Mrs M. P. Samson

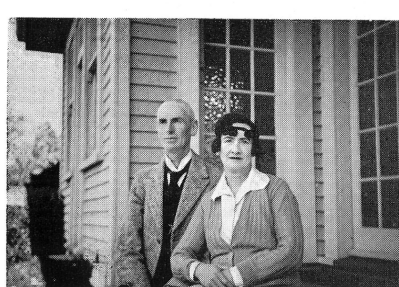
In July 1966 occurred the death of Mrs Maysel Samson of Seatoun, a foundation member of the Society. A very active member for many years and an enthusiastic supporter of the Bulletin, Mrs Samson served on the committee in 1943-44 and as a Vice-President in 1945. Her whole estate, amounting to £4552.14.3 after sale of property, was left to the Society.

The following recollections have been contributed by Miss M. M. Johnson.

I first met Mrs Samson nearly thirty years ago at an afternoon botany class at Victoria University. I had just retired from primary teaching and was pleased to find a contemporary who had also had the brilliant idea to take the course.

Mrs Samson, a foundation member of the Wellington Botanical Society, suggested that I should join and invited me to see her native garden. In her youth she had lived in Westland amidst that paradise of bush, and now field days with the Society had revived her interest in our indigenous plants. She had taken out all her bright exotics, for as she said they don't mix with natives, and besides she could see them in other people's gardens.

She was a lover not only of the larger blooms such as senecios, *Clianthus* and renga lilies but also of the smaller flowers; those fairy daisies of the hillside, slender-stemmed bluebells and tiny yellow buttercups were all flourishing here. Then there were plants with perfume too: *Cotula, Brachycome odorata* (now *radicata*), and the



Mrs Samson and her husband, Mr W. W. Samson.

ornamental scented grass, *Hierochloe*. Trailers and climbers were not forgotten: *Disphyma, Fuchsia procumbens* and *Muehlenbeckia* adorning an old ponga stump.

From the verandah one had a miniature bush scene: young tikouka, houhere, rangiora, puka, manuka, rata, whau, nikau and others. On the shady side of the house were ferns growing with the tree-fern *Dicksonia*. Mrs Samson would laugh when she pointed out her spiky taramea, the cutty grass, and stinging nettle grown to attract the red admirals (*Vanessa*).

She was an enthusiast for Nature's many branches; a member of an Ornithological Society, and a collector of lichens for dyeing as well as grasses and shells. There was excitement when, as we strolled round the shore at Seatoun or Breaker Bay, a rare brachiopod—that ancient pink shell—was found. The seeds of her native plants were carefully saved to be sold in aid of the Bulletin fund. Stones too were collected, and geology was a favourite subject for study.

Mrs Samson believed in re-incarnation and that our knowledge of subjects learnt here would not be lost. Let us hope that in her new Elysium she is able to continue her studies of the natural sciences.

Asteliad Names, Old and New

L. B. Moore, Lincoln

SPECIMENS collected on Botanical Society excursions and especially during Easter trips to Nelson contributed materially to the revision of Australasian asteliads published recently (Moore, *N.Z. J. Bot. 4*, 1966, 201–240). It is possible now to use formal names in place of the temporary and undefined ones that had come to be applied fairly consistently in the field by members of the Society and other students. A table equates the more recent treatment to that of Cheeseman (*Man. N.Z. Fl.* 1925, 313–319) and incidentally shows where these field names fit. Cheeseman recognised fewer species partly because he took a wider view of their limits and partly because he had seen few specimens, if any, of some of the more recently named ones.

Some older names are now applied in unfamiliar ways, and the reasons for these changes are set out in detail in the Journal of Botany paper. Several species illustrated in Dr Morice's account of the asteliads of the Wellington district (*Bull. Wellington Bot. Soc. 33*, 1966, 6–12) are referred to by their page numbers in the table. The more restricted distributions are indicated, and any occurrences outside these limits would be worth recording.