

THE LATE DR. ROBERT STOUT

In the last twenty years of his busy life, his occasional habit of book-buying developed into an ardent enthusiasm for books of his native country. Perhaps because a great deal of manuscript and other material relating to his distinguished father, Sir Robert Stout, was in the Turnbull Library, he became accustomed to call in to discuss New Zealand history and the books that recorded it. No librarian could fail to be pleased to offer advice to such an enthusiast, and he gradually became launched upon a collecting programme.

I remember the excited, almost incredulous, amazement he evinced when I urged him to take an opportunity of purchasing a copy of Angas's *New Zealanders*, remarkable for its sixty splendid plates of early New Zealand and Maori life. He was still half-fearful when it arrived, and yet it was soon his most cherished possession, as it must be for any New Zealand book collector.

He early became a member of the "Friends of the Turnbull Library", and for the last several years its president. But he was an unusual friend: no passive member, but an active dynamic reader and student, despite his three score years. Whatever he read, it was absorbed with a critical mind: he found fresh information in obscure places, data the library was glad to record more precisely for later use. He corrected errors that had been perpetuated down the years. He saw clues to valuable records, to be found for the seeking. At every stage he pressed us to do things, to seek things, and usually the reward came back to us.

Any library that had such a friend would be the gainer. It didn't need money, it simply meant ideas. . . . In the meantime his own library was growing apace, and when he died on October 1, 1959, there could have been few such private collections in our country.

In his last illness during one of my visits, he said, "I have learned so much from the Turnbull Library, and I should like to express my gratefulness." He did this by making a gift of £500 for the acquisition or copying of useful manuscripts or other texts of importance in the history of New Zealand.

His career as a medical man, as an art connoisseur, and as a tennis player is recorded elsewhere. To the Library he was a warm-hearted, devoted, diffident but delightful friend through the pleasant years of our association.

C. R. H. T.