

forest and almost impenetrable bush. The trees are covered with epiphytic ferns, Astelias, and Liliaceous epiphytes, which, perched in the forks of the branches, remind one in their habit and appearance of the Bromeliaceous epiphytes of Tropical America. One of the most remarkable trees, as pointed out by Mr. T. Kirk, F.L.S., is the Rata (*Metrosideros robusta*).<sup>1</sup> This, though a Myrtaceous plant, has all the habits of the Indian Figs, simulating them in the closest manner. It starts from a seed dropped in the fork of a tree, and grows downward to reach the ground; then having taken root there, and gained strength, chokes the supporting tree and entirely destroys it, forming a large trunk by the fusion of its many stems. Nevertheless, it occasionally grows directly from the soil, and then forms a trunk more regular in form. Another species of Rata (*Metrosideros florida*) is a true climbing plant.

Few birds were seen. The Gull of Kerguelen Island (*Larus dominicanus*) was common in the harbour. On the telegraph wires along the shore sat a Kingfisher (*Halcyon sanctus*) in abundance, and dashed down from thence on its prey into the shallow water of the harbour. It was interesting as being the first Kingfisher met with on the voyage leading a littoral existence and feeding on sea fish. Afterwards Kingfishers similarly inhabiting the sea shores became familiar in the Strait of Magellan. In the poulterers' shops the curious parrot, or Kaka (*Nestor meridionalis*), was hung up for sale. Mr. T. H. Potts<sup>2</sup> describes this bird as tearing away the dead wood of trees in search of insects, and appearing by its habits to replace to some extent the woodpecker, which is totally absent in New Zealand.

The New Zealand *Peripatus* (*Peripatus novæ zealandiæ*)<sup>3</sup> is abundant near Wellington amongst dead wood, and forty or fifty specimens were brought to the ship as the result of a day's search in the Hutt Valley. As in the case of the species from the Cape of Good Hope (*Peripatus capensis*), the males are much less abundant than the females. In essential structure and habits the animal closely resembles the South African species, but is distinguished by having fewer pairs of feet, viz., fifteen instead of seventeen. The females all contained young, although it was mid-winter (see p. 284).

Land Planarian worms are also pretty common near Wellington. In their anatomical structure, the New Zealand species are more nearly allied to South American forms of the genus *Geoplana* than to the Australian Land Planarians. These latter belong to a special genus (*Cænoplana*), which has affinities with the genus *Rhynchodemus* of India and the Cape of Good Hope.

Mr. W. T. Travers, F.L.S., to whom the Expedition was indebted for much kindness and scientific information during the stay at Wellington, brought on board specimens of *Peripatus novæ zealandiæ* and also of Land Planarians, together with the egg capsules

<sup>1</sup> T. Kirk, F.L.S., On the Habit of the Rata, *Metrosideros robusta*, *Trans. New Zealand Inst.*, vol. iv. p. 267, 1871.

<sup>2</sup> *Trans. New Zealand Inst.*, vol. iii. p. 82, 1870.

<sup>3</sup> H. N. Moseley, *Ann. and Mag. Nat. Hist.*, ser. 4, vol. xix. pp. 85-91, 1877.