

Very little evidence of Maori occupation remains, with the rapid regeneration over the past sixteen years the ground for the most part is completely covered.

Four of our party, myself being one, landed for about three hours on the South West King. After a scramble through about thirty yards of tight, twiggy Taupata we found ourselves in a beautiful Puka forest, a dense canopy of large leaves above and a covering of fallen leaves under foot; this was something entirely new and very fascinating. A plant which immediately claimed our attention was a large leaved and large fruited Kawakawa. Nothing I have seen on the mainland or the Hen Island anything like approached this plant for leaf and fruit size.

Owing to the dense canopy there was very little growing beneath the puka besides a sprinkling of kawakawa already referred to and a light sprinkling of *Paratrophis smithii*, some of the latter had slightly larger leaves than the largest on Great King, this can be accounted for by the quality of the soil which is a rich humus.

A tree growing among the puka and approximately the same height (10 to 12 ft) with large, long, tapering, elliptic entire dark green glabrous leaves, fairly fleshy but soft in texture proved to be Parapara (bird catching tree); it is present also on the Hen Island. An occasional puka which had reached its life span or had been blown down, affording a space for other plants to grow, would usually be occupied with vigorous plants of Poroporo. Nearing the highest point on the island on the western side a rocky precipice is reached; here the puka thins out giving place to stunted Taupata, flax and cucumber. Along the lower parts coming up from the sea on the southern and south eastern approaches, before the puka commences, it is fairly steep and rocky: this portion was invariably covered with a stunted, tangled mixture of *Hymenanthera*, ngaio and taupata, with cucumber vines thrown in for good measure, the combination making a well nigh impregnable barrier. Time did not permit of other than a quick run over a part of the island therefore this brief account of the flora is very scanty.

Ross Michie

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Our thanks to Mr. Kitchen for his account of the finding of *Meringium minimum* (A.Rich.) Copeland at Golden Bay. I can well understand his surprise at its habitat, as I well remember my own surprise in finding it growing on a branch of tree overhanging

the sea in Paterson Inlet, Stewart Island. It also grew on neighbouring rocks.

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To be informed that a filmy fern grew on the rocks at the end of Golden Bay a few feet above high tide mark sounded just queer. Filmies grow in sheltered damp places as a rule, at any rate away from salt winds with their searing spray. However, bowing to superior knowledge, Mr. Farnell and I set off at the gallop to add another fern to our botanical experience. The tide was at the full and the rocks were slippery but when fern hunting the elements are ignored. Standing with the waves lapping at one's socks and hanging on to mossy rocks, we failed to see any ferns except Asplenium obtusatum and Microsorium diversifolium. These tough stalwarts can survive many a buffetting. But look! Does not that moss about three-eighths of an inch high appear to have a different foliage? My eyesight 'aint what she used to be'. Using a pocket knife I removed a section of moss about the size of a postage stamp and having untangled the cord of my lens from around my neck, there I could see the perfect fronds of a filmy fern, some no more than one quarter of an inch long. The pinnae were deeply serrated and then suddenly into focus came a terminal sorus with a protruding bristle, Meringium minimum. We had found another fern! See "New Zealand Ferns" H.B. Dobbie, p.100.

On retracing our steps we found that we had passed by several patches. Having once seen this minute fern and noting its habitat, it was comparatively easy to locate again. We found it abounds wherever rocks are damp enough to support a moss cover but only a few feet above high tide. Unfortunately time did not permit wandering inland, our tramps being mainly confined to the coast.

We reflect thus: as this fern is so small, have we not passed it before? Did it grow on the Milford Track, around Milford Sound, Doubtful Sound etc.? One can never search too thoroughly. But we shall know in what situations to look next time.

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