



**Letters from Louisa: A Woman's View of the
1890S, Based on the Letters of Louisa Macdonald,
First Principal of the Women's College, University
of Sydney**

Jeanette Beaumont, W. Vere Hole

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In 1892 a young Scotswoman arrived in Australia to become the first principal of the new Women's College at the University of Sydney. For over a decade she wrote weekly letters to her friend and mentor in London, Eleanor Grove. Extracts from Louisa's letters tell the story of the early days of the Women's College and offer an insider's view of life at the University and in Sydney in the 1890s. As principal of the Women's College, Louisa Macdonald was one of Sydney's leading women, and participated in almost every women's organisation of the period. She was involved in campaigns for suffrage and against workplace exploitation, and made a major contribution to the higher education of women. Letters from Louisa is an engaging account of the contribution of one of Australia's early feminists. 'This is much more than the story of the founding of a much-loved institution of learning. It's a timely reminder of the women and men of Sydney who believed in it and supported it, and it's moving evidence that in the 1890s women needed the same self-belief to resist being marginalised and deprived as they do in the 1990s, even if the reasons are differ

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