

seemed like a dream'. The next day Selwyn took Caroline to the brow of the hill at Taurarua and pointed out all the features:

staying for a moment as he always does, when the Undine comes in sight to expatiate on her excellence and beauty—and then dilating on all [his] hopes and plans—and the intermarriages which would take place between his trained Maori youths at St John's Coll. and these educated maidens at Mrs Kissling's school and how he looked to the raising of a new tribe in this way.¹⁰

A little later she wrote, 'What do we find him?—*All that he was; all that we believed* . . . Every day [at St John's College] makes me feel more really here, made members of a "Holy House".'¹¹ The following month the Selwyns' end of St John's was more like a 'Lying-in Hospital' with three confinements—even Tibi the cat had kittens—and the Selwyns' indefatigable nurse was 'in her glory'. Sarah Selwyn's daughter was born on 5 September; about the same time Tirena, wife of Rota Waitoa, also had a baby daughter and shortly after 'our child', born prematurely, died.¹²

Of particular interest in Caroline's letters from St John's is the light that she throws on Sarah Selwyn. The remarkable stamina, even zest for colonial life, which is apparent in Sarah Selwyn's letters and in her *Reminiscences*¹³ was not, it appears, easily achieved or (in the case of her *Reminiscences*), was achieved only in retrospect. Caroline frequently felt 'desolate in this far land', but in contrasting her life to Sarah's asks,

What must it have been to Sasa in those early days wh. even yet she has never spoken of really to me but only alluded to as if she dared not trust herself to speak even now! "How wondrous it is to think of all that the heart does bear, time after time, without growing a bit more *used* to it", as she says,¹⁴

and comments on how keenly Sarah felt her husband's frequent and lengthy absences:

She used to shut herself up in her room & come out only to slave away at some drudgery, or some teaching work, & look distressed & one dared not notice it, least she shd. put on a forced cheerfulness.¹⁵

Most bitter pill of all. Just when English letters began arriving full of congratulations about the birth of Margaret Selwyn, the five and a half month old baby died suddenly of fever. Caroline, who had suffered intensely 'beyond what I imagined wh. was bad enough' during her first confinement, and was to go through a miscarriage the following year wrote, 'I have shrunk back from the thought of the cares & anxieties & pains wh. seem to me to make up so much the largest portion of a mother's lot.'¹⁶ Selwyn, on the other hand, often spoke of his lot having fallen unto him in a fair ground.¹⁷