

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

It is proposed that henceforth, short bibliographical or descriptive notes should be included. These will mainly feature unrecorded aspects of well-known titles or draw attention to books of some possible interest which have been 'discovered' in the course of work.

A FICTIONAL BIOGRAPHY?

Frank Leward/Memorials/Edited by/Charles Bampton/London/Kegan Paul, Trench, & Co., 1 Paternoster Square/1884. 3 p.l., 359p. 40p. of advs. 19½cm.

Attention was recently drawn to the above work by a friend who was prepared to accept its narrative as a factual record. It had hitherto escaped the writer's notice and the Library's copy, Alexander Turnbull's own acquisition, has long been classified as biography in which section it has apparently been resting unchallenged if not undisturbed for the past fifty years. At first glance there is no reason to suspect it to be other than it purports – the life of an adventurous man of the first half of the nineteenth century assembled from recollections and letters by a devoted friend. However, more critical examination would indicate that it is probably a fictional compilation from available factual literature of the period.

Frank Leward runs away from school under the suspicion of having misappropriated the cricket club funds. In absentia he is quickly cleared of this charge but meanwhile is working his passage to the Antipodes and Hobart. After minor adventures in Tasmania he returns to England but is rejected, or at least discouraged, by his father so returns to the South Pacific, this time to New Zealand. He visits various parts of the North Island including Rotorua and the Terraces, Auckland and Wellington, all in 1841. At Wairoa village an attractive Maori girl asks him to marry her but he recalls his English fiancée and escapes. The incidents here are strongly reminiscent of Meade's *Ride through the disturbed districts*...

In Wellington he would like to buy land but first needs capital so ships on a whaler visiting among other places Campbell Island in search of seals. Father meanwhile relents and sends him £500 to buy land to which on the son's return to Wellington in June 1843 he adds his whaling cruise profit of £300. He decides to accept an offer of partnership with one Johnson and 'I expect we shall take up about 10,000 acres from the Government almost directly.' (p. 98). This they were able to do at a very low price as we learn from the next letter written in October 1843 from 'The Glades', Wairapa [sic], New Zealand.