

About 45 . . . sat down to supper & danced merrily from ½ past 7 to ½ past 11 . . . we thought our young men & maidens danced quietly & nicely—even with all the fun of figure dances & the ease of Boy & girl acquaintance.<sup>45</sup>

Caroline was again suffering ill health—‘falling back into bed & then creeping out’. She was also disturbed, more for the young than for herself, by the current interest in biblical criticism; too much of the Catholic doctrine she felt was now held as an ‘open question’. In reply to Sophia Marriott who was having trouble with the Athanasian Creed she wrote, ‘The line between the things of faith & the things of reason may be a fine one, but I believe there is such a line & I had rather wish enlarging it on the side of faith.’<sup>46</sup> One of her frequent visitors was Sarah Selwyn and with the resignation and perception of the invalid Caroline commented, ‘She is overwhelmed by the *more* of life & diminished powers to meet it.’<sup>47</sup> On 11 February 1877 with difficulty she wrote,

I did think dear Soph & still do at times that my time has come . . . God knows it is for no lack of love to my dearest that I am willing to leave them but just because I do love so intensely.<sup>48</sup>

It was her last letter.

#### REFERENCES

All manuscript sources referred to are held by the Alexander Turnbull Library.

1 From Virginia Browne-Wilkinson. Many extracts from Caroline Abraham’s letters appear in Browne-Wilkinson’s *The Far Off and the Near* (Florence, Privately printed, 1983).

2 MS Papers 2395. Unless otherwise stated, all letters quoted are by Caroline Abraham and from this collection.

In addition, the Turnbull Library holds ‘Correspondence of Caroline Harriet Abraham’ (MS Papers 2305) which is a typed transcript (with errors) of some of the originals in MS Papers 2395. There are twelve further Caroline Abraham letters in ‘Letters from Bishop Selwyn and Others’, 4 vols (typescript), v. 4 (qMS sequence).

H. W. Tucker, *Memoir of the Life and Episcopate of George Augustus Selwyn*, 2 vols (London, 1879), v. 1, pp. 331–5, contains her description of St John’s College. *Extracts of Letters from New Zealand on the War Question* (London, 1861), includes one Caroline Abraham letter.

The 87 letters in MS Papers 2395 fall into four main sections: English letters, 1841–March 1850; from St John’s College, Auckland, July 1850–March 1857; from ‘Bishop’s House’, Wellington, March 1860–November 1867; from Wimbledon and later ‘the Close’, Lichfield, May 1867–February 1877.

3 Letter to Mrs Marriott, 19 January 1842.