

BOTANICAL GLEANINGS. By GEORGIUS.

The field naturalists held their usual fortnightly excursion on Saturday afternoon last. The locality visited was a small scrub in the vicinity of Oxley Station. There was an unusually large muster of members, including several ladies, tempted out probably by the delightful coolness of the weather after the late rains.

The whole country was one blaze of colour from the numerous plants that were in bloom, affording collectors a rare opportunity of securing specimens for their herbariums and for home study. Amongst the grass the species of *Goodenia* was conspicuous. This genus seems never to have received a common or local name, although so abundant in our pasture lands. It is likely, however, that the natives have a name for it, as it is supposed that they use it as a narcotic and administer it to young children to cause them to sleep while on long journeys. The genus contains over seventy species, distributed all over Australia. It was named by J. E. Smith, the founder of the London Linnaean Society, in honour of Doctor Goodenough, Bishop of Carlisle, the grandfather of the late Commodore Goodenough, remembered favourably by most Australians.

Here and there peeping from the grass the *Stylidium graminifolium* was found in perfection. It is strange that this flower should have received no pet name, considering how eagerly it is sought after by the young folk, on account of the elastic irritability of the column of the flower, which in repose hangs down, but when touched springs up and flies at once to the opposite side with great force. Nearing the scrub were found several specimens of *Capparis sarmentosa*, a climbing plant of the caper family. This lovely species was first found by Cunningham on his visit to these parts in the early part of the present century. The plant is by nature a climber. Those met with, however, were without any support, but rose from the ground to the height of several feet in an irregular, tangled mass. This plant, with its beautiful leaves of various shades of green and its clusters of lovely white flowers, strongly reminds one of the veritable caper of commerce as seen on old walls in Southern Europe.

When the scrub we intended to explore was reached it was found that, like most other scrubs near the city, it had been taken possession of by that sub-tropical American pest, *Lantana camara*. Lured on by the sight of some beautiful flower, from time to time we attempted to penetrate its fastnesses, but failed every time. After some discussion it was decided that the party should work round the margin of the scrub collecting on the way. Here were found many plants of more or less interest, either in flowers or fruit. At one spot the ground was covered with the showy fallen fruit of the *Lignumvitae* (*bitex lignumvitae*), which so closely resemble cherries in appearance, that were it not for their disagreeable odour one would be tempted to taste them.

A small tree of *Symplocos stawelli* was noticed in full bloom, the flowers of which rival in fragrance those of the European hawthorn, although for beauty it does not approach that well-known and much loved plant. It may here be remarked, however, that this Australian tree produces one of our most valuable woods. It has a very close grain and is considered suitable for all the purposes to which box is applied.

The *Duboisia myoporoides*, the medicinal properties of whose leaves were brought under the notice of the profession some years ago by Dr. Bancroft, was blooming profusely. Here was found also the "Woolah" (*Eleocarpus obovatus*), the linear-lobed, small white petals of whose flowers formed an object of interest to those of the party whose attention was now drawn for the first time to this feature in the flowers of the genus *Eleocarpus*. It would require too much space and time to enumerate all the plants found in flower; it may be stated, however, that they numbered over fifty, so that the excursion may be considered a successful one from a botanical point of view.

Here, I think, it would be appropriate to devote a few words of eulogy to Mr. F. M. Bailey, the Colonial Botanist. After performing his arduous duties through the week, he is ever ready to accompany us on our excursions, never wearying on the longest march, and ever cheering beginners with kindly words and instruction; while his pleasantries and ready wit keep the whole party in constant good humour.

After leaving the scrub, the high ridge overlooking the river was visited. At length, somewhat weary and footsore, the field naturalists turned their faces homewards. When nearing Oxley Station a pleasant surprise was encountered in the form of an invitation to spend the evening at the residence of Mr. George Watkins, one of the oldest and most enthusiastic members of the society. After discussing an excellent tea in the cool of the evening, the hours rolled by rapidly, and the whole party started for town about 10 o'clock. The hospitality of Mr. Watkins will long be remembered, and will be associated with one of the most enjoyable afternoons in the annals of the Field Naturalists' Society.