

New Zealand Moss Flora

It is with much pleasure that we announce the publication of *A Handbook of the New Zealand Mosses* by G. O. K. Sainsbury, F.L.S., as Bulletin No. 5 of the Royal Society of New Zealand. Complete with introduction, classification, keys, illustrations, glossary and index, this work is of classic importance and ranks with the other moss floras of the world.

Mr. Sainsbury describes 440 species, concerning which, comparative study and a wide specific concept have reduced the endemic ones to less than one third, an important phytogeographical aspect of the book. In New Zealand a wide specific concept, perhaps not always appreciated by overseas bryologists, is the only answer to a variable bryophytic flora, in which, at times, supposed specific criteria just disappear. The descriptions themselves give minute detail, especially as regards the measurements of the different parts, and are followed by informal comments which are relevant and interesting. Another pleasing feature is the retention of the capitals in the nomenclature.

The author has been fortunate in having the co-operation of Miss N. M. Adams, as botanical artist. Miss Adams is well known for the scientific accuracy and artistry of her work, and these 200 drawings of selected species are certainly no exception, for so masterly is the perspective, that they assume, at times, a three-dimensional aspect. Worthy of special mention, I think, are the habit drawings of the dendroid mosses, particularly that of *Hypopterygium filiculaeforme*, the umbrella moss, which is exceedingly beautiful. These illustrations in conjunction with the descriptions will be of inestimable help in the identification of the mosses.

Congratulations are extended to Mr. Sainsbury, Miss Adams and to Dr. J. T. Salmon, Editor for the Royal Society, on this notable addition to the botanical literature of New Zealand.

E. AMY HODGSON.

Note on *Blindia Martini*

G. O. K. Sainsbury, Wairoa

A REMARKABLE case of discontinuous distribution in a New Zealand moss has lately been reported when Mr. A. P. Druce found the endemic *Blindia Martini* on Mt. Hikurangi, East Coast District, in a watercourse at about 5000 ft. The species was set up on material collected by Mr. W. Martin on boulders in streams at Arthur Pass Canterbury, and prior to Mr. Druce's finding that was the only known station; so this discovery in a new locality more than five

degrees of latitude distant, and in the North Island, is indeed notable. Most of the New Zealand plants of the genus are practically aquatic, dark brown or almost black in colour, with falcate-secund or almost circinate leaves which are narrowed from a concave base to a very long fine subula. The main feature distinguishing *B. Martini* is the immersed and peristomate capsule. In *B. immersa*, another South Island and Stewart Island endemic, the peristome is absent. *B. egmontensis*, an endemic on Mt. Egmont, is closely related, the capsule being immersed and peristomate, but the nerve is narrower, the cells are shorter and the plant is much smaller in nearly all its parts. If the gap in the distribution of *B. Martini* is to be bridged by future collections, then the Ruahine and Tararua Ranges appear to be the most likely areas in which to expect it, so far as the North Island is concerned. It is to be hoped that botanists travelling in those regions will keep the possibility in view when investigating suitable localities, and will not be discouraged by the apparent absence of fruit in any *Blindia* they may come across, for the appearance in this case can be very deceptive.

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