“This is the land of the lost, one of those happy spots where no questions are asked. Of course, the fact of a person’s being here is usually all the explanation necessary.” The Story of a New Zealand River is a romance set in the Northland region of New Zealand, in the time when the forests of New Zealand’s grandest tree, the kauri, were being logged for their exquisite timber. The novel begins as Alice Roland and her free-spirited daughter Asia are being rowed in a black punt by handsome and cultured David Bruce up the Kaipara harbour to their new home at a raw kauri logging settlement in a bend of the Kaiwaka river. Tom Roland, a rough colonial and the boss of the settlement, is Alice’s husband of a few years. Alice is a beautiful but tight-laced, proud, puritanical Englishwoman whose mismatch with Tom Roland is not a happy one. They arrive with Alice’s piano among their belongings to find a half-built cottage, a strange collection of inhabitants, from gentry to scoundrels, and a place that is beautiful and challenging. Jane Mander was a New Zealand novelist and journalist. As well as New Zealand, she also lived in Sydney, New York and London. There is a superficial resemblance between The Story of a New Zealand River and the Jane Campion film The Piano, which is principally the setting and the piano. (summary by Gail Timmerman-Vaughan)