

in a simple time and place of an immensely difficult art, who had leisure for all that writing, who (so far as I know) showed no sign of discontent with their conduct of their jobs. True, Horace Ward did not indulge himself as a *littérateur* or a *savant*: he had not the temperament for those agreeable callings; he worked instead long hours of invigilation, and did produce, in his immaculate script, a card catalogue of his library. I do not know what zeal the others had in cataloguing. No doubt they all liked a life spent among books. Would not you, with your knowledge of the modern profession of librarianship, with your strong respect for the proceedings of the New Zealand Library Association, regard them all as amateurs? Would you, if they came before you now, appoint any of them to equivalent positions? You would not; you would reject them all with the same instantaneous unanimity as you would reject me, if I continued to retain the last sad tattered garment of romance. I remember now, I too was, for a few weeks, a librarian – at least a temporary student-assistant to the reverend gentleman, whom I came to like very much. What I did, I must confess, I have not the faintest idea, except wrap up – or was it unwrap? – some parcels, and sit at the raised desk and enjoy a sense of power, and receive a small salary. Perhaps that is what makes men librarians still: the desire to exercise power, and to receive a small salary. But the librarian – I continue to drive, however erratically – the directing genius, has indeed become professional. He also is part of our growing maturity. He is at once product and indication. He may know a little about a lot of things, and we should not wish to deprive him of a wide-ranging intelligence; but he must also know a great deal about one thing, and that is the library.

Night wears on. If it did not I could say more about this: I mean about the mature librarian administering the mature library in the mature society. I could give you a philosophy of history where I have merely touched on history. I could bring in wars and depressions and international institutions, a centenary and the state of the wool market, the dairy industry and the influence of America, the Statute of Westminster, 1931; Mary Parsons, the angel of light, who founded our library school; Peter Fraser, the prime minister, who sent for people and hammered so many things together. The inter-relations are illimitable, as our country part struggles, part is dragged and heaved and bullied, into this maturity or near-maturity of which I have been talking. The horse and buggy are gone with our colonial status; the green alluvial paddocks of the Hutt Valley sustain a load of houses and factories and civic advancement; the Terrace inexorably becomes a multi-storey steel and concrete money-hallowed wind-tunnel. Lambton Quay as inexorably curves into the future, and Wellington is a fringe to a multi-laned motorway. Yes, our maturity is upon us. If you look