

had this excellent hobby of the study of New Zealand bird-song, and the reproduction of it from his own lips. I have wondered how he had time to be a librarian; and indeed that magnificent main Turnbull room with its Persian carpet and the shapely products of Mr Kupli's cabinet-making, full of first editions—now, alas! for so many years a stack room—did look as if it had become Mr Andersen's private study. I may be wrong: you must remember that these were the impressions, gathered upwards of fifty years ago, of a young man, appropriately dazzled, humbly seeking permission to study Captain Hobson and the New Zealand Company for an MA thesis. Was it in fact a Persian carpet? Was the treasure house in fact as staggering as I thought it was? It was staggering enough for me, anyhow, as I laid my eyes on folios and quartos; saw, as it were, an endless vista of morocco bindings; had realised for me, solidified, the abstract words of Andrew Lang in that delightful book. I never thought of calling the building a temple, in its semi-Jacobean red brick, so different from the rest of Bowen Street, and the old Turnbull dwelling behind it, and nineteenth-century colonial Lambton Quay just around one corner, and the nineteenth-century wooden Terrace just round the other; none the less there it was, centrally situated but rather removed from the interests of Lambton Quay as well as its architecture, something distinct, not religious, but of the spirit; and inside was the sort of high priest, ministering to I am not quite sure what. I left him alone, and he left me alone; and before very long I had the magical, the transforming experience of laying hands on my first historical manuscript, the brief diary kept by Colonel Wakefield on his passage to New Zealand in the *Tory*. It did not cast a flood of light on anything; but it was a manuscript, it was enchantment.

Talking about libraries, or 'the library', and in a supplementary way about librarians, I find I am talking primarily about New Zealand, and Wellington. I could, of course, describe my emotions on first entering the Reading Room at the British Museum, and, under that enormous dome, feeling so much nearer the centre of the Cosmos. I suppose someone wrote a sonnet on it once, in the days when the production of sonnets was a thriving branch of British industry, about the time of 'Give a man a pipe he can smoke' and Mr Gladstone's first government, and any words of mine would be as otiose as an addendum to Wordsworth on Westminster Bridge. I am equally not called to discuss the Laurentian Library in Florence, or the Vatican Library or the Library of Congress or the Library of the Abbey of Melk. So I can return to New Zealand, and Wellington. Adding together the Wellington libraries I have mentioned, and the collections I have not mentioned because I do not want to become too complicated, the remaining part of our so-called National Library and our city library, I think we could say that as general readers we are not badly off for books. That is not at