 5TH OCTOBER.

The morning was mainly spent examining the clay banks of the roadside cuttings from Silverstream to the road summit. Prosera auriculata was in flower and there were many fertile liverworts in the damper places and many ground orchids were just shooting. An uncommon fern, apparently Blechnum vulcanicum, was found. Pittosporum tenuifolium male and female, and some of the beeches were in flower.

In the afternoon, the party wandered along the bush road of the Blue Mountains. A specimen of tree fern uncommon in Wellington, Dicksonia fibrosa, was seen and profusely flowering specimens of Meliccytus lanceolata attracted attention. Both the native and introduced bitter cresses, Cardamine heterophylla and C. hirsuta were growing together by the roadside and the differences between them could easily be seen.

R. Mason.

.....

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION TO THE SOCIETY:

In Wellington, 7s. 6d., reduced to 5s. 0d. if paid before November 30th. Outside Wellington 2s. 6d.

EDITOR:

MISS L. B. MOORE.

HON. SECRETARY:

DR. MARGARET MAYER,
DEPARTMENT OF BOTANY,
VICTORIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE,
WELLINGTON.