

who put it right and in time he was his old self again but he didn't come up for morning tea any more and I for one missed those talks of his.

Mr Andersen and I didn't always see eye to eye. There was a small matter of my print script on the catalogue cards – or rather, of one letter in my print script. He said one day he didn't like the way I made it, but I preferred my own way and, rather obstinately stuck to it. He didn't refer to the matter again and I thought he had forgotten all about it and then a year or two later I found that this small thing had been stored up against me and that also, quite unconsciously, I had been getting his back up over other things which he had not mentioned. This I found when he sent in a report on me so unfavourable that I contemplated appealing against it, but I decided not to and nothing untoward happened. After that there was a certain coolness in our relations, which I was sorry about, but there it was. Faults on both sides as is usually the case in any trouble.

Except that he was tall like Mr Andersen, Elsdon Best was a different type of man. His neat grey beard gave him rather a distinguished look, and he usually wore an old-fashioned but comfortable type of 'Norfolk jacket'. He had been given a room at the Library because there was no suitable accommodation for him in the old Dominion Museum Building.

When I read the biography of him – *Man of the Mist* – by his nephew Elsdon Craig, I was surprised and somewhat annoyed to see it stated there that 'he had a dingy little room at the Turnbull Library'. It was nothing of the kind. It was what is now the Art Room and was quite a fair-sized room except that on two of the walls racks had been built to take bound volumes of Wellington newspapers, and that naturally encroached on the space. But he had a big working table in front of a sunny window, with a pleasant outlook over into the Parliamentary Grounds, and there were shelves for his books and papers, an armchair and a fireplace.

Fires were the only form of heating in the building, which meant that the housekeepers had to carry up scuttles of coal from the coal-house at the back. In cold weather Mr Best's fire would be half-way up the chimney. In the New Zealand Room, with our table in the window and five double-banked rows of bookcases between us and the fireplace, it could be pretty cold and we would be glad of an excuse to go up to Mr Best's well-warmed room to consult him on some point of Maori history or the spelling of a name. He was always courtesy itself and took a great deal of trouble to find the right answer to any enquiries. It was sad to see his health failing in the last few months of his life.

After all these years it isn't easy to remember more than a few of the people who came to the Library either as readers or visitors who wanted