THE LIFE OF QUEEN MARY ANN . . .

. . . A BRAVE WOMAN

By Mrs. Florrie Munro

Mrs. Florrie Munro, who now lives at Caroona, and until recently lived at Bass Hill, near Sydney, gives us another story on the life of Queen Mary Ann, Queen of the New England aborigines. This time one of the first chapters, and the final chapter, in the old Queen’s life.

Mary Ann was given every attention and being the hardy type she was, soon made a complete recovery.

A few days later the rains came, and there was soon grass and water everywhere.

That little incident in the barren hills will serve to illustrate the courage and stubborn determination that went to make up the character of Mary Ann.

It was in 1916, while the first Great War raged, that I saw the final curtain fall on the life of Queen Mary Ann.

Old and blind, the vital spark of life was slowly flickering away when we took her on to the Mines which were only a couple of miles from the little town of Tingha where her daughter Nellie could look after her.

One night she called her daughter and said, “Nellie, I’m going to sleep now. I may not be here in the morning,” and as the daughter pulled the bedclothes over her she heard the old lady saying softly—

“I’m hungry and weak, just like you are, Toby,” she said to the old dog as she patted him, “and we are still several day’s journey from home.”

While the faithful dog kept the flock together, the courageous young woman summoned up all her strength to break down branches and leaves from the Kurrajong trees in a last effort to keep them from starving.

Slowly the starving woman and her faithful dog and the weakened flock of sheep, hardly able to stand, edged their way slowly back towards the farm.

In the meantime, the farmer and his friends had become alarmed and had set out to investigate.

One morning they found Mary Ann lying unconscious, the victim of starvation and exhaustion, while nearby a weak, thin old dog kept the flock together. When they found Mary Ann, the ants were just beginning to eat her . . . another few hours and it would have been too late.