

long. *Stamens* two. *Ovary* two-celled, inferior. *Styles* two. *Capsule* longer than the calyx, coriaceous, dehiscing near the top by the falling away of the summit. *Seeds* very minute, numerous, ovoid-oblong.

*Hab.*—Throughout the South Island abundant in alpine swamps from 2,000–6,000 feet altitude.

This plant is very closely allied to *Helophyllum*, and perhaps should be united with that genus. It may not be congeneric with the Fuegian plant on which *Donatia* was originally founded by Forster.

ART. XLIV.—*On the Occurrence of the Morel (Morchella esculenta, Pl.) in New Zealand.* By J. B. ARMSTRONG.

[Read before the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury, 2nd September, 1880.]

THE object of this short paper is to place on record the discovery in New Zealand of the well-known European edible fungus, popularly known as the morel, and called by botanists *Morchella esculenta*, Pers. About three years ago a number of specimens of this plant were found growing in the Christchurch Botanic Garden, under the shade of some large trees of *Eucalyptus globulus*, Lmk. At first we supposed the plant to be a recent introduction, but as so many other European fungi are found in New Zealand, and as the morel occurs in Australia and in nearly all other countries, I now feel satisfied that we may look upon it as indigenous to our colony. The morel belongs to the sub-order Ascomycetes and to the tribe Elvellacei, and is described by Berkeley as follows :—

*Gen. Morchella, Dillenius.*

Receptacle clavate or pileate, impervious in the centre, stipitate, covered with the hymenium which is deeply folded and pitted.

*M. esculenta, Persoon.*

Pileus ovate, conical or sub-cylindrical, adnate at the base, ribs firm, anastomosing and forming deep pits, stem even.

In woods and gardens, esculent, varying much in breadth and height, sometimes almost cylindrical.

British specimens are often 4 or 5 inches high, but all the New Zealand specimens I have yet seen were considerably smaller; their diminutive size, however, may have been owing to the poverty of the soil in which they were grown. The colour of our specimens was a dull brown, whilst European ones are described as olive-coloured. In the arrangement published in

Hooker's "Handbook of the New Zealand Flora," *Morchella* should precede *Leotia*. I think that it is very likely that other species of *Morchella* will eventually be found in this colony.

In Germany and France the morel is much used as an esculent when fresh, and in the dried state is used for flavouring gravies, etc. It has also been used for making catsup, for which purpose it is considered superior to the common mushroom. In the forest districts of Germany the morel comes up abundantly after fires, and the collection of these plants was formerly so profitable that the country people are said to have set fire to the forests in order to hasten the production of these esculents. Whether the collection of morels will ever be profitable in New Zealand remains to be seen; but I trust that it will not be necessary to set fire to our beautiful native forests in order to obtain them.

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ART. XLV.—*A Synopsis of the New Zealand Species of Veronica, Linn., with Notes on new Species.* By J. B. ARMSTRONG.

[Read before the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury, 5th August, 1880.]

ABSTRACT.

INTRODUCTORY.—The genus *Veronica* is by far the largest New Zealand family of flowering plants, and excepting *Coprosma* (of which I am also drawing up a conspectus) it is also by far the most difficult. Although found in many countries the genus is nowhere else so abundant as in New Zealand, and in no other country does it possess so many large shrubby forms, or enter so largely into the composition of the floral scenery. Indeed I may truly say that if we had only this genus, our flora would be very far from devoid of interest and variety, so different in appearance are many of the various forms which the genus assumes.

Anyone exploring the mountains of these islands cannot fail to be impressed by the remarkable characters assumed by these plants. They abound in all situations; on the lower grassy slopes, in the beds of the numerous mountain torrents, on the steep shingly slopes of the higher peaks, and even on the most barren-looking rocks, these hardy *Veronicas* will be found struggling to maintain an existence and to beautify the scene. Many of them are indeed most beautiful plants; from the tiny *V. canescens*, a little trailing plant forming matted patches less than one inch high, to the stately *V. arborea* with a trunk three feet in diameter, there is not one but is worthy of the most careful cultivation.