



The late Miss J. A. Fletcher

Photo. by Michael Sharland

was, with this species, most unusual and the movement of the bill, etc., in calling, unmistakable.—G. E. HALE, Adelaide, S.A., 15/2/56.

Obituary

JANE ADA FLETCHER

Miss J. A. Fletcher, who joined the Union at its foundation in 1901, died at her home at Eaglehawk Neck, Tasmania, on April 15 this year, after an illness lasting more than a year. She was an outstanding observer of birds, and past numbers of *The Emu* contain many of her papers on Tasmanian birds. She had been an honorary member of the Union for some years.

The daughter of Price Fletcher, one time editor of *The Queenslander* and a naturalist, Miss Fletcher was born at Penshurst, Victoria, and went to school in Brisbane. While still a young woman she came with her family to Tasmania and settled at Wilmot, where her father died. She became a school mistress and was in charge of schools at Wilmot, Cleveland, and Springfield, and several of her papers in *The Emu* refer to the bird life of those particular districts. She was fond of the crakes and rails and wrote much about them, but all birds interested her, and her sisters with whom she lived, and she has left some fascinating descriptions of excursions to swamps and marshes in search of uncommon species. She was first to record the *Cisticola* in Tasmania and found it breeding in the Springfield district, and she also recorded at Eaglehawk Neck the only occurrence in Tasmania of *Pygoscelis papua*, the Gentoo Penguin.

As well as being fond of birds, she was also interested in historical matters, having produced a useful guide book to the history of former penal stations on Tasman Peninsula. She also wrote books for children, one of which, *Stories from Nature* (1915), reflected particularly her wide knowledge of Tasmanian natural history. Stories based on the lives of the extinct Tasmanian aborigines came from her pen as well.

Living in retirement at Eaglehawk Neck, she cultivated a garden that became celebrated for the number of birds it attracted. Many were tame enough to feed from the hand. Quails and rails were seen in this garden, which always had ample cover for shy birds and a wealth of nectar-bearing flowers for others.

She was interested in the Youth Hostel Movement and allowed part of her cottage to be used as a hostel.

She will be remembered for her kindness and generosity, one of her last acts being to provide, at a local guesthouse, a formal luncheon for between forty and fifty members of the Union during the annual meeting in October, 1955, although, on account of the first stages of her fatal illness, she herself was unable to attend.—M.S.R.S.