

had actually taken place. Martha wrote 'As we conversed she had occasion to say "as I have no husband to please I can suit my own convenience," a reasonable point of view one might suppose. However, Martha continued 'I looked at her to see how she could say such words, expecting to see the tell-tale feeling on her face that could not be suppressed: but she was calm and unmoved! Alas! at that moment my heart ached for her! How must the fountains of love have been broken up, to render her capable of uttering unmoved *such words!*' Mary, in fact, later remarried and, as Mary Muller, wrote the first articles calling for New Zealand women to be given the vote.

Other old favourites are Grace Hirst, the New Plymouth entrepreneur, and Mary Swainson, who as a young girl wrote the family letters home to England. A new name which looks interesting is that of Lizzie Ovenden, a young widow who came to New Zealand in 1867 to carry out an arranged marriage, was widowed again within two years and passes out of sight in 1874. Another is Flo Derry, with her spirited defence of New Zealand girlhood and her preference for 'rowdy colonials' over English youth.

One of the strengths of the publication is that it goes beyond listing, in itself a huge task, to provide details of the lives of those who appear. There are some surprises here. I did not, for instance, know that Adeline Absolon was probably the lover of Dillon Bell before becoming the wife of Dr Thomas Renwick.

*Women's Words* shows the extraordinary range of the Turnbull's collection. There are entries for Queen Victoria (her instructions to the Governor in 1840, so not particularly revealing about her life), Lady Grey with her morbid dislike of Auckland, the music-hall singer Fanny Clifton, and the alcoholic Martha Browne. There are a number of entries relating to Maori women, especially letters from Maori women within collections. There is material relating to England, the United States, the Pacific, Australia and doubtless to other countries as well.

It is instructive to note that it was the interest of an American scholar that prompted the Turnbull to undertake the compilation and publication of this guide to its collection. This raises the question of whether research scholars in New Zealand are demanding enough of their scholar librarians. The Turnbull librarians have shown that they can do it—we should ask for more. I hope that *Women's Words* leads to an increased interest in the collections and further research into the history of the nineteenth century. Such work will help us understand the dynamics of living in New Zealand as experienced by all people.