

Mrs Violet M. Scott, of Takaka

AFTER Mrs Samson, the Society's most generous benefactor has been Mrs Violet M. Scott, who bequeathed a legacy of \$400 at her death in July 1969. Though a country member for many years, she was known personally to only a few Wellington folk who called at her home in Takaka. Specimens she sent were displayed at occasional meetings from the early 1950s onwards.

For 15 years or more she contributed rather consistently to Botany Division's collection of living plants and to the herbarium (CHR), and recorded her observations in a long series of enthusiastic and beautifully written letters that are preserved in the Division's archives; she sent colour photographs of plants and their habitats, too, as slides and prints.

Mrs Scott trained in Home Science at Otago and her husband, who pre-deceased her by many years, had a pharmacy business in Takaka. In general she depended on friends to transport her to the coast and the hills in search of plants, and she encouraged these people to watch for rare plants also. She herself must have had a very good eye, and she made some useful finds, especially of northern species not often recorded from the Nelson district. Amongst these, as represented by herbarium specimens, are: *Gleichenia flabellata*, *Spiranthes sinensis* (grown in her garden to 50 cm tall), *Prasophyllum nudum* (to nearly 60 cm tall), *Microtis parviflora*, *Thelymitra carnea*, *T. ixioides*, *Pterostylis barbata* and *P. nana*. Specimens of *Collospermum* grown in her garden helped to prove that "*spicatum*" turned into *C. hastatum* as it grew larger.

She liked us to see her plants alive. Mostly they were dispatched by bus, in large cartons, and we learned to expect surprises. Often a plant would arrive growing in its pot, and once we unpacked a big enamel piedish containing a whole established garden of asteliads, orchids and ferns. Sometimes a pottle of blackberry jam or apple jelly would be tucked in amongst the plants, and a big bunch of paper white narcissi arrived almost regularly each June.

Once, instead of making excuses after a long silence, she quoted:

*Just when we're safest there's a sunset touch,
A fancy from a flower bell, someone's death,
A chorus-ending from Euripides,
That's enough for fifty hopes and tears.*

Without having met her, I feel sure that Mrs Scott would like to be remembered as a lover and grower of plants, with a special feeling for the modest ones amongst the native species.

L. B. MOORE