THE TURNBULL LIBRARY RECORD

JUBILEE ISSUE

1920 — 1970

WELLINGTON NEW ZEALAND
THE FRIENDS OF THE TURNBULL LIBRARY
August 1970
VOLUME 3 (n.s.) NUMBER 2

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THE LIBRARY AND THE COSMOS

Address delivered at the Alexander Turnbull Library on Tuesday, 30 June 1970, by Professor J. C. Beaglehole

I never wanted to be an engine-driver. I liked travelling by train when I was a boy, with my brother, out to the Lower Hutt in the holidays, when the Hutt was still country, with paddocks as far as you could see, and horses, and once out of the train you got into the buggy behind a horse; and when you got into the train you each had a penny cake of chocolate, to be consumed on the journey in case of extreme hunger; but I never wanted actually to drive the train. My idea of romance was libraries. I don't know why this was so, unless it was because I was one of those fortunate boys – and there could not have been very many, really, in New Zealand in those days – who were brought up in the midst of books, to whom books, of all sorts, were as much part of the intimate family environment as my mother's brown scones or the round piano stool that went up and down, so that when you got tired of practising you could twirl round and round on it. That familiarity did not lessen the romance for me, though it may have done so for another of my brothers, whose idea of romance was to clean our doctor's motor-car on Saturday mornings. There were not so many cars in Wellington, it was still possible to walk across Willis Street on the spur of the moment without being killed; and they were still called motor-cars, not cars. I am not simply indulging in the idle chatter of a born free-associationist, as I know I am: I am trying, if only for myself, to picture a period. The period was that of the early years of Alexander Turnbull's Library.

I may have been an extreme case of my particular sort of romance. I just don't know. And I don't mean that I had no other interest at all. I was not interested in football, but I was interested in food, and marbles, and making toy theatres. It just happened that I had a natural affinity with the printed page. As for the Cosmos, there it was, but it never struck me that it might be wondered about. I was never quite certain about the meaning of the word – I am almost, as a matter of fact, impelled to look it up again now, to give my ideas exactitude – but I knew it had something to do with the universe, and the universe was the stars, and I admired the stars; but how much more interesting the spangled firmament on high would have been if it had been books. It was not; and there was nothing to do but accept it unquestioningly. Perhaps that was why, when I first came across Margaret Fuller, I was a bit puzzled. You will remember that remarkable blue-stocking

Transcendentalist American lady, one of the ornaments of New England, and the age of Emerson, when our own colony was struggling into existence; and how she declared, with the true fervour of that remarkable age and that remarkable country, 'I accept the Universe'; and how Carlyle rather sourly commented, 'By God, she'd better!' Well, I thought, what else do you do with it? So I ignored it, except I suppose now and again as a visual display. I took it – the Universe, the Cosmos – for granted, the eternal silence of the immense spaces did not at all frighten me, I stuck my head in a book.

And of course they were books; or at least they looked like books. I don't know how you would define a book in our day. An instrument by which you hold high converse with the mighty dead? The precious life-blood of a master spirit? Or a small rectangular block of newsprint with a shiny cover bearing the picture of an undressed young lady? Not with such insubstantial sawdust were the great libraries of the past built. Who now will reissue, even with an undressed young lady outside it, Isaac Disraeli's *Curiosities of Literature*? It was entrancing. There you could learn of the great library of Alexandria, beloved of the Ptolemies, the accumulation of all classical learning, wisdom, poetry, given to the flames by uningratiating Christians. I wept for Alexandria. I steeped myself in Andrew Lang, *The Library*. I remember its size, a small octavo; the texture of its cover, a rough light-brown linen; the panelling on its spine, the feel of its paper, the disposal of its print. I believe that Andrew Lang was somewhat the dilettante, but how delightful he was on Elzevirs and Aldines, and incunabula; what fascination when he discussed the sort of wood the true devotee would make his bookshelves of! Elzevirs and Aldines, indeed. They seemed the pinnacle of felicity to me. Abstractions – but romance, romance. I had to admit that though my father's shelves were not of well-seasoned English oak they held the books well enough. I suppose that only Turnbull, in Wellington, could afford to worry about that sort of thing, and he worried to some purpose, with the aid of Mr Kupli, cabinet-maker, of Upper Willis Street. It used to be said, of course, by strict moralists, that you should not read books about books, that was the way to perdition; you should read books and cultivate depth of character and moral fibre, and all those things the late Victorians valued. Idiots! Slayers of delight and innocent dissipations! They would frown on walks in flowery meads, insist that one should be forever climbing mountains. Were books about books not the most agreeable way of being led on to the strict rigours of bibliographical study? And is there anything more gratifying to the mind, in the end, than the triumphant pedantry of distinguishing between the first impression of the first edition and the second impression of the first edition? I do not say that there is a virtue in this superior to the virtue of the really esoteric mathematician, or of the youth who

delves in the bowels of the internal combustion engine or makes a television set work; I am not talking of virtue in the conventional sense at all, but simply of the working of the human mind, for its own sake, the area where the pedant meets the artist. In the old days the great librarian, I fancy, my figure of romance, was this sort of pedant. Nowadays, I gather, implicit or explicit in the words of emissaries from America, the great librarian is a high-powered public relations man. Well, I suppose there is a sort of romance in that. The romantic view changes from generation to generation. Perhaps librarians have their own forms of romance. Some of them dream about books; some of them dream about computers.

Librarians: one could meditate a good deal about them, their types or individual characteristics: the scholar-librarian, the technician librarian, the public relations librarian, the education of librarians, the history of librarianship, the influence of the librarian on history, the comparative study of the contribution of the sexes to the art, science, and practice of librarianship, the charismatic (one must keep up with the language) librarian, the librarian as cosmic figure. I have studied the peculiarities of a number of librarians, and on the whole they seem to be an estimable race. I once had ambitions that way myself – romance again, you see; and one of my schoolmasters, a man of harsh voice and kindly soul, whom I admired greatly, whose name I still revere, must have thought I showed some promise. He asked me, 'What are you going to do with your life, Beaglehole?' I said modestly I didn't know. 'Well', he said, you know a little about a lot of things and nothing much about anything; you might do quite well as a librarian.' I thought he did a little injustice to the depth of my learning, but I was struck with his perception otherwise. I think my father had already explored the possibilities, however; he had consulted Mr Charles Wilson, the Parliamentary Librarian, a man of weight, and Mr Wilson had been discouraging. There was nothing in it at all, he said; and anyhow there were no jobs going. I have been puzzled by this since; because how many of my juniors managed to get jobs in libraries, and became eminent in the profession – parliamentary librarians and city librarians and national librarians and Turnbull librarians! Their fathers could not have consulted Mr Wilson. So my father got me a job in Whitcombe and Tombs instead, which was also romantic; and I must certainly have shown some promise as a bookseller, because at the end of a year my stipend was raised from 25 shillings, or $2.50, a week, to 27*s* 6*d*, or $2.75, and I was overcome with gratification. It was while I was in the shop that I encountered, rather remotely, Mr Wilson – rather remotely, for his conversation was reserved mainly for another exalted personage, Mr Cameron, the manager. Ah! if I could only give you an adequate picture of that 1918 Whitcombe's, or of the bookshop further down

the Quay, S. and W. Mackay's, whose great period had been earlier, who did not run a warehouse and supply the trade, or sell sporting goods – to say nothing of Ferguson and Osborn, and of Smith's – you would understand better how the literary pulse beat in Wellington in those days.

I think Wilson was an interesting piece of our literary, and library, history: in the literary history, minor; in the library history, quite largely illustrative. I suppose there was a sort of tough, local, middle-grade Bohemianism about him. He was a middle-sized man, much tobacco-stained, with a rather gruff voice, and the boys in the shop were convinced that he absorbed vast quantities of whiskey. If untrue, it was still delightful scandal. As a very young man he had been in the Bradford woollen trade, and then in some sort of business in Paris – he was said actually to be able to speak French; and still as a quite young man he came to New Zealand and took up teaching and then journalism, working his way down from the East Coast to an editor's chair in Wellington. At the end of the nineties he was briefly a member of parliament, and in 1901 began his quarter-century as parliamentary librarian. You see that he had had quite a varied experience, none of which, before he thus assumed the senior professional position in the country, had had any connection with libraries whatever. It was a colonial experience, and a very colonial sort of appointment. It seemed to work out all right, according to the lights of the time. Anyhow, there the distinctive figure was. I don't know what proportion of the library's books came directly from England – the war years may have had some effect – but Charlie Wilson used to come into the shop quite regularly and pick out a staggering number (as it seemed to me) from our new ones, that I had just unpacked and marked with the price, and carried downstairs; and Mr Cameron would then put them in piles, with a slip of paper inserted, marked in his very neat hand, 'G.A.L.'. I don't know who carried them up again to the packing department; my colleague Archie, I suppose, whose private love was astronomy. Archie confided this in me, with some shyness: it was the first inkling I had that anyone could have a disinterested passion for anything other than books, and I regarded Archie thereafter with a mixture of astonishment and a sort of amused awe.

Now, Charlie Wilson did something else besides smoke and assuage the legislative intellectual hunger and pick the eyes out of the stock. He kept a hand in journalism, and every Saturday morning he wrote about books in the *Dominion* newspaper. He was our Sainte-Beuve or Edmund Gosse: I must not compare him to anyone in our later reaches of criticism, he carried none of the *Landfall* and precious little of the *Listener* atmosphere with him. He wrote under the name 'Liber', and he used as epigraph lines famous in their day:

Give a man a pipe he can smoke,
Give a man a book he can read;
And his home is bright with a calm delight,
Though the room be poor indeed.

Very true. 'Sunday up the River' by James Thomson, 1869. Not *The Seasons* man. So you see there was an author coming into the shop, not only a librarian; and there was an added thrill. It was not quite Dr Johnson, but one makes do with what one has. It was at least Literary Authority. He republished a number of these articles a few years later, with the collected title – I am sorry if I give you a minor shock – *Rambles in Bookland*; and the volume being successful, followed it with *New Rambles*. Here I begin to suspect rather clayey feet: my father acquired neither of these volumes. Nor did I. Perhaps, as the century advanced, we were turning into intellectual snobs. Anyhow, I was a university student by then, deep in the *Athenaeum* and the *Times Literary Supplement*, and I had a different librarian before my eyes, the asthma-ridden, skull-capped, disciplinary, Greek-Testament-reading Horace Ward, the Reverend B. H. Ward, BA (LONDON) – whom the junior janitor, with mildly humorous hostility, would refer to as 'the reverend gentleman'. And a different library: minute, I suppose one would call it, but it had books, some of them out of the common run, it had the *Athenaeum,* it was a Cave of Enchantment. Horace Ward was not a great scholar; but sitting in the centre of it at his raised desk, he looked as if he might have been; he looked as if he might have edited the letters of Erasmus, or some early Christian Father. The right sort of librarian.

In the meantime something else had happened: a Great Event. The time was the last year of the war – the First World War – and all sorts of astonishing things were happening. I well remember standing in the bookshop – first floor, Educational Department – and gazing out of the window at the sky, and meditating, not on the imminent crash of empires, the tramplings and the chaos of mankind, but on the news that Mr Turnbull had just died, and bequeathed his library to the country, or anyhow to the Government of New Zealand. And I remember romance taking charge again, and a great mark of interrogation confronting me in the sky that Wellington morning: should I abandon my career as a bookseller and become instead the librarian of the Turnbull Library? It was an attractive prospect, after Mr Wilson's discouraging comments; it seemed to indicate that there was some force in the Cosmos working for an ultimate justice. After an interval, however, I gathered that the question was not one that I should answer; neither the Prime Minister nor the Governor sent for me; and when the Fates, as cosmic instruments, finally made up their minds and impelled the

Government of New Zealand to do something about the bounty that had fallen so prematurely into its lap, they were seen to have come down on the side of Mr Johannes C. Andersen. Well: one could hardly be surprised at that. Anyway, by then I had read H. G. Wells's *Outline of History*, that first electrifying edition in parts, and I was off in a fresh direction. Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, to be young, to be reading the *Outline of History* in weekly parts. Mr Andersen could have the Turnbull Library.

Let me now clearly announce that in celebrating this fiftieth anniversary of the beginning of the public function of the Turnbull Library I should not be taking the lead. I know of only one man who should be doing that, apart from the Turnbull's own officers, and I have neither the intimacy nor the breadth of Dr McCormick's scholarship. I really know very little about Alexander Horsburgh Turnbull or the history of his library, either while he was building it up or since it came into the hands of the State. I have been a hanger-on, an outsider – though taken in with enormous hospitality and allowed a free run by the staff, even when some of my opinions on the destiny of the library differed from theirs; I have been a sort of profiteer; I have tended to regard the place as a private preserve of my own, to which I have been willing to allow a few other people access; I have been not at all pleased to find, once or twice, all the seats taken. You can be an outsider and still feel all that. I do hold it up as a virtue in myself that I never robbed the library. For when I came into it first I felt like Robert Clive confronted by the treasury of Bengal. You know that he stood astonished at his own moderation. I stand astonished at my total abstinence. There I was, hit between wind and water, once again, by a salvo of romance, practically sunk. I had only to fill my pockets with the most delectable pieces of figured gold, fantastic jewellery, and walk out. I could be gloating over them at home now. The confounded puritan upbringing that dogs so many of us! There is strong reason for thinking that in that early time there were visitors less restrained by the rules of an immoderate morality. Still, there were plenty of books left. You could hardly emerge from the front door with the Kelmscott Chaucer or Johnson's Dictionary under your arm, unwrapped, without being noticed by somebody; and there was a rule, I think, against taking in suitcases or cabin-trunks.

Mr Andersen was, also, as you are no doubt well aware, an author; and on a larger scale that Mr Wilson. He wrote a large book on the history of Canterbury, and another on Polynesian myths and legends; he had written verse of a rather embarrassing nature and was about to publish, I think, on English prosody; he wrote, at length, on Maori string figures and on place names; he was the Polynesian Society's editor, and had a large volume coming up on Polynesian music; he

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

all the same as saying that we are well off, as students or special readers. Add all our books and manuscripts together, add all the libraries in New Zealand together, and we still should not get more than a small fraction of a library of real size and scope. We should still have to send away for microfilms and xerox copies. We are of course an odd people. I do not need to adduce to you the history of the National Library to prove that; and you are acquainted with the fact that as our university population rises, together with the extension of research and the pursuit of higher degrees – which mean, or should mean, the satisfaction of special needs – our universities are being urged to spend less and less on books, while the huge rise in prices, added to by devaluation, makes it imperative to spend more and more. It is not much comfort to reflect that most peoples are in some way odd, and that the British Museum is chronically short of money. But how odd can we be, and still respect ourselves as a community? It depends, I suppose, on what we respect ourselves for. I suppose we could respect ourselves for having, not a healthy provincial, but a crudely unabashed colonial, mind. I hope, on the other hand, that we are past that point; that we do assume naturally that we are a healthy province. It is no use trying to persuade ourselves, even with the most painstaking snobbery in the world, that we are a metropolis – even if the Turnbull does have a Milton collection that a metropolis might envy.

Of course I do not think that possession of a large number of books necessarily makes us more than crudely colonial. But it does tend to help the health of the mind. It is, on the whole, an aid to the intellectual activity of the community. We do need more than the Bible and the Pilgrim's Progress and James Bond, even as an aid to our prose style. I was conversing a few weeks ago with Sir Harold White at the National Library of Australia at Canberra. You know they have a very good new monumental building there, in an expanse of lawn, overlooking a lake, with sculpture by Henry Moore outside, and a fountain, and a ring of fountains and trees in the distance; and I said to Sir Harold, 'What about expansion? Have you your plans for expansion laid down?' He answered, 'I don't think we need worry about that yet. There's room for ten million books underneath.' I understand the combined contents of our New Zealand libraries, of all sorts except school libraries, add up to something over ten and a half million volumes. We must not say combined resources, because two copies of the same book do not exactly double resources. Well: if you suggested a national library in New Zealand by the end of this century, in one place, of ten million volumes, would you get a very good reception from the financier concerned? Yet by the end of this century we expect to have our population attaining its third million. That would work out at three-plus books – or titles, in library terminology – per person. That

doesn't seem so extravagant to me. Perhaps I am naive. Perhaps I am, once again, romantic. When I was young I dreamed dreams, and now –though possibly it is just that something has gone wrong with my eyes, through too much use of microfilms – perhaps I see visions. I even see a vision of Henry Moore outside our new National Library.

That elementary bit of play with numbers brings me back to thinking about the Turnbull, in its relations with other libraries. A great collector of books can either specialize, or he can just amass books; or he can do something in between, he can drive his tastes in double harness. Alexander Turnbull belonged to this third class: he was interested in English literature – first editions and so forth; he was interested in New Zealand and the Pacific; and just before he died, I gather, he had added a third horse to his team, in the form of the history of the stage and drama. His great contemporaries or near-contemporaries stuck much more closely to one theme: Hocken in New Zealand, David Scott Mitchell and Sir William Dixson in Sydney. Hocken worked on New Zealand, Mitchell and Dixson on the whole Pacific, and Mitchell picked up things that certainly ought to be in New Zealand. With everybody no doubt there is a marginal area. But the Turnbull, in the sphere of Oceania, could never be a rival to the Mitchell; and now that the Dixson collection has gone under the same roof in Sydney as the Mitchell, I doubt if there is anything else, outside the British Museum, that will ever be. On the other hand, you will look in vain, in the Mitchell, for the folio sermons of John Donne, the Gibbon quartos, the first editions of *Paradise Lost* or *Hyperion* or *Lord Jim*. And those are things we desperately need, if we are to see truly the development of the English, and hence the New Zealand, mind. I almost, at this point, bring out a theory of my own on the influence of book sizes on the development of English prose, but that might be too violently parenthetical. I assure you, all the same, that Donne's sermons are just as important for us as the journals of Captain Cook. Now, Turnbull could have extended this side of his collection enormously, to our advantage, if he did not run too far into the sands of Swinburne and that sort of thing – and he may have had every intention of doing so: though I feel a little bit dubious when I remember the large unopened packing cases which, I was told, contained his first orders on the history of the stage. I do not condemn the history of the stage: I simply speculate about the ultimate value, comparatively, in the life of the community and of scholarship, of the specialized library, the 'learned library', and of the more general library. Which is going to bring us closer to the heart of the Cosmos and do we want to get there? Should we give our collectors orders on what to collect, or should we let them have their fun? Should we encourage them to collect manuscripts as well as books, and prints, and maps? You see these collections, when

they come into public ownership (and we must assume public spirit and generosity on the part of our collectors, even without the inducement of the American tax system), are going to determine the future patterns of research. Would it be a good thing to invent a system, and pick on promising young men with a bent for collecting, and allot them fields – seventeenth-century poets for one, eighteenth-century geography for another, twentieth-century lecture manuscripts for a third – and have them all heavily subsidized by the state? Would this be anything more, really, than the subsidy by public subscription through which the British Museum was enabled to buy the Codex Sinaiticus? It might be a trifle expensive, since the Americans and the Russians introduced their policy of scouring the Old World and buying up whole libraries, but what great achievements were realized without great efforts? When one thinks of the Old World, indeed, is one not driven to other sorts of disquiet? Would it not be sensible of the British Museum and the Bibliothèque Nationale and the Abbey of Melk (I cannot run through all Europe) to export all their collections to New Zealand as a preservative measure for when the bombs go off? It would stimulate scholarship here and bring a lot of money into the country and add to the prestige of our universities: it might even offset some of the ruin we face when the United Kingdom goes into the E.E.C. Of course they would have to face the risk of some misguided Frenchman putting his finger on the button at the wrong moment at Mururoa and sinking us and European civilization together.

What I am driving at in this roundabout way, you will perceive, is the statement, not very original, that New Zealand has – we as New Zealanders have – a responsibility towards civilization; and I see it much more in terms of the library than of fighting in someone else's backyard. I think this statement is a true one; and I think I see our realization of its truth in terms of our history. It is the history of a colony, a dependency, living politically and intellectually at second hand, that turned into something else. What that something else is it is hard to define, and this is not the sort of lecture that calls for precise political definition, either of New Zealand's status or of that of any other political community. Few of the old definitions work any longer. But there are elements of independence in it, and elements of maturity. Our concern with the library – let me give the thing a generic name – has these elements. It has them in common with another institution of some intellectual significance in our country, the university. The library is no longer a few hundred books of fiction and miscellaneous uplift attached to a Mechanic's Institute. The university is no longer a small gathering of imported teachers and underworked students picking their way through a minimum of text-books for examination by some allegedly eminent professor overseas. They have both become large

ingredients in the national consciousness over the last thirty or forty years, the library developing rather later, I think, than the university: certainly both becoming serious institutions. You cannot cut them arbitrarily apart. The university has three functions: to spread knowledge, to preserve knowledge, to extend knowledge; or, if you prefer it put more actively, to teach men to think, to preserve the results of former thinking, to foster that sort of thinking called research. Are not the functions of the library the same? – though fundamentally it may be devoted to providing the means of thought rather than training in thought. You may say: Ah, but what about the laboratories and the computers of the physicist and the chemist and the engineer? Haven't they a primary, a superlative importance in the modern world? And does the Turnbull or the Hocken or the G.A.L. or the Country Library Service provide these? No, none of them does; but the demands those fellows, physicist, chemist, engineer, make on the library in the course of their work is quite astonishing; and they are quite as self-righteous in their demands as the classical scholar, the economist, the historian. You may like to warn me that I am talking too much in terms of scholarship, that I have forgotten the works of imagination, the story, the play, the poem. No, I have not forgotten them, I do not wish to maim the library, I wish to see in it all the nobility, the exultations and anguish and meditations of the human mind; and I think we can classify them as knowledge: more important than some of its other departments, yes. You may like to bring into the discussion a country's archive collection; and I should say Of course, and say it eagerly, if I were discussing the preservation and utilization of all the records of the country's development and identity, all its links with humankind. The historian, or certain sorts of historian, may lean on both library and archives, possibly equally on both. I should agree that we have very lately come by a sense of responsibility in relation to archives. But archives and library are not the same thing; and I am discussing the library.

I am driving at something else, in relation to the library, in relation to its seriousness, in relation to our responsibility to civilization. I am driving from a different direction at the development of the library in New Zealand, in the development of the librarian. I hark back in the first place to my own no doubt tedious memories of literary life in colonial Wellington, of Andrew Lang among my father's books, my romance-sodden youth, my uncertainties, the librarians who were such significant figures to me, the summary of a librarian's qualifications by my much-admired schoolmaster. When I look back at those librarians I have to smile – not, quite certainly, in a scornful or patronising way. If I did so I should deserve scorn myself. Then in what way? In the way – I fumble with these words – in which one looks back at practitioners

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

carefully, with a mind that remains library-orientated, you will descry somewhere in the hurly-burly the figure of Alexander Horsburgh Turnbull, the pattern of Pacific exploration, the glint of gold on a leather binding.

At this point I realize, with alarm and depression, how completely I have let you down. These large generalizations, this trivial self-centred reminiscence, masquerading as a lecture on the library: and now it is too late to pour out a stream of constructive thought, such as should issue from the realities of this contemporary scene, carry you excitedly to the basic demands of commercial and technical information, information retrieval, all the electronic glories of our modern blood and state. I was even wondering how I could work up to another piece of poetry, on the plea that it was written by a librarian. I realize only too well that the historian, however confidently he may talk, has few certainties to offer you. You should have got someone who knew something to address you. – And what about the Cosmos? you may enquire: have I no word of explanation or benediction for, can I retrieve no information about the Cosmos, before I sink into oblivion? Isaac Disraeli does not seem to have examined it. I have dragged it in where I could. If you press me, I explain that I added it to my title just to make you think the lecture might be interesting. We are all part of the Cosmos. The Library is part of the Cosmos. My librarian-poet, preliminary to his declaration of love, thought of a second quatrain:

> Knowing how unsure is all my knowledge, doled
> To sloven memory and to cheated sense,
> And to what majesty of stars I hold
> My little candle of experience . . .

Well, all our candles are little ones. Without the Library, should we have anything worth calling a candle at all?

J. C. Beaglehole

ALEXANDER TURNBULL – SOME BIOGRAPHICAL REFLECTIONS

Address delivered at the Alexander Turnbull Library on Thursday, 16 July 1970, by Dr E. H. McCormick

With some reluctance, I must confess, I have interrupted my shamefully protracted labours to speak informally this evening on Alexander Turnbull. I hope I am committing no grave breach of confidence in disclosing that when Mr Bagnall invited me to do so he anticipated my unwillingness 'to tear myself away from Auckland', as he expressed it. But, he pointed out, I would have to visit the Library at some stage to check up personally on a number of outstanding points – and, he may well have implied, to give some relief to his staff distracted by my constant inquiries. Further, he wrote, it might be an advantage for me to stand off from my subject, disregard the detail, and look at it in what he termed 'a much smaller compass'. Taking my cue from these hints, I shall try to present an objective view of the enterprise to which I am committed, attempt to see Turnbull in summary – or at least in relatively simple – terms, and touch on my aims, methods, and assumptions.

I say assumptions, for I have no theories of my own and in the course of fairly extensive reading I have discovered none that seemed directly relevant to the particular problems that confronted me. But I have occasionally come across some statement by masters of the art – or craft – of biography that seemed to illuminate and confirm my pragmatic approach. There is, for example, the much quoted passage by Dr Johnson. The biographer, he wrote, should 'pass slightly over those performances and incidents which produce vulgar greatness, to lead the thoughts into domestic privacies, and to display the minute details of daily life'. Or again there is Virginia Woolf presenting a rather similar view in a series of concrete questions. 'When and where did the . . . man live;' she asks, 'how did he look; did he wear laced boots or elastic-sided; who were his aunts and his friends; whom did he love and how; and when he came to die did he die in his bed like a Christian, or . . .'

However reassuring the dicta of one's illustrious forerunners, they are again of little practical use and perhaps raise more questions than they answer. The minute, mundane details rather than the public performance, yes, one assents. But *which* details from the overwhelming multiplicity to be found in the least complicated of lives? And what if it happens that no personal minutiae have survived – particulars of the hero's taste in footwear, for instance? Ultimately the biographer must deal with his problems according to circumstances and with such skills

as he can muster. In the act of composition when he is seated at his desk and must choose this fact or that, one word or a synonym, a particular document or some alternative, it all depends. It depends on the nature of his subject, on the kind and extent of his sources, on the purpose for which he is writing, and, not to be exhaustive, on his own preferences and limitations.

To turn from the impersonal biographer to myself, what, I ask, has guided me thus far in writing the life of Alexander Turnbull? What are my aims? They are so simple and self-evident that I would blush to name them if I were still capable of that youthful accomplishment: I have been seeking to create a true picture of the man. Though my purpose is simplicity itself, how different the realization. It has meant establishing – or attempting to establish – innumerable facts not only about Alexander Turnbull but about his parents, his relatives, and his friends: when they were born, when they were married, when they died, how much money they left, details of their occupations, their diversions, their perpetual travels in the First Saloon. Hence the continuous flow of questions from Green Bay, Auckland, to the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, and from there to Somerset House, London, the Commissary Office, Edinburgh, the Sheriff's Office, Jedburgh, to name only some of the repositories called on to supply dates and documents. And hence, I must emphasize, the immensity of my debt to Mr Bagnall and his staff, especially Miss Margery Walton who with more than saintly patience has borne the brunt of my inquiries.

A framework of verified facts is an indispensable part of any biography – or such is my pedantic assumption. But the truth about a man will not, of course, be revealed by the registrars of births, deaths, and marriages. More personal sources are required if the biographer is to penetrate to the region of domestic privacies or create even a faint semblance of the living man. He needs letters, diaries, journals, together with first-hand impressions and fragments of gossip if they can be found. Some such records of the Turnbull family do exist, covering a period of about six decades. For the early years Walter Turnbull, Alexander's father, is the chief witness with half-a-dozen shipboard narratives, including two versions of a journal he kept when he emigrated to New Zealand in 1857. In addition there is a small packet of letters sent to his elder daughter Isabella while she was at school in Britain during the seventies and an unfinished memoir of his childhood. His wife, Alexandrina or Alexa, is represented by only one document, a long journal-letter describing part of the 1857 voyage. It is unfortunate there is not more, for Alexa was a livelier observer than the rather prosy Walter and remains a shadowy figure after her arrival in Wellington. Alexander, the youngest son, contributes most to the family archives.

Nothing survives from his first sixteen years, but towards the end of 1884 he acquired a bulky notebook which he continued to use until 1890. Here he entered so-called 'Logs' of voyages to and from New Zealand, a detailed account of his journey through the country in 1886, and other items, among them two bibliographical exercises. In 1891 he began to copy his letters – or most of them – and presumably continued the practice until shortly before his death. The extant volumes run on with minor breaks for the next decade, but the later ones were lost in circumstances that have never been satisfactorily explained. So for the last eighteen years there remain only such of Turnbull's letters as a handful of friends and associates chose to preserve. There are, besides, miscellaneous letters addressed to him and a mass of invoices and receipts recording his transactions with booksellers from 1887 onwards. Finally come the legends and the gossip, some on record, some still circulating orally.

Altogether, it is a pretty mixed collection, spread unevenly over the years between Walter's departure for Wellington in 1857 and Alexander's death in 1918. But there are enough personal records to disclose at irregular intervals some of the innocent privacies of bedroom, billiard-room and cabin. Moreover, they are sufficiently full to permit an approach which I find best suited to my tastes and limitations: namely one that allows the biographer to retire into the background, leaving facts and people to speak for themselves as far as possible. If this method were carried through to its conclusion, the biographer, as such, would of course retire completely, adopt the role of editor, and publish the documents in their entirety, appropriately introduced, annotated, and indexed. Some family remains are suitable for such treatment but not the Turnbull papers, as even a casual inspection will show: they are too wordy and repetitive (Alexander's letters alone would, I estimate, run to three or four thick printed volumes), and they are, for the most part, too trivial in content. Nevertheless, they provide the indispensable raw material of biography and, as I have remarked, lend themselves to an indirect approach on the part of the writer. The biographer of this persuasion, to elaborate briefly, uses the hint in place of the assertion, he favours the implication rather than the direct statement, and he prefers to withhold judgement – that duty he relegates to God and his reader. His method is exploratory, tentative, non-committal. It is closer to the one adopted by such novelists as Henry James and E. M. Forster than to that of the didactic, moralizing biographer of a more robust age.

Lest I am raising expectations that cannot be fulfilled, I hasten to add that the prospective reader will find no drama of Jamesian depth and complexity in the biography of Alexander Turnbull. Nor will he often be called on to exercise his divine prerogative. The Turnbull papers are in general a record of ordinary events and mundane activities relieved

here and there by an element of the melodramatic, the scandalous, or the tragic. In fact, they are more or less what you find in similar collections left by middle-class families with the foresight or imprudence to preserve their archives. In many respects they resemble the Field-Hodgkins papers, but the correspondence of a gifted artist lends that collection a peculiar distinction. There is no such character in the Turnbull circle, and Alexander, who stands at its centre, was in some ways a very ordinary person. 'Is he worth a biography?' commented a young scholar when, in answer to his inquiry, I mentioned my current occupation. Though I did not say so, he echoed the question I have pondered in recurring moods of depression. 'We are nobodies', Alexander once wrote of his family and himself. Pursuing that train of thought, I have occasionally wondered whether I wasn't engaged in compiling the life of a Mr Pooter. The correspondence of Alexander Turnbull abounds in Pooterisms, while the score of his limitations is an impressive one. Unlike Napoleon, the hero of his youth, he was not a great man – he led no conquering armies and founded no dynasty. Unlike one of his minor heroes, Nelson, or Cook, who ultimately seems to have replaced Napoleon, he never won a battle or explored an ocean. He was not a political leader or a social reformer or even a writer. On the other hand, he was never responsible for the death of another human being; he never ordered a flogging; he never (to the best of my knowledge) lived in adulterous union with someone else's wife; and his life was innocent of the intrigue and the ambition that beset the careers of most politicians and many literary figures. The list of his negative achievements and negative virtues could be extended, but they can be disregarded in the light of his one claim to distinction: Alexander Turnbull founded the library that bears his name. (And, as it has since occurred to me, the young scholar whose slighting remark touched off these reflections had drawn mainly on that same library for his own research into New Zealand history.)

This sedentary, unspectacular achievement – the foundation of a unique library – was at the centre of Turnbull's life and must necessarily be one of his biographer's chief concerns. But not, of course, to the exclusion of all else. Indeed, it would be a false view of Turnbull that presented him as a bibliophile and nothing more. Further, important clues to his development as a collector would be missed by disregarding other interests and activities. Here I speak with the authority of my own shortcomings, for some years ago I attempted to do precisely that. The simplified account I gave in *The Fascinating Folly* contains some errors of fact and, as I now realize, did less than justice to the variety of Turnbull's collection and the complex influences that shaped it. The new venture will, I hope, make amends for past omissions and misdeeds. But pending its completion – in the not too distant future, if my

routine is not again disturbed – let me, as a sample of the whole, summarize the earlier sections until Turnbull established himself as a collector. In deference to Mr Bagnall's wishes I shall avoid detail, as far as I can, and I shall permit myself greater licence to assert and comment than I have done in the biography.

I begin not with Turnbull or his birthplace but in Scotland some centuries before his appearance and with his remote forebears. I adopt this approach not merely as a conventional gesture towards the unseen generations that helped to form him but also because Scottish genealogy and history were among Turnbull's continuing interests and contributed one substantial section to his library – a section I failed to mention in the earlier essay because I was unaware of its existence. Moreover, the ancestral past formed the subject of his first bookplate – Walter Crane's rendering of the clan's eponymous founder, that man of great spirit who seized a charging bull by the horns and turned it aside from Robert Bruce, thus earning rich estates from his grateful monarch. When the Turnbulls emerge from the mist of legend in the early nineteenth century their estates are gone and the head of Alexander's branch of the clan, his great-grandfather William, is a general storekeeper in the town of Galashiels. These last two facts again seem to have some bearing on the central theme. In due time Alexander adopted the family's mercantile calling and, obviously enough, if he had not been a wealthy business man there would have been no Turnbull Library – at least no library as we know it. The relevance of of Galashiels is not quite so plain, but it seems worth noting that Sir Walter Scott lived two miles away at 'Abbotsford'. Was this perhaps one source of Alexander's baronial pretensions which, transmitted through his father and mingled with other influences, finally took shape in the present library building? One can't be sure. Nor is it possible to assert that because Walter grew up near this venerated figure he developed bookish interests and a taste for self-expression. Only the interests are certain, recorded in his shipboard journals. Whatever their origins and their possible effects on his youngest son, his literary attainments found no direct outlet in his chosen career. He also took up the family calling, established himself in the town of Peebles, went into partnership with a namesake, George Turnbull, and in 1856 decided to transfer the business to New Zealand. Before leaving the next year he married Alexandrina Horsburgh who seems to have stood a step or two higher on the social scale than Walter: her father was deputy lieutenant of county Sutherland and she is described as gentlewoman in the marriage register.

This was a decisive move, for if Walter and Alexa had stayed in Scotland the Turnbull Library would, of course, never have been founded. Why did they migrate?

Walter supplies an answer in the entry of his shipboard diary for 12 August 1857, a week after he left Plymouth: 'Rested very ill last night as usual and had recourse twice to a soporific called *aqua vitae* but with indifferent Success: a Sound Sleep is a luxury I have not enjoyed for, I am afraid to say how long, but certainly not for Six months at least, and this I attribute in a great measure to intense mental anxiety; during that time two very important matters have been engrossing my attention, and are still: the first was getting married, and this, with all right thinking and well meaning people, is a matter not lightly gone into, nor without much thought; luckily for me, I had no distracting doubts as to the qualifications of the young lady I made choice of for a wife, but I had a very great many as to how I would support her properly when I got her and So powerful were they also, that they induced me to leave my own country, where I could not see I had any chance of making a comfortable living, to go to New Zealand, whither my good wife and I are now bound, in the good Ship the *John Macvicar,* to seek there for a larger share of the world's wealth, than we could possibly have found at home The preparation for the marriage therefore, the preparations for going abroad, the establishing connexions at home for the purpose of trade, the canvassing for consignments, and the anxiety of mind connected with all as to whether the step I was taking would prove a Success or a failure, have kept my mind so much on the rack night and day that sleep has all but gone from me, but I trust less anxious times are in Store for me yet.

Walter is not often so revealing and when revising the journal in later life suppressed the passage – an example the biographer, in his zeal for uncovering domestic privacies, has seen no reason to follow. Alexa also wrote of her husband's sleeplessness but not of his soporifics, and both conscientiously recorded the novel phenomena of shipboard life – the sunsets, the storms, the flying fish, the dying children, the boredom, the drunkenness, the scandal. A glimpse of her husband and fellow passengers supplied by Alexa: 'W., though troubled with sleepless nights, has become stout – his appearance Similar to a "Whiskered Pandour" or "a fierce Hussar" If you could have a glimpse just now of the Saloon of the *John Macvicar* you w[d] think us a busy community. It is not teatime yet, many are writing – others Sewing & talking – M[r] Gaby is mounted on the table making himself useful, by cleaning out the water filters. the Sounds of music come from M[rs] Lambert's Cabin – promenaders are above our heads. the report of a gun is heard now & then. The Quarter Deck is like a fair, on a small scale – children Swinging on a real Swing – women washing & baking – a number of men are occupied cutting up a pig, which has just fallen a Sacrifice to our Carniverous tendencies – the old highland wifie sits apart with folded hands looking on – thinking – thinking –'

The Turnbulls, it is clear, were highly literate and both were great readers: among the writers represented in the small library they carried with them to New Zealand were Macaulay, Marryat, Dickens, Fenimore Cooper, Washington Irving, with Colonel Mundy, author of *Our Antipodes*, and Charles Hursthouse Junior, author of *New Zealand*. Nor must I omit to mention that both were pious, though not oppressively so: Alexa distributed tracts to the sailors but also danced in the cuddy; Walter censured his fellow travellers' laxity on the Sabbath but sometimes joined them in a game of cards – a relief, he found, from continuous reading.

After four months at sea they landed in Wellington and for more than a decade disappear from view – that is, in their private aspect. Public or semi-public activities have been uncovered, a few by myself, far more by Miss Walton – far more, indeed, than I have found it possible to use. Walter established himself with his partner in Willis Street, he bought land, he sat on committees and councils, he undertook a brief business trip to Britain, he dissolved the partnership with George Turnbull, he bought more land, he built stores, warehouses, shops – in a word he prospered. More than that, in collaboration with Alexa he initiated a new and fruitful chapter in the history of the Turnbull clan. As children appeared in rapid succession their advent was announced in the *Wellington Independent* or the *New Zealand Spectator*: a daughter and three sons, born in a house in Tinakori Road, and two sons, Robert and Alexander, born in the next home, situated in Dixon Street. 'Precisely where in Dixon Street?' some pedantic reader may ask. The question is, alas, unanswered and apparently unanswerable, for it has baffled even the ingenuity and pertinacity of Mr Bagnall himself. Hence, if Wellington should ever decide to affix a memorial plaque to some building associated with Alexander Turnbull, it will encounter serious problems: his birthplace is unknown, his office on Customhouse Quay is demolished, and two of his homes are soon to meet a similar fate. One of them, the present nurses' home of Bowen Street Hospital, known to the Turnbulls as 'Elibank', was bought by Walter in 1869 when Alexander was six months old. There the last child was born, a daughter christened Joanna but usually called Sissie, and there for a while Walter and Alexa lived with five of their children: the eldest son had died of croup in 1867 and a year later Isabella, the elder daughter, had left to go to school in England.

The Turnbulls had now been thirteen years in the colony and, as Walter remarked when opening a new shipboard journal, Alexa was 'yearning greatly to see again her native land and the few friends that were still left of the many she had parted with'. Accordingly they set off in December 1870, taking with them the three elder boys but not the baby Joanna and not Alexander, then two years of age. Only after

anxious thought, Walter was careful to explain, had they decided on this course. 'It was', he wrote, 'a hard trial to both my Wife and myself to leave our two youngest children behind us, but we believed it was much better for the dear children themselves to leave them behind than to Subject them to the hard fare and the rough usage of a long Sea voyage, the more So as our Contemplated absence from them was to be Short, and we were leaving them in the care of a most Kind & tender hearted friend . . .' Apart from this there are few intimacies in the new journal, not much about natural phenomena, and no references at all to reading. But Walter does mention the ship's newspaper to which both he and Alexa contributed; he praises the captain who dispensed free drinks on festive occasions; he sometimes complains of sleeplessness; and more frequently he writes of the three boys, their health, their high spirits, their engaging pranks. The revelation during this voyage is of Walter as the fondest of parents. A more perfunctory journalizer now than he had been in 1857, he ends in mid-ocean soon after the passengers celebrated crossing the Line with potations of champagne supplied by the generous captain.

That the Turnbulls reached London and travelled to Scotland can be inferred from an incident recorded not by Walter but by some anonymous journalist, with the heading, *Sad Fatality*. This paragraph from the *Wellington Independent* for 4 November was the reward of Mr Bagnall's inspired and persistent searching:

'By the arrival of the English mail yesterday, the friends of Mr Walter Turnbull, of this city, received the intelligence of his having sustained an extremely distressing family bereavement. It appears that, by a sad accident, two of his children have been drowned – both fine young boys, aged eight and nine years. The accident happened in the river Tweed, in the vicinity of Peebles, and during the visit of Mr Turnbull to the city of Edinburgh. Accompanied by a servant girl, they had gone to the river to bathe. When the girl thought they had been sufficiently long in the water, she called to them to come out. Robert, the youngest of the three, did so at once; the other two replied that they would be out immediately. While engaged dressing the youngest, she turned to look to the river where the boys were, and missed them. She at once gave an alarm, and it was found that the poor boys had gone over a bank or a ledge on the bottom of the stream into a pool ten feet deep – the Tweed being in that neighbourhood a succession of shallow streams and deep pools. The bodies were got out, and everything was done to restore animation, but without avail. . . . Yesterday, on the news being received, the vessels in harbour showed their colors half mast in recognition of the general regret it had caused.'

In their extremity the Turnbulls were supported by their unquestioning faith – or so Walter's one extant reference to the tragedy seems to

imply. In another journal begun on the homeward voyage he wrote: 'We came to the house of our fathers with three as strong & healthy boys as ever lived, and in one day we were bereft of two of them; let us not boast ourselves therefore of tomorrow, but Watch and be prepared for our own Call, at whatever hour we may be Summoned.' There was 'no help for it' in Walter's phrase but to pack up, say their farewells, and return by the fastest route to the two infants left in Wellington. They travelled across America and reached home early in December, to find the children both in good health, reported Walter in bringing the journal to a close.

Outwardly in good health but perhaps not wholly unaffected by the absence of their parents. His younger son certainly gave Walter reason for mild anxiety in the months that followed their return. To Isabella, a pupil of Miss Dransfield's seminary in Camberwell, he writes in April 1872, 'Alick is a terrible Turk, and rules over every one in the house with a rod of iron, when he does not get his own way, but I think he is getting more easy to deal with than he was at first; in our absence he had been left very much to do as he liked.' And again in September: '. . . Alick . . . Seems to have far greater enjoyment in destroying his Toys than playing with them, and his face just beams with delight when he has been detected Knocking the head off a Doll or Smashing to pieces a Noah's Ark and its Contents.' But, as the correspondence unfolds, this picture is modified by glimpses of a sheltered and, it would seem, a happy childhood: Alick gardening with the nursemaid in the grounds of 'Elibank'; Alick picnicking with the family at Worser Bay or on holiday in Masterton and Auckland; Alick riding on his pony or playing with Sissy on the beach at the foot of Bowen Street; and, in due course at the age of five, Alick cheerfully following Robert to school. 'Which school?' again asks the nagging, inquisitive reader. And again the biographer is forced to admit that he doesn't know, adding in mitigation of his ignorance that the problem has baffled the combined brains of the Alexander Turnbull Library.

The elusive fact, one reflects with a slight twinge of conscience, is probably not essential to an understanding of Alexander's development. He spent little more than a year at the nameless Wellington school before setting out at the age of six on his first ocean voyage – a fact that is undoubtedly of the profoundest significance. In February 1875 Walter embarked for London with his wife and family, so initiating a new phase in his career. For more than a decade he was to commute between two hemispheres, one the focus of his affections, the other the centre of his commercial interests and the source of his increasing wealth. Of his numerous voyages in this period records of two survive – affectionate, nostalgic, tedious journal-letters dutifully compiled for the benefit of Alexa and the children. They add further to the score of

oceans travelled, drinks consumed, nights passed in sleepless discomfort. And they disclose two more facts bearing on his younger son's future. In the earlier series, written in 1876, Walter describes a day ashore at the coaling port of Saint Vincent. 'When wandering up and down the Town', he writes, 'we entered a Wine Shop to get a drink, and when there I bought a few Portugese and Russian Coins for Alick's Collection, and I will try to pick up a goodly quantity before I return.' At the age of eight Alexander had already begun his career as a collector. The second series is written four years later on notepaper headed with the printed address, 'Mount Henley, Sydenham Hill, S.E.'. 'Mount Henley' was within easy walking distance of Dulwich College, the only one of Alexander's schools that can be positively identified. He entered it in April 1881 while his father was absent in New Zealand.

Dulwich is not one of the great public schools. A. E. W. Mason, Turnbull's older contemporary, described it in one of his novels as 'a brand-new day-school of excessive size, which gathered its pupils into its class-rooms at nine o'clock in the morning and dispersed them to their homes at four.' Nevertheless, it could boast cultural amenities unknown in more famous institutions. It possessed a unique collection of manuscripts, inherited from the founder, Edward Alleyn, and it owned a gallery hung with works by the masters – Poussin, Veronese, Gainsborough. Moreover, Dulwich and the surrounding district fairly bristled with literary associations: both Shakespeare and Donne were remotely linked to the village through Alleyn; Byron had lived there as a boy; Dickens had chosen it as Mr Pickwick's place of retirement; and Browning had often walked to the gallery from his native Camberwell, two miles away. But perhaps the most powerful of these unseen presences in the eighties was Ruskin, once a resident of nearby Denmark Hill but now withdrawn to Coniston in the Lake District. It might be assumed that the young Turnbull, already a collector by instinct and now exposed to these influences, would have transferred his attention from coins to manuscripts, books, and pictures, thus creating the nucleus of his future library. If only things were so simple! There is no evidence that either he or his articulate contemporaries were aware of the great Dulwich collections – at least during their schooldays. And if Turnbull shared his parents' literary interests at this time the fact has left no trace in the records. He spent only three years at the school and, except for winning a prize for mathematics in his first term, achieved no academic distinction. He took the compulsory subjects – Latin, French, mathematics – with special classes at various times in German and geography, and so far as rather meagre information shows, was a good average pupil. He shone only in outdoor activities, winning a place in the school's shooting team and, true son of his native land, playing for the first fifteen in his final year. Altogether his school career

was not a brilliant one, but the influence of Dulwich can by no means be discounted.

He left school in 1884, worked for a time in his father's London office (or more accurately, it seems, the office of Turnbull and Smith, wholesale drapers), and in the following years paid two visits to New Zealand, both recorded in the notebook mentioned earlier. On the first outward voyage, made at the end of 1884, he went alone on the *Ionic,* entering only bare details of the passage and none at all of his stay in the colony. The second time he accompanied his father, who was going out to arrange for his retirement, and travelled by the *Doric,* reaching Auckland early in 1886. (I apologise for the multiplicity of detail, but it cannot be avoided.) During this trip Alexander again kept what he termed a log and in addition wrote a very full account of the journey he made through the country with a friend of his own age. In his unformed hand and limping, schoolboyish prose he records the wonders of the Hot Lakes, as he calls them – the Pink and White Terraces, the boiling mud, the geysers; he writes at length of the Maoris, their songs, their legends, their religious views, their hospitality; he describes Taupo and Wairakei and the long, dusty coach drive to Napier. After a brief interlude in Wellington, the youths cross the Strait and, armed with a tourist guide, make for the Cold Lakes, first Manapouri: 'the loveliest scene, I think I have ever seen', to quote Alexander at his least felicitous and introduce a note of topical propaganda. Here they fall in with a character known only as George, rough it for a week, search the fields for moa bones, shoot rabbits, fish for eels. Finally, the more civilized pleasures of Queenstown and then, as so often in the Turnbull narratives, a blank. As other sources confirm, after this baptism – or rebaptism – of place, Alexander returned to England to resume his career in the wholesale drapery business, to continue a solitary course of selfeducation, and to build his library on the foundation of *The King Country or Exploration in New Zealand* by J. H. Kerry-Nicholls.

Or such is my tentative solution to a problem that is ultimately insoluble. On the fly-leaf of his copy of that book Turnbull wrote in his mature hand, 'This was the first book of my collection. I bought it to read going out in Ionic in Dec. 1885.' Now, as I was at excessive pains to emphasize, in December 1885 he travelled by the *Doric,* not the *Ionic,* the vessel which had taken him to New Zealand on his first visit the year before. Since *The King Country* was published in 1884, he could have read it during the earlier voyage, but 1885 seems the more likely date. For it seems at least possible that a recent reading of the book on the *Doric* had prompted him to undertake the tour and visit some of the places mentioned by Kerry-Nicholls. And there can be no doubt that in his North Island narrative he draws on *The King Country*

for Maori anecdotes and local lore as if it were fresh in his mind, not something he had read in the past.

A year more or less, one again reflects, is of little moment to anyone save a pedantic biographer. Whatever the precise date of his initiation, by the late 1880s Turnbull had become an ardent book collector. A handful of accounts survive from the last months of 1887, recording some of the young tyro's early purchases. In view of his recent travels it is not wholly surprising that voyage narratives figure prominently – Cook's in eight volumes quarto (presumably the official eighteenth century set), Parkinson's and Dampier's. In the New Zealand collection, narrowly defined, foundation works were Brees's *Pictorial Illustrations* (of special interest to a Wellingtonian), Cruise's *Journal of a Ten Months' Residence,* Domett's *Ranolf and Amohia* (bought soon after the poet's death), Grey's *Mythology of the New Zealanders.* Early in 1888 he acquired most publications of the Hakluyt Society, while a large purchase later in the year enriched and diversified the New Zealand collection. Certain items take on added significance in the light of the 1886 journey. S. Percy Smith's *Eruption of Tarawera,* for example, is a report on the disaster which occurred less than five months after Turnbull visited the Terraces. Then, as pictorial mementos of the tour, there are *The Sounds, Lakes, and Rivers of New Zealand* and the companion brochure, *The Thermal Springs of the North Island.* Works on the Maoris abound – White's *Ancient History,* Gudgeon's *History and Traditions,* Grey's *Polynesian Mythology,* Pope's *Health of the Maori* – and, less directly related to Turnbull's recent experiences, Buller's *Birds of New Zealand,* Buchanan's *Grasses of New Zealand,* Jervois's *Defence of New Zealand,* et cetera and so forth. His aims in this native field were not yet comprehensive but he was already casting his net very widely.

Voyages and works on New Zealand represent only two of Turnbull's interests in this early formative period. The invoices disclose that he bought 'Bewicks Works' and 'Fitzgerald's Works' and the 'Oeuvres de Moliere'; he bought Craig Brown's *History of Selkirkshire* and 'Lay's Scottish Cavaliers'; he also bought 'Piers Plowman' and 'England's Helicon' and 'Valpy's Shakespere' in fifteen volumes. And with particular zeal he seems to have hunted out and bought the works of John Ruskin. 'Why Ruskin in particular?' asks the biographer and remembers that he once lived on Denmark Hill near both Dulwich College and the Turnbull's "home" on Sydenham Hill. Pushing his inquiries farther, he consults the invaluable notebook kept by Turnbull in the eighties and comes to a section entitled 'Trip to English Lakes begun 6th August 1887'. This laboured account of solitary rambles and coach excursions, of ruined castles and inspiring sunsets, even more stilted in expression than the New Zealand journal, describes an excursion he made on the third day of his visit. In the morning he took a coach to

Coniston and after lunch at the hotel and a walk of two miles arrived at his destination – and perhaps the goal of his journey from London. 'Brantwood', he writes, was 'an irregular built cottage' that seemed to have been added to from time to time; 'at one corner', the account continues, 'a little tower has been built the sides consisting of small panes of glass where no doubt the Great Thinker often sits & scans the lake'. He passed on, returned to London, and in the following month bought *The Stones of Venice,* soon adding to this nucleus other works – *Hortus Inclusus, The Seven Lamps of Architecture, Praeterita, Examples of the Architecture of Venice.* The Great Thinker also seems to have inspired the purchase at four guineas, of 'Woodcuts after Giotto frescos at Padua', for the invoice adds, 'Mr Ruskin's Notes on same' (10/-).

Before I attempt to sum all this up, let me take one further example or series of related examples of slightly later date. With the sale of Turnbull and Smith to the firm of Sargoods in 1888, Turnbull had been freed for the single-minded pursuit of his vocation and now entered on a period of great activity. One acquisition probably made about this time was the *Catalogue of the Pictures in the Dulwich College Gallery.* Had he belatedly discovered the resources of his old school and immediate neighbourhood? A positive reply to the question is suggested by a companion volume, the *Catalogue of the Manuscripts and Muniments . . . at Dulwich* compiled by G. F. Warner of the British Museum. Turnbull's copy bears an inscription suggesting that it was sent to him with the 'Compliments' of a College official, evidently at his own request, in December 1889. The catalogue is a model of its kind, listing the extant correspondence of Edward Alleyn and other documents including the diary of Philip Henslowe, Mrs Alleyn's stepfather. Warner performed a further service by discussing the forgeries which the notorious John Payne Collier had introduced into these papers in support of his theories on the Elizabethan theatre. Was Turnbull aware of these revelations? Again the answer seems to be in the affirmative, for on 15 August 1890 he bought from John Galway of Garrick Street *The Old Dramatists from Lillis to Dryden* which was, he wrote on the fly-leaf, 'Said to be in hand-writing of J. Payne Collier'. It is his first recorded purchase of a manuscript. And here again I must acknowledge my debt to another over-taxed member of the Turnbull staff, Mrs Margaret Scott who drew my attention to Collier's manuscript.

Turnbull was only at the outset of his career as a bibliophile and the greater part of his life was still before him, but if I am not mistaken the pattern of his collecting was already beginning to emerge. Generally speaking, something in his life or background – some special interest or combination of interests – would impel him to gather material in a certain field, mainly books but sometimes manuscripts and pictures or occasionally medals and Wedgwood medallions. If the interest waned,

as it seems to have done with Napoleon, or if for any reason the field proved unprofitable, he simply ceased collecting. But when he was deeply engaged there was no limit to the effort and resources he was prepared to expend – in such circumstances he was a perfectionist. The most notable instance of this sort was his New Zealand collection where he proclaimed as early as 1893 that his aims were comprehensive. Here, too, one can see, as with the Dulwich catalogues, how one thing led to another. By the late nineties he had widened his range to include the Australian colonies and Pacific islands; but how thoroughly he collected in this area, vast in both the geographic and the bibliographic senses, I cannot say. To this broad thesis, I should add, certain qualifications must be made. For the origin of some special collections I can find no clue in the facts of Turnbull's life. Why, for example, did he decide to gather all he could by or about Milton? The decision, made soon after his return to New Zealand in 1892, simply came from the blue, as far as I can see. Then again outside the special collections there are in a library of the Turnbull's dimensions numerous books that cannot be worked into any biographical thesis unless of the vaguest kind. Many are there, I suppose, because they fitted into Turnbull's conception of a gentleman's library – the complete range of English classics, for instance, or those of Greece and Rome.

I am in danger of repeating my earlier error – that is of considering the bibliophile in isolation and ignoring other aspects of the man. And recollecting Virginia Woolf's catechism, I realize how imperfectly I have discharged my functions. Where and when did he live? she asks. That information at least has been supplied. Next, how did he look? To be brief, handsome in an Edwardian fashion, well-groomed, well-tailored, tall. *Question:* Did he wear laced boots or elastic-sided? Questioner is referred to a vast correspondence on the subject, often illustrated by sketches. *Question:* Who were his aunts and friends? *Answer:* Of aunts he had only one by marriage and of her nothing is known. Friends few, of acquaintances and correspondents a multitude. Then the absorbing modern question: Whom did he love and how? His father, the biographer replies evasively, his brother and his sister, but his mother less certainly. For the rest nothing but hints, gossip, legend – perhaps the answer may be found in his library. Finally, did he die in his bed like a Christian, or . . . ? A complex question, summoning up spectres from the past and the rumoured frailties of his later years – too complex for summary discussion. And since this is after all a commemorative occasion, I must assert my view that despite human frailties – of which his biographer has more than a share – there was in Alexander Turnbull a kind of greatness. The evidence may be found in his library.

A TROUBLED CHILDHOOD

'The nucleus of a National Collection'

The bequest to the Crown by Alexander Horsburgh Turnbull was the first in New Zealand of its kind, and in its range, character and value was then and still is unique. How did Government rise to the challenge of this splendid cultural if quite unsought legacy so far from the normal preoccupations of New Zealand, particularly at the end of the first World War? Were there people about who knew what should be done and were able to provide for future development as well as ensure appropriate custody for the collection? If we can be permitted to exercise summary judgement in anticipation of a conclusion before we have presented any of the evidence a provisional answer could be, on the whole, favourable except in the provision of funds – favourable or, less warmly, satisfactory at least by the standards of the time having regard to the general poverty of professional library expertise, the lack of any endowment and the fact that the Library's first fifteen years spanned one major and two mini economic depressions. With the virtue of hindsight and the courage of our slightly better resources we must avoid the temptation to hasty or complacent judgement and even have regard to the idiosyncracies of librarians as well of the administrators with whom, too often, the final decisions rested.

Space, time and discretion command that the outline history must be covered in varying depth and completeness. It is nevertheless possible to survey the initial decisions and some of the Library's struggles during the 'Andersen incumbency' a little more closely than has hitherto been practicable. Even a modest two decades take us to 1940 when the writer himself had been on the staff for more than two years. Much more importantly 1940 is an archival frontier at which point in terms of the thirty-year rule of access even an enlightened archives administration would say that use of contemporary files should stop. For various good reasons a closer perusal must be left to our successors as either historians or historian-librarians.

The Library climate at the time of the Turnbull bequest may help us to place the difficulties of the Library's beginnings in a suitable context – that is, if the use of this modern metaphor of 'climate' is not far too pretentious a way of summarising the scattered and unrelated thinking on librarianship in the early twenties. The New Zealand Libraries Association was in recess; a halting subsidy scheme lamely assisted a local authority public library movement, weak except in the four centres whose city councils mostly were still accustoming themselves to the necessity of making a modest provision beyond the range of a subscription system; the university libraries were enduring a starved

and protracted infancy. True, there had already been at least two outstanding bequests, that of Dr Hocken in Dunedin and Sir George Grey's gift to Auckland whose Library under the competent guidance of a young Scot, John Barr, was perhaps the most impressive of the city services with its Grey and Shaw collections. In Wellington, Herbert Baillie, a student of local history and former bookseller, was in charge at the Wellington Central Library. The reading room contained a surprisingly good general collection pervaded by a characteristic odour blended from stale paper, dust and dried sweat – unique and far removed from Lawrence Clark Powell's nostalgic recollection of Parisian Chanel and coal smoke. With its Newtown and Brooklyn branches it had a staff of about fifteen. The General Assembly Library with its staff of ten was the leading reference collection of national scope under the ministrations of a former journalist and litterateur Charles Wilson.[1] As the Library of Parliament it was obliged to reject implicitly if not overtly the periodic public suggestions that it was and should act as, the National Library.

In Dunedin the city's rate-supported public library was showing the way to New Zealand of the next generation but things were less happy at the University which controlled the Hocken Library, the bequest of Turnbull's old friend. We know that Turnbull was impressed by the public reaction to Dr Hocken's gift. Perhaps he took note of its subsequent history. One local school of thought considered that W. H. Trimble, Hocken's first librarian, had completed his task when he compiled the unorthodox and incomplete but most useful printed catalogue of the collection. Trimble was not amused when the University Council expected that he might take responsibility for the main Library as well as Hocken at half his former salary and word of his resignation may have reached Turnbull who at this time made the codicil[2] to his will which left the collection to the Crown instead of to Victoria University College. All in all the precedents for a generous staffing of such special collections were not encouraging.

Within a few weeks of Turnbull's death on 28 June 1918 Cabinet, in formally accepting the heritage, decided that the Library be called 'The Turnbull Library', that it be run on the lines of the Mitchell Library in Sydney, its management to be under the 'direct control' of the Chief Librarian of the General Assembly Library and its general supervision to be placed in the hands of the Board of Science and Art and, finally, that an officer be appointed to take charge of the Library who would be given 'the use of the residential quarters until such time as that portion of the building is required for State purposes'.[3]

The building itself in which Robert Turnbull, Alex's brother, resided for a period after his death, did not form part of the bequest and was purchased as a home for the collection for £9,133 with furniture and

fittings, etc, for an additional £593 19*s*.[4] As a result of representations by Robert Turnbull it was decided to call the Library 'The Alexander Turnbull Library' a change which was formally ratified by the Board of Science and Art in October 1921, following a Cabinet decision to this effect in July.[5] A provisional insurance cover on the building and library for £50,000 was taken out.[6]

The effect of the administrative decisions was to make the Chief Librarian of the Legislative Library the person to whom Turnbull's Librarian would be directly responsible while the Board of Science and Art, in the exercise of its 'general supervision', was in practice some degrees removed from short-term control except in a few minor matters. Mr Wilson, who was doubtless consulted about the propriety of this step, was appointed Advisory Director to the Turnbull Library at a salary of £50 per annum and as such reported to the Minister of Internal Affairs for the first three years.

Turnbull, although he had bequeathed his library to the Crown as the nucleus of a national collection had not made it over to the Parliamentary Library. After all he had lived opposite to it for twenty-five years and presumably knew something of it. There is no evidence that he intended his bequest to be administered as a part responsibility of its librarian, although the Cabinet decision was an understandable one in the circumstances of the time. What Turnbull thought of Wilson is not on any located record although Wilson himself claimed Turnbull's friendship. When he was busily restricting Mr Andersen's development of the theatre collection he claimed that 'Some five years ago when spending a Sunday afternoon' with Turnbull they had discussed the future of this section. Turnbull had noted that certain items he was thinking of ordering on Wilson's checking were found to be already in the General Assembly Library.[7]

The Board of Science and Art had been established by statute in 1913 to manage, *inter alia*, 'The Dominion Museum, Dominion Art Gallery and Dominion Library'. Clause 5 of the Act authorised the establishment of a 'Dominion Scientific, Art, and Historical Library . . . in the City of Wellington, within or adjoining the Dominion Museum'. The Dominion Library was the first legislative proposal for what we would today regard as a National Library and it was logical for Government to place the responsibility for Turnbull under its general direction. However, delays in the construction of the Museum and the war itself contributed to the increasing ineffectiveness of the Board which was finally abolished by the National Art Gallery and Dominion Museum Act of 1930.

The next step was the appointment of a Librarian, Johannes Carl Andersen who was appointed at a salary of £345 per annum shortly to be raised to £440. Mr Andersen, a poet, historian of Maori legend and

of South Canterbury, had transferred in 1914 from the district office of the Lands and Survey Department in Christchurch to the General Assembly Library. Despite the presence in the Library of the faithful, over-worked and under-valued Mr H. L. James he was virtually the second-in-command and his promotion to the Turnbull position left Wilson, his former chief, still virtually in charge in the capacity of Advisory Director. Andersen took up duties in January 1919 and in March reported to the Under-Secretary for Internal Affairs,[8] 'I have now a good general idea of the state of the Library as regards classification and arrangement, and of the amount of work required to be done in order to make it available to the public. I submitted to the Chief Librarian and he approved, an outline of the proposed course of work, methods to be adopted, etc. by which the New Zealand and Australian books will be taken first . . .' He thought that with an assistant he could have the 6,000 bound volumes of this section ready in about a year. However, this comprised less than a fifth of the whole and he recommended the appointment of two and, if possible, three assistants. Rather hopefully he thought that with two the first section might be ready before 1920 'and the whole library say in three years'. He was in fact to retire eighteen years later without the completion of a full catalogue of the original collection, let alone its accretions.

However, on 22 April, Miss M. D. Gray took up duties to be followed on 1 May by Miss G. F. G. Davidson and Miss Q. B. Cowles. The Librarian did not wish to take advantage of the living-in privileges authorised by Cabinet and responsibility for the off-duty hours of the Library and for its cleaning was in the hands of Miss Emily Brouard, an old Turnbull retainer, and Miss Hannah Grierson. Their domain, which vanished in the 1953–55 alterations, comprised the kitchen, bathroom, pantry and the two maid's rooms. A carefully drafted eight-clause schedule defined their duties. As well as cleaning the building they were to assist in moving the books and answering the door. For many years the visitor's first impression of the Library after ringing the bell was of the front door being opened by the tiny bird-like figure of Miss Brouard who was well capable of making a quick assessment of the credentials of the caller before permitting entrance. One or other of the two custodians was always to be on the premises (Miss Grierson resigned in May 1920 and was replaced by Miss J. Tweeddale who in turn was followed by Miss O'Donnell). On Miss Brouard's final retirement in October 1944 she was appropriately interviewed by the *New Zealand Listener* and written up under the caption *She dusted but did not read them.*[9]

A Miss U. I. M. Tewsley was appointed in September 1923 and had the distinction of editing for publication as the Library's second bulletin – (the first was Andersen's *One hundred representative New Zealand*

books) – Zimmerman's *Third voyage of Captain Cook* which appeared in 1926. At the end of that year Miss Tewsley transferred to the Museum and Miss Cowles to the General Assembly Library. One of the vacancies was filled by Miss A. M. Woodhouse as from 13 December 1926.

In addition to the basic tasks of cataloguing the collection the next question seemed to be that of rules for the operation of the Library. The Board in March[10] requested that rules be submitted for its next meeting. This was done and in June they were approved subject to amendments proposed by Mr H. F. Von Haast. It is of some interest that the approval was not a mere formality and that the proposer of amendments was one who in later life was closely associated with the Library, and one of its benefactors.

But perhaps one of the most vital questions of all was that of finance for its future growth and development. If the expectation of further donations was implicit in its origin, money was necessary for systematic building in accordance with the founder's wishes if the nucleus were to develop and grow. The Librarian in April 1919 asked the Under-Secretary if a decision had been reached as to the amount available per annum for new books. 'I presume that the New Zealand portion is to be kept up to date and if possible at least part of the Australian and Pacific portion so long as there is no duplication of works being taken by the Parliamentary Library and Museum.' A sum of £300 or £400 would enable all the New Zealand publications and the best of the others to be acquired. 'I understand, of course, that no purchases will be made by me except after consultation with Mr Wilson . . . but this Library is at a standstill so far as keeping up to date is concerned . . .'[12] The Under-Secretary (6 May 1919) thought that Mr Wilson's views should be obtained to which Andersen, a little testily, replied on 12 May that he wanted an indication of a specific sum to help in the discussions he was in any case having with Mr Wilson.

In July Wilson submitted a lengthy document to the Under-Secretary.[13] He proposed that in future 'only works on Australasia and Pacific history, geography, etc. should be added *by purchase* . . .', a view to which he adhered in his first published report:[14] '. . . In other branches of literature the requirements of students and the reading public are adequately met by the Parliamentary, the Museum, and the University libraries.' However commendable at first glance was this attempted rationalisation of collecting, it contained inbuilt contradictions which only today the National Library of New Zealand is attempting to solve. To meet the needs of Parliament there would have to be some duplication of New Zealand material while, conversely, it would be contrary to the intentions of Turnbull's will to restrict growth in these areas of the 'nucleus'. On the other hand the authority to specialise in Australiana posed a challenge to the Library and its parent

Department utterly beyond it, although the excellent Australian collection still provides a basis for National Library building in the future. Surprisingly ignored was the Library's already clear pre-eminence in the literature of New Zealand. Again, there was obviously to be no commitment to the rare book collection itself except by donation.

The formation of a policy however, was overshadowed unexpectedly by a posthumous debit from Turnbull's own purchases. A number of outstanding invoices for books supplied by Quaritch, although the volumes had been held in England at Turnbull's request until the end of the war, and hence had not been seen by him, were rejected by the Public Trustee as a claim against the estate. Among these were accounts for £654 14*s* 2*d*, the titles on the British theatre in accordance with Turnbull's request of 14 December 1916. E. Y. Redward, Crown Solicitor, to whom the question of the Crown's liability was referred, confirmed that there was no legal claim against the New Zealand Government but that one would lie against the Public Trustee as administrator.[15] However, commonsense prevailed and on 27 August 1919 the Minister, on the recommendation of Wilson and the Under-Secretary, approved the purchase of outstanding items totalling £1,331 16*s*.

Another matter was satisfactorily adjusted. A proposed remission of £6,000 death duties had been the subject of much correspondence and Government shuffling. A petition was formally presented on behalf of the Public Trustee with a recommendation for favourable consideration. In the debate[16] Wilford said that when the original bequest was made in 1907 the residuary estate was not liable for duty in terms of existing legislation. He claimed that the collection if auctioned at Sotheby's would now fetch £80,000. To the credit of Government the remission was authorised by Cabinet in February 1922, and the refund to the estate of £5,525 was placed on the 1922 Supplementary estimates.[17]

Nevertheless, the settlement of the Quaritch account was doubtless a discomforting prelude to a reasonable decision on the annual grant. Except for *ad hoc* approvals of small orders such, for example as that in December 1919, when the Minister was asked to approve expenditure of £30 on books, there does not seem to have been a grant at all. Perhaps the story told by Andersen to Mr Taylor of the verbal result of his approach to the Under-Secretary relates to this period: 'You've got a good collection – look after it.'

So without the sinews of war the inconsistencies and inadequacies of Mr Wilson's acquisition policy became almost irrelevant. Alexander Turnbull, it was estimated, had spent about £2,000 per annum on acquisition and a further £500 on binding.[18] A respectable percentage, 25 or even 40 per cent, of his total would have given the Library a viable basis for development but the need was not appreciated. In the numbed

shock of deprivation the deep surgery which pruned back Turnbull's list of current periodical subscriptions was almost unnoticed.[19]

It must, however, be recorded that in October 1921 the Librarian was advised that the Minister had approved 'an annual expenditure not exceeding £500 per annum' on the purchase of books and publications for the Library. Something, nevertheless, seems to have happened to this authority which clearly was not available for most of the period of these notes. (Librarian to Under-Secretary, 5 October 1921). Possibly it withered in the first small depression some months later.

There were, however, occasional unexpected dividends. At the end of the year Messrs Wright Stephenson 'who are clearing out their premises' sent up thirty cases of books and some 400 bound volumes of newspapers, a residue from the 1916 take-over of W. & G. Turnbull and Company's premises. With today's hind-sight we would have loved to be present at the clearing out of Messrs Wright Stephenson's premises. Not merely the archives of an important firm of stock and station agents might have been rescued but the records of Turnbull and Company themselves, now well lost to research except for dim indirect light in the files of solicitors and the occasional government archive. There might even have been some of A.H.T.'s own correspondence, perhaps the 1901–18 half, which according to legend brother Robert left in a tram, although with closer study one may feel that Robert's loss may not have been accidental.

But it was more than time to open the Library. Members and the general public had been wanting to know almost for years when they were to see the national treasures. Mr W. T. Jennings, the member for Waitomo, was a persistent questioner. In November 1918[20] he asked whether members would have an opportunity of visiting the Library. The Minister said because of 'want of staff' it was proposed to ask members to defer their visits until the next session. 'At present it is absolutely closed.' Mr Jennings tried again in September 1919.[21] 'What is the position of the closed Turnbull Library . . .?' He was told that 3,000 Pacific area volumes had been classified, accessioned and arranged and 4,000 remained to be dealt with. However, the Minister agreed that parties of members could now inspect the collection. Mr Jennings, from his remarks in the Supply debate,[22] availed himself of the opportunity. On 18 September the Honourable D. Buddo asked what provision was being made to keep up-to-date reference works on New Zealand and Australia.[23] Mr Wilson's suggested reply was that 'It is intended to secure the necessary works of a reference nature relating to Australia and New Zealand'. Neither probably understood what was meant by the term reference work but in this mandate for equivocation the policy of restraint was confirmed.

The second anniversary of Turnbull's death, 28 June 1920, was chosen

as the day for the official opening. The Honourable G. J. Anderson 'in the midst of a distinguished gathering' spoke briefly of the Library 'and of its great importance as a national historical collection'. Following afternoon tea, guests were shown over the three storeys of the building 'with its heavily stocked shelves'.[24]

With pressure now on the Librarian to show the Library, if not to the world, then to a small but sometimes discerning public, the time available for basic cataloguing diminished. His hopeful expectation of completing the task within three years was no longer mentioned. Much staff time went in showing visitors around. There was no reading room and, so far as can be judged from complaints, no reading area, although from the early 1920s an increasing number of graduate students came to use its New Zealand resources. The limited number of staff and more critically, imperfect library organisation, defeated the Librarian who in the years at his disposal could make it neither a research centre nor a tourist attraction.

The Minister's remarks at the opening regarding its future as the national historical collection were not entirely uninspired. While this is not the place to detail the origin of New Zealand's National Archives some sections of the story have relevance, as the Turnbull, for a brief period, was regarded as the appropriate repository. With vigour and determination – and staff – it could have developed into a joint State Library- Archives administration. Proposals, to begin only with those of Edward Tregear, go back to the 1890s[25] and the first serious recommendations linked archival responsibility with the Dominion Museum. A press note in July 1909 reported that Cabinet had decided upon the Mount Cook site for the new Dominion Museum 'in front of the Barrack'. A three-storey building was to be erected with 'provision for state documents and papers'.[26] The following month a note on the New Zealand Company Embarkation Register then in the custody of the Museum, elaborated on the intention to house the New Zealand Company records collected by Dr Hocken with the state archives under Mount Cook.[27]

This plan was taken a stage further by the Science and Art Act already mentioned which conferred responsibility for collecting historical materials on the 'Dominion Library'. However, because of the postponement of the Museum building plans the Board of Science and Art, at its annual meeting on 23 June 1920, approved the transfer of the historical collection to the Turnbull Library.

These measures had the full support of Dr Allan Thomson the Director of the Museum who in a report on the historical collections said 'I am strongly of the opinion that the collection should be transferred to the Turnbull Library . . . If the whole historical collections of the Government were concentrated in the Turnbull Library this could

issue a much stronger appeal than the Dominion Museum can under present conditions and would, with adequate finance, be in a much stronger position than the well-known Mitchell Library in Sydney. Moreover all possibilities of overlapping between the Turnbull Library and the Museum would be eliminated.' In advising the Librarian of the decision the Under-Secretary added 'This Department has a number of old records on hand and arrangements have been made for these to be gone through at an early date for the purpose of making a selection of those which it is considered should be deposited in the Turnbull Library for reference purposes.' From another source it is clear that the person asked to select the papers concerned was James Cowan. Cowan was instructed to report fortnightly on his progress in sorting material into two categories, retaining if necessary, documents that might contain information 'which it may not be desirable to throw open for public inspection'.[28] The reports were to be submitted to Dr Thomson and to Mr Andersen for preliminary approval. As a result of Cowan's labours several parcels of New Zealand Company documents were sorted out and ostensibly handed over, but these appear to have been reunited with the main body of the Company papers some years later. Possibly this occurred in 1928 when the records of the German administration in Samoa, which formed part of the Historical Collection, were passed on to Dr Scholefield as the Controller of Dominion Archives.[29]

However, the National Historical Collection was transferred on 25 August. Apart from some propaganda dross of the war, it included original manuscript and other material of some value. The Annual Report for 1921/22[30] announced that a biographical section had been started but warned that existing staff had more than enough to do in merely completing the cataloguing of the Turnbull collection. The report for the following year, more hopefully, said that the 'library may in time include an Office of Public Records'.[31]

About the same time a Library and Archives Committee of the Board of Science and Art was appointed of which the Chairman was the historian and journalist Guy H. Scholefield. The Sub-Committee held its first meeting on 4 February 1922 and approved the transfer of the Carter collection to the Turnbull Library. It also recommended that systematic efforts should be made to locate and catalogue all local, general government, provincial and ecclesiastical records as well as those of the New Zealand Company. Andersen at the request of the Under-Secretary, had made some general comments on the future of archives but without specifically associating the Library with them.

The report for 1923 stated that 'it had not been possible to do anything towards arranging or cataloguing' the historical records already received and in 1925 the collection and its accretions was still being

referred to. However, one enquirer was told by the Librarian that the Library was not one for historical research.

Admitting all the problems and limitations of staff one cannot avoid the conclusion that a chance was missed to involve the Library from its inception in a major responsibility. With the appointment of Dr Scholefield as Chief Librarian of the General Assembly Library in 1926 and shortly afterwards as Controller of Dominion Archives, a new direction was taken.

An interesting glimpse of the Library in 1922 is given by W. H. Ifould, Chief Librarian of the Public Library of New South Wales, in a report to his trustees following a visit to New Zealand.[32] Alexander Turnbull in his lifetime 'we considered . . . a most serious competitor with your Trustees in the acquisition of Australasian material'. He spoke of the magnificent collection bequeathed to the country now probably worth £100,000. 'The New Zealand Government has decided that the Turnbull Library shall be the archives department of the Dominion and are transferring there important records from all departments . . .' He noted that the Internal Affairs Department provided for the necessary additions to the Library 'but so far the Government has made no definite endowment'.

It was important that he should find out the exact financial position of the institution but after further enquiry concluded 'My visit . . . disclosed that your Trustees are not likely to have to meet for some time competition from New Zealand libraries and collectors in the acquisition of original documents of Australasian interest.' How right he was!

Trans-Tasman satisfaction at a collecting policy of restraint was understandable and of course was privately expressed. Auckland misunderstanding and contempt, however short-sighted, was wounding. Some time in June an article on the Library appeared, allegedly, in the *Auckland Star* (the original article has not so far been traced) stating that 'prominent people in Auckland' had expressed disapproval of the 'proposal to increase the Library' which was itself a 'mistake as it should have been attached to the Parliamentary Library'. The building was quite unsuited for library purposes although it would be most appropriate for a ministerial residence for which purpose it could be freed if the books were transferred to the Parliamentary Library. Auckland people did not think the Library was in the same category as the Grey collection but no one suggested that the cost of the latter should be a 'charge on the Consolidated revenue'.[33]

The Under-Secretary pointed out the obvious answers regarding Turnbull's will, the fact that the building had in part been specially constructed by Turnbull to house the collection, and even had it been possible to keep the Library with that of the General Assembly Library

'it would still have been necessary to have someone specially in charge . . .' and to catalogue it. The press reference to an 'increase' was explained by a Board of Science and Art recommendation that the Government should acquire a site adjoining the Library 'for the establishment of a general scientific library'.[34]

The librarian himself the following year urged the acquisition of a 'small block adjacent . . . about which I wrote some time ago' and then on the market as a site for future expansion[35] but nothing was done. He brought up the question of additions at different times during his term of office, but of course no action was taken about the suggestions nor were the national science library proposals followed up.

In 1924, prompted by press discussion urging greater use of the General Assembly Library, the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Honourable R. F. Bollard, drew attention to Turnbull as an alternative most suited for better use by students and continued in a tone of somewhat startling naiveté. 'I must say that as Ministerial head of the Library my inspection of it last week was more interesting than I expected . . . The Library is kept in beautiful order and very careful attention is paid . . . to visitors. It is possible for anybody to handle and peruse, under cosy conditions, the most rare book in the library . . .'[36]

The financial administration of Government was not unmindful of Mr Wilson's restriction of scope. In 1923 there was a brush with Treasury which queried a number of quite reasonable purchases. It was possible, nevertheless, to buy three Heaphy originals (three of four depicting Rangitoto Island) from Francis Edwards for £60 in October 1921, probably from the grant noted earlier, although four months later two Meryon New Zealand drawings had to be declined 'in view of the present economic position'. A minute by the librarian needs no comment: 'I saw the Minister & told him we were too late: the pictures had been purchased by the Mitchell Library.'

In June 1923[37] the Librarian again raised the possibility of an increase in staff, commenting with almost surprising pungency: '. . . I presume it is the wish that the library should be kept alive . . .' An assistant was needed so that the 'historical side can be attended to properly . . . A great box of Samoan records which I have not even opened . . . the McNab papers . . .'

But his greatest acquisition battle was over the set of Gould's *Birds of Australia*. Early in 1930, after the onset of the Great Depression, although before its first effects were being applied administratively, Andersen had the opportunity of acquiring privately a set for £250. As far as can be ascertained £250 represented the peak annual Library book budget before the slump so additional funds were clearly needed. But they were difficult to raise.

In a memorandum to the Under-Secretary in October he confessed

his dilemma. 'Realizing that it might be too much to expect the Government to spend on one set of books . . . I have attempted to raise part of the price privately. So far I have nearly £40 in hand . . . The depression set in however . . . and now it is increasingly difficult to secure contributions . . . As, however, the vendor is pressing for payment, I can only come to the Government . . . I have secured many hundreds of pounds worth of donations during the last few years, and trust that the Government will recognize this one liability I have incurred. I recognize that it is a considerable one at this time, and must cry Peccavi, but the volumes will be a decided acquisition . . .'[38] There must have been some painful discussion after this approach for the next letter is a further one from the Librarian:[39] '. . . I saw Dr Scholefield as to the Parliament Library assisting temporarily to the extent of £100 but he said that he had talked it over with his Chairman and he thought that if such an arrangement were to come to the Committee [it] might decide that if the £100 could be done without the grant for that Library was £100 too much, and he could not therefore help me.' The vendor had now agreed to take £100 before the end of the year and the balance after 31 March. Andersen had paid him the £40 already collected.

There was no immediate response on paper to this except a parallel warning that 'when economy is being practised in every direction' his private telephone subscription could cease to be an official charge 'without undue interference with your official duties.'[40]

In April 1931 he made representations to the Minister of Internal Affairs and sent a copy to the Prime Minister. The Honourable G. W. Forbes, on 14 April, said that he would be glad to confer with Mr De la Perelle. However, on the 16th, the Under-Secretary (G. P. Newton) advised that the Minister had spoken to the P.M. again but 'it is regretted that the payment asked for cannot be granted'.

There was silence until 25 August 1931 when Andersen again wrote to the Under-Secretary reporting that he had tried unsuccessfully to induce other libraries to take the set. The owner had called in that day and said that unless he could make a definite arrangement within a week he would put the matter in the hands of his solicitors. 'He is willing to take £50 now, with a definite assurance of the balance being paid in instalments and whilst the library vote is comatose just now . . . it seems to me that £50 is an account it could easily bear.' He hoped that Cabinet might be induced to reconsider its previous decision. Four days later he confirmed that the vendor would take payment in four instalments through to October 1932. The threat of legal action, however, was decisive for on 25 September the Under-Secretary advised that Cabinet had now approved the purchase and payment had been made. The last blow was still to be parried for in August 1933 Andersen was

asked to comment on the fact that a set had been sold the previous June at Sotheby's for £40.[41] He made a spirited reply pointing out the varying aspects of completeness, condition, etc. He would be consoled were it possible for him to know that a set from its catalogued description in no way superior to the splendid Turnbull holding which he acquired was sold at Sotheby's on 22 June 1970 for £6,800.

The greatest humiliation, however, would have been the approach to Dr Scholefield who for four years was Advisory Director in succession to Wilson, until Andersen's fervent protests led to a cancellation. Wilson had reported three times as Advisory Director in 1919, 1920 and 1921/22 the last report being a joint effort with the librarian. Although he did not retire until 1926 he had been away from the General Assembly Library for some time on account of ill health and Andersen might reasonably have expected that he would be allowed henceforth to go it alone. After all he already had a Minister and an Under-Secretary.

His first hopes, however, were to succeed Wilson. In a letter to the Speaker dated 6 October 1925 he reminded the Honourable C. E. Statham of a conversation on the subject and the promise allegedly made by Statham on Andersen's appointment to the Parliamentary Library that 'in eight years time, on the retirement of Mr Wilson, I might look forward to taking his place'.[42]

At the time of his appointment to Turnbull he understood that the move did not mean a severance from the General Assembly Library and he could 'still step back later on'. Rather surprisingly in view of what he was to say a little later in the same context he gave it as his opinion that 'with the appointment of a junior only, the two libraries could still be run as one, the present first Assistant of the Parliament Library and myself dividing our time between the two with economical result and efficient service'. There does not appear to have been any response to these seemingly praiseworthy anticipations of later generation national library proposals and on 20 November he wrote again. He recalled the promise made to him by the Honourable F. M. B. Fisher, then Minister in charge of the Legislative Department, and again referred to his suggestion to administer the two libraries jointly. On 18 February he followed it up with a letter to the Honourable Downie Stewart, describing his surprise and shock on seeing the position advertised at a salary of £500 per annum – Wilson had been receiving £690 plus his Turnbull Advisory Directorship allowance and another of a similar kind.

His shock was probably equalled by that of the successful applicant who apparently protested to some effect. Dr G. H. Scholefield was appointed as from 17 May 1926 at a salary of £500 per annum rising to £600 by £25 annual increments. To give him an income approaching

that of his predecessor he was appointed, in June, Advisory Director of the Alexander Turnbull Library at £50 per annum and Controller of Dominion Archives at £200 per annum.[43] 'The Doctor', as he became known to his colleagues, prior to his appointment had been editor and director of the *Wairarapa Age* and was a journalist of some distinction. He had published in a number of fields and he had obtained the rare qualification for those days of a doctorate, but had no library experience. Not that Andersen would yield much even on the grounds of scholarship. After the award of his own Fellowship of the New Zealand Institute he had written hopefully to the Under-Secretary 'As this is reckoned the equivalent, or more than the equivalent of the D SC degree, I should be pleased if the Commissioners could be notified in view of any salary readjustments that may take place'.[44]

However, on learning of the Doctor's appointment as Advisory Director the landscape changed entirely. Andersen wrote through his Minister a strongly worded letter of five foolscap pages to the Prime Minister, the Honourable J. G. Coates.[45] On receiving notification of Dr Scholefield's appointment as 'Advising Director' he had seen the Under-Secretary to ask if his work was unsatisfactory and whether he (the Under-Secretary) had been consulted as to the necessity of the appointment. Mr Newton had said 'No' but he could do nothing. Andersen went into the responsibilities of his position in great detail and what he had done for the Library, his development of its services, his personal standing as a writer and as an authority on scholarly matters, the number of donors, the exacting reference questions. The new appointee had had no library experience – 'I am rather in the position of being able to advise him, seeing that I have had experience both in the Parliament Library and the Alexander Turnbull Library. The latter contains more than two-thirds as many books as the former, and is at least eight times the value.'

After a due interval and a reminder, an interim reply from the Honourable Downie Stewart (4 October 1926) assured the librarian that his case had not been overlooked but the Honourable Mr Nosworthy (Minister in Charge of the Legislative Department) had said that the 'matter is not free from difficulty'. Three days later he was formerly advised that no alteration could be made to the arrangement[46] nor did the Public Service Commissioner consider his present salary and the increments which he had received other than 'fair and reasonable'.

In June 1927 Andersen wrote to Sir Francis Bell[47] who was politely unhelpful. However, he succeeded in obtaining an interview with the Prime Minister and subsequently wrote[48] to Sir Maui Pomare as Acting Prime Minister and again to Mr Coates the following year. Following the August letter there was an interview between Mr Andersen, the Prime Minister and the Public Service Commissioner at which Mr

Coates apparently promised that a 'satisfactory arrangement' would be made. His salary would be raised to £590 which became operative but nothing happened about the Advisory Directorship. 'My objection . . . is not so much to the office as the persons to whom it has been given; the first holder of the position never once visited the library in his official capacity, and only three or four times in any capacity – and then only to bring friends to see the books. The same is true of the second holder. I am perfectly ready and willing to consult with the Parliament Librarian whenever there is need for it – but not to go to him for advice when I know perfectly well I know more about the matters concerned than he does.'[49]

The Under-Secretary, being helpful, said that if it was decided to abolish the Advisory Directorship it would be necessary to make some provision for the additional £50 which could be done by adding it to the £200 as Controller of Dominion Archives.[50] After further high level discussion Charles Statham addressed a memorandum to the Prime Minister, Sir Joseph Ward, on the subject in which he took the view that it was wrong in principle for an officer of the Legislative Department to hold other positions under other state departments. The Advisory Directorship was a mere sinecure and Andersen had been for years past 'quietly collecting and preserving Archives and historical papers of all kinds', and anyway Internal Affairs was the proper place for this activity. Both positions should be given to Andersen, with an officer of the Department to assist with the Archives. Scholefield should retain his position of Chief Librarian at £700 per annum. There does not appear to have been any reaction to these suggestions and certainly no change was made about archives.

However, in the end his wish was granted but not, it should be noted, because of the justice of his claims, the preoccupations of the Legislature or the integrity of the Turnbull Library – but simply for a characteristically New Zealand reason of economy. The final minute merely recorded that 'This is being finalised by Economy Committee . . . 23.2.31'.[51] The Advisory Directorship terminated.

The 1920s, however, were not all penury, administrative frustration and a power struggle for autonomy. There were friends – and donations. As early as October 1919 the Librarian had advised the Under-Secretary of the inauguration of a donation book[52] prompted by gifts from Herbert Baillie and Judge Chapman. Sir Frederick Chapman was an excellent friend who gave much but above all permitted the Librarian to copy letters of his father H. S. Chapman for posterity. The precedent established by this undertaking with that of the typing of the Marsden Journal for the Mitchell Library gave the Librarian some strength in his plea for additional staff to undertake this labour, a campaign which was more successful after the depression when a full

copy-typing programme was inaugurated. This would be supplanted. only a generation later, by the xerox machine and copy microfilm, Then there was the Russell Duncan photograph collection, Percy Smith books and manuscripts, the W. H. Triggs donation and the high spot for the decade, the Mantell collection about which the Librarian rather hopefully wrote: 'A booklet is in preparation which will include a list of the books and letters.'[53]

And in 1926 W. F. Barraud had presented his father's collection of 196 water colours, perhaps following Percy Hodgkins who the year before had donated some important W. M. Hodgkins items. The period closed appropriately with a donation by Bishop H. W. Williams of 400 volumes of Maori language material. The Librarian even thought up an ingenious proposal by which the book fund could be enhanced by the value of donations. It did not find favour.

In 1930–31 and 1932 the rays of hope on money and staffing which had appeared fitfully during the clouded years behind were extinguished altogether. Misses Davidson, Hardie and Woodhouse supported the Librarian throughout this period and kept the precarious life-line of service operating. Perhaps even they were really unnecessary for we find Andersen making a spirited rejoinder: 'So far from any of the assistants being supernumerary I have before reported that more assistance is necessary, and the position is becoming more and more acute.'[54] Small sums of money were obtainable only after a prolonged struggle and the Librarian was undoubtedly cowed by the Gould contretemps noted earlier. Even the renewal of individual periodical subscriptions needed the approval of the Under-Secretary, and there was a battle in April-May 1933 for the few remaining.[55] Prior to the onset of the depression the annual sum available appears to have been £250[56] but for the year 1929/30 the amount spent was £92 16*s* 3*d*. More pathetically the Librarian sent a list of proposed purchases forward on 4 March 1931. 'As you know I have not sent in any list for some time so this is an accumulation.' The Under-Secretary advised on the 10th that the Minister had minuted the paper: 'Matter to stand over until the new financial year.' And it kept standing over beyond that watershed. Perhaps not too much should be made of the careful filing without visible response, mark or blemish of a departmental routine request for a contribution from Turnbull staff towards a retirement present to two under-secretaries.[57]

But as yet unrecognised, the embodiment of young masculine vigour with potential strength, if not salvation, was around the corner. Andersen in 1933 was sixty years of age and had forty-six years of superannuation service. The question of a successor was worrying even the Department. The Librarian on 30 June 1933 reported to the Under-Secretary:[58] 'I have seen Mr Taylor referred to in your Memo and wish

to say that my first impressions are quite favourable.' Better still, when C. R. H. Taylor took up duties shortly afterwards the Carnegie Corporation of New York was amenable to the suggestion that the potential inheritor of this senior position should share in the new programme for Library Fellowships in the United States. In 1934–35 Mr Taylor was able to gain invaluable experience and even see scholarly libraries which had front doors that were kept open, reading rooms and even effective catalogues.

1934 was equally notable in two other respects. It was the year of the Munn-Barr report. Ralph Munn of the Carnegie Free Library of Pittsburgh and John Barr were an excellent team. The building, the catalogue and the inadequate staffing were specially commented upon. '. . . a home and private library for its owner . . . not suitable for its present purpose . . . The classification and cataloguing are inadequate. There is hope that the recently appointed assistant librarian, who is at present studying in America . . . will improve conditions upon his return . . .'[59] But Andersen found vindication in at least one matter – 'For a collection of this nature, a much larger staff is needed.' In Great Britain or America a staff at least twice the size would be found. And the Surveyors concluded with their well-known recommendation that with the General Assembly Library 'it should form the nucleus of the proposed national Library.' – no resurrection of advisory directorships – simply an outright partnership.

But more peculiarly Turnbullian was the bequest of £100 by Sir George and Lady Shirtcliffe as the nucleus of the ATL Endowment Trust. An impressive Trust deed formally established the Board which henceforward 'shall stand possessed of the said sum of *one hundred pounds* . . . and all other moneys hereafter received . . .' It was to be many years before there were any significant accretions; for years there was no reference whatever to it in the Annual Report; but after the war bequests, donations, profits from print sales and other sources helped the fund forward over the five-figure barrier.

1935 saw yet another change of vital interest to the Library. There was a new Under-Secretary. The Economic Crisis for many New Zealanders was far from over but there were grounds for hope even in the repressed consciousness of Turnbull's Librarian. Encouraged, possibly pushed, by his young assistant back from the States and full of ideas, he wrote yet again: '. . . We have been steadily going back as regards current books . . . I would point out that during the year I was repeatedly discouraged from recommending books for purchase . . .' There was a direct and encouraging reply under the initials J.W.H. Joseph William Allan Heenan was interested and helpful; the wheels slowly began to go forward again. His often-repeated, forthright and earthy comments on first seeing Mr Andersen's three tables (described

by Miss Woodhouse in her article) bespoke in a more general context the end of an era. But Heenan, too, had his blind spots; the tidying up of the Turnbull Library, getting it a reasonable minimal post-depression staff and funds was a straight administrative job; when the Librarian had helped him do this the Librarian would be ready to do other things, hence the curious and anomalous involvement of that person in film censoring which persisted for some twenty years. A decade later for example, we find one almost testy frustrated comment from the kindliest of colleagues: 'I have made several attempts to get you on the telephone but always seem to strike one of the days when you are busy with films . . .'[60]

Meanwhile things continued to look up; in 1936 there was even direct ordering from publishers – an almost revolutionary step, and a little earlier a very bold decision to place a subscription for Sotheby's auction catalogues. The Library could never catch up with Sydney but it might manage not to get further behind.

The showing of visitors round the building was another of the last Andersen ditches to be filled if not to the top at least to within a few inches. In February 1936 the Librarian wrote to the Under-Secretary reporting that there had been over 300 visitors during January. '[they] get from half an hour to two hours or more according to the interest shewn by them'.[61] In future, exhibition cases would reduce if not yet eliminate this time-consuming chore and reduce unnecessary handling of the Library's treasures – And the culminating short-term triumph of the new order: Taylor as Acting Librarian reported on 30 September 1936: 'Since I have had the door open (in the last six weeks or so) many people have been encouraged to visit the Library.'[62]

With the formal retirement of Andersen at the end of the year and the appointment of Taylor as his successor the new order became fully effective. There was, slowly, more staff, improved routines; indexes even, for things that no one had thought of using before; better cataloguing – but why did it have to be the multigraph – improved acquisitions for which there was almost but not quite a policy; more exciting manuscripts. Although the stimulus of centennial-induced research was offset by the threat and actuality of war the ground gained was substantially held until 1945.

Are we to sum up; to pronounce on trends? Was the seeming neglect only one of ignorance or national poverty and not of jealousy or malevolence? In modern parlance was there at some point a 'crisis of confidence' in Johannes Carl Andersen, this antipodean polymath – who in a number of his activities we feel strongly has been undervalued – and hence indifference to his institution? Perhaps there were occasions (little touched on in these notes) when he appears confused about priorities in his various interests. The presumption of judgement,

however, is to be avoided and not simply because of the warning in the first verse of the seventh chapter of the Gospel according to Saint Matthew. Are we ourselves more or less culpable? For the present the point of view of this article, the selection of facts, the juxtaposition of non-events and negative decisions on the vital issues, it is hoped, are reasonably clear. A.G.B.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

(Unless otherwise stated file references to 1923 are to I.A. 13/300)

[1] I am indebted to Mr J. O. Wilson for the details of staff in the General Assembly Library at the time and to Mr Stuart Perry for assistance in estimating the number employed in the Wellington Public Libraries. These notes with their references to Mr Charles Wilson had been prepared before Professor J. C. Beaglehole delivered his address but his impressions confirm rather than contradict my own tentative inferences.

[2] Mr M. G. Hitchings, Hocken Librarian, has kindly supplied details of Mr Trimble's service in the Hocken and University of Otago Libraries, largely from notes prepared by Miss E. J. Robinson.

[3] Cabinet decision of 13 July 1918 on I.A. file 13/300, Bequest of the late A. H. Turnbull.

[4] The purchase price is given variously as £9,133 and £9,153.

[5] Board of Science and Art: Meetings and recommendations; file I.A. 2/48/4: meeting 26 October 1921 and Under-Secretary to Librarian 1/8/21 on 13/300. I am again indebted to Miss J. Hornabrook and other members of staff of the National Archives for locating files and particularly to Mr J. D. Pascoe, Chief Archivist, for permission to quote from them.

[6] Under-Secretary to General Manager, State Fire Insurance 30 January 1919. Measures were also taken to provide additional fire protection within the building.

[7] Advisory Director to Under-Secretary 16 July 1919.

[8] Librarian to Under-Secretary 3 March 1919.

[9] *New Zealand Listener* 27 October 1944.

[10] I.A. file 2/48/4. The file date of 1913 is clearly a mistake for 1919.

[11] Ibid and *Evening Post* 24 June 1919.

[12] Librarian to Under-Secretary 29 April 1919.

[13] Advisory Director to Under-Secretary 16 July 1919.

[14] A.T.L. file – and A – J:H. 22 1919 pp30–31.

[15] Opinion 30 July 1919 on 13/300.

[16] N.Z.P.D. vol 188 p302 6 October 1920, with reports of other speakers on recommendation of Public Petitions Committee.

[17] A – J: B 7 1922 p109. The estimates for this period show a modest £1,500 provided for all the purposes of the Turnbull Library with the addition of £50 for Mr Wilson's allowance.

[18] Librarian to Advisory Director 19/9/19.

[19] The following references cover steps in the review being undertaken, although details of what subscriptions were actually terminated are not listed but can be traced from breaks in the holdings: Under-Secretary to Advisory Director 26 August 1919; to Minister of Internal Affairs 14 October 1919 and Librarian to Under-Secretary 29 October 1919.

[20] Order Paper 16 November 1918 and N.Z.P.D. vol 183 pp1103–4.

[21] N.Z.P.D. vol 184 p608 17 September 1919.
[22] Ibid vol 185 p160 8 October 1919.
[23] I.A. 13/300.
[24] *Evening Post* 29 June 1920.
[25] E. Tregear. *The Archives of New Zealand* in *Monthly Review* vol 2 pp602–5 1890 and *New Zealand Times* 5 December 1902.
[26] *Evening Post* 1 July 1909 p6.
[27] Ibid 7 August 1909.
[28] Under-Secretary to Librarian and to James Cowan 7 July 1920 on 13/300.
[29] Librarian to Under-Secretary 6 November 1928.
[30] A–J: H.22 1921/22 p24.
[31] Ibid 1922 p9.
[32] Mitchell Library MS 61/1/02 20 March 1922.
I wish to express my thanks to Mr G. D. Richardson, Principal Librarian and Mitchell Librarian, Sydney, for permission to quote this extract.
[33] Under-Secretary to Minister of Internal Affairs 30 June 1922. One hopes that the literary editor of the *Star,* Alan Mulgan, in later life a strong friend of the Library, had no part in this article.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Librarian to Under-Secretary 26 July 1923.
[36] *New Zealand Times* 12 May 1924 p7.
[37] Librarian to Under-Secretary 5 June 1923 and reply 12 June on I.A. 13/27/45.
[38] Librarian to Under-Secretary 2 October 1930, on A.T.L. file 2/2.
[39] Ibid 28 November 1930, ibid.
[40] Under-Secretary to Librarian 4 February 1931, ibid.
[41] Ibid 26 August 1933, ibid.
[42] Librarian to Honourable C. E. Statham 6 October 1925 on I.A. 3/10.
[43] P.S.C. file 4/53805.
[44] Librarian to Under-Secretary 5 June 1923.
[45] Librarian to Prime Minister 13 July 1926 on I.A. 3/10.
[46] Minister in Charge, Legislative Department to Librarian 7 October 1926.
[47] Librarian to Sir F. D. Bell 3 June 1927, ibid.
[48] Librarian to Acting Prime Minister 9 September 1927 and Librarian to Prime Minister 11 June 1928, ibid.
[49] Librarian to Under-Secretary 1 July 1929.
[50] Under-Secretary to Minister of Internal Affairs 10 July 1929 on P.S.C. file 4/53805.
[51] Speaker to Prime Minister 19 August 1929, ibid.
[52] Librarian to Under-Secretary 21 October 1929.
[53] A–J: H.22, 1928, p6.
[54] Librarian to Under-Secretary 1 October 1930 on A.T.L. file 5/1.
The Under-Secretary had suggested that the services of one or more assistants might be unnecessary.
[55] A.T.L. file 2/3.
[56] Under-Secretary to Librarian 13 July 1929 on A.T.L. file 2/2.
[57] A.T.L. file 5/1. The Under-Secretaries in question were Messrs P. G. Newton (in May 1931) and Malcolm Fraser (in February 1935).
[58] I.A. file 13/300/65.
[59] Munn-Barr Report, 1934, p33.
[60] W. S. Wauchop to C. R. H. Taylor 12 February 1948 on A.T.L. file 4/2.
[61] Librarian to Under-Secretary 7 February 1936 on A.T.L. file.
[62] A.T.L. file 4/4.

EARLY DAYS IN THE TURNBULL LIBRARY

There must be few people who are fortunate enough to find themselves, especially when no longer young, in perhaps the one job in the whole country they would most like to have. That is what happened to me, and I still wonder sometimes how it all came about.

Towards the end of 1925 I came up to Wellington from Dunedin to stay with some cousins, in order to recuperate after an illness. My plans were uncertain at the time, and one day my cousins said to me, 'Why don't you try for a position in the Turnbull Library?' And they explained what the Turnbull Library was, and where it was. I took their advice, and sent in an application, but there was no vacancy at the time, so I went off to Auckland to visit relations there. It was my father's home town – he was born there in quite early days – but I had never been there before. Naturally I found it an interesting place and was pleased to make the acquaintance of relatives I had not hitherto met, but this could not go on for ever, and I was wondering what my next move had better be when a message came from my Wellington cousins saying 'Turnbull Library enquiring for you'.

Back I came to Wellington by the next day's train and there were the inevitable interviews and two or three weeks of waiting while applications were being considered. I believe the only other applicant at that time was a well-educated Russian woman, a refugee, who spoke several languages, but of course knew nothing about New Zealand history and literature.

At last my appointment was confirmed and I reported for duty at the Library on 13 December 1926. The number 13 has never had any terror for me and from this time on I regarded it as, if anything, a lucky number, especially when I found that this was the date on which Tasman had discovered New Zealand. For some obscure reason, this seemed to me a good omen. It was also just the day before my own birthday.

The Library was open to the public in the sense that people could come in and use it, but the front door was kept closed, and visitors had to ring to be admitted. At that stage it was a wise precaution, because the smallness of the staff made supervision difficult and also the greater part of the Library was still not catalogued.

The large room on the ground floor was the Rare Book Room and it was also used by Mr Andersen as his office. He had a table for each of his different activities – the Library itself, the Polynesian Society, any book he was engaged on at the moment, etc. The small room adjoining also housed rare books and series like Book Auction Records. The portrait of Alexander Turnbull hung over the fireplace. The portrait of

his father was of course, set in the panelling over the fireplace in the large room.

What had been Mr Turnbull's dining-room was the office, as it is today.

Above the Rare Book Room was what was usually called the New Zealand Room though it really housed the main Pacific Collection. This is now the Reference Room and Reading Room. The companion smaller room also had some New Zealand books, as it had a cabinet which held the big illustrated books and such things as the portfolio of reproductions of Dr Wilson's Antarctic sketches.

In the bay window of the New Zealand Room was the big table at which we did the cataloguing. The only accommodation for readers consisted of three small tables at the fireplace end of this room, though there was a large table in the next-door room which could be used if necessary.

Above the New Zealand Room was the English Literature Room, its shelves filled with the more modern writers, and with the theatrical collection, and other material. The small room next door was occupied by Mr Elsdon Best, ethnologist to the Dominion Museum, which at that time was in the old building at the top of Bowen Street.

The four storeys of stack rooms at the back had fortunately quite a lot of empty space in some of them.

The staff consisted of Mr J. C. Andersen, Miss Grace Davidson, Miss Marion Hardie and me, and then there were the two housekeepers – Miss Brouard and Miss Tweeddale. They had both been with Mr Turnbull for several years. Miss Brouard came from the Channel Islands and was short in stature, active and efficient, and with a lively disposition. Miss Tweeddale was tall, and of rather a melancholy cast of countenance. She became ill while I was there and had to go to hospital where she died, and I can't remember whether there was a successor to her or not. Probably there was one until Miss Brouard herself retired, and no more resident housekeepers were appointed.[1]

Miss Davidson had been one of the original staff, the others being Miss Quinice Cowles and Miss Ursula Tewsley. Miss Cowles went over to the General Assembly Library, and I took her place. Miss Hardie's appointment was rather unusual, as she was over sixty, but Mr Andersen had been very pleased with some typing she had done for him on occasions, and had been anxious to have her at the Library. This was possible because of the peculiar arrangements about women in the Public Service at that time.

During World War I many women were taken on the permanent staff of the Public Service, which they hadn't been before, but of course many of them didn't stay on – women had to resign on marriage, anyway – and the men complained that they were upsetting the super-

annuation fund and throwing things out of gear. So the edict went forth that no more women were to go on the permanent staff, and Miss Hardie was taken on as a 'temporary', and so was I, though as time went on I acquired, if I remember rightly, the rather curious designation of 'permanent-temporary'. This was really to my advantage, as it meant that I was retained on the staff for two or three years longer than would have been the case if I had been strictly a 'permanent'.

Miss Hardie's main job was typing, but she was supposed to help in a general way with the cataloguing and other duties, such as showing visitors round. But she found doing the catalogue cards in print script rather difficult, and any way her time was taken up more and more with the office work, and the cataloguing, reference work, and conducting visitors through the Library fell mostly to Miss Davidson and me.

For Grace Davidson I developed a great admiration, mingled with some slight irritation. She was so very conscientious! Anything she did was thoroughly done. If it was reference work, then anything remotely related to the subject would be looked out. If it was cataloguing, then you knew that every detail would be correct on the card she did in a neat and characteristic script, with rather square-shaped letters. But she got to the stage of thinking the place would collapse if she wasn't there to hold it together. She didn't always take her annual leave and she very seldom took the afternoons off that we were allowed to compensate for evening duty. And it was all so unnecessary. Everything went quite well on the rare occasion when she wasn't there.

The Librarian, Johannes Carl Andersen, was a remarkable man. He was remarkable in any company, with his height and his mane of hair and his craggy face. That is the only way I can describe it. Once at morning tea there was one biscuit left on the plate and I handed it to him and said, 'Here's £10,000 a year for you, Mr Andersen.' And he said, 'Well, I can't be a handsome husband can I?' There was a stunned silence. Neither Miss Davidson nor I could think of anything to say.

He was largely what one would call a self-educated man. Except for attending a few lectures at Canterbury College he had no university training. All his knowledge had been acquired by his own efforts. A glance at a list of his publications shows the wide range of his interests. He would come up and join us for morning tea and some chance remark might set him off on a dissertation on some subject or another which would go on for quite a long time. The cataloguing work suffered a little, but one learnt so much from him that it wasn't really a waste of time.

Then he stopped coming up for tea – he said it didn't agree with him, and he certainly didn't look well. Sometimes he looked very ill indeed. I don't know what the trouble was, but in the end it was a chiropractor

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

to be shown round. There are two whom I do remember from my first year there. One was Sir Douglas Maclean, son of Sir Donald, and the other was Bishop Herbert Williams – the third of his family to be Bishop of Waiapu. In after years, when working with the historical collections in Napier, I liked to think that I had met, even briefly, two men whose families were so connected with Hawke's Bay.

Sir Douglas liked to browse around but the Bishop usually wanted something specific or would like to look through the Maori collection.

An interesting personality was H. E. Maude, Administrator of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands. He sometimes came to New Zealand for his leave and on more than one occasion he spent considerable time in the Library, finding out all he could about the Islands of the Pacific. His own islands were getting overcrowded and he wanted to find an uninhabited group with similar conditions to which some of the people could be moved. With the information he got from the Library and also elsewhere he was able to find a suitable group, and some of the Gilbertese were transferred.

Then there was Harold Gatty the flyer, who was also very knowledgeable about the Pacific, and later, during the war, wrote little books about how to survive and find your way about if you had the misfortune to fall into it. He would drop in about tea-time and would talk away at a great rate about his flying and other experiences.

A frequent visitor was T. L. Buick, author of *The Treaty of Waitangi* and other historical books. He was engaged on *The French at Akaroa* when I joined the Library. The material for this had been collected in Paris and elsewhere by Dr Robert McNab of Southland, but he died before he could get started on the book, so Mr Buick had been allowed the use of the papers. Most of the documents had been translated where necessary, but there were some still in French, and when he found that Miss Davidson and I were fairly good at French he asked us to translate them for him. This we were quite pleased to do and thought we had made a good job of it, but there were traps, like the phrase, *a grande vitesse* which we translated as 'full speed ahead', till Mr Buick pointed out that this is used only of steamers, and all the vessels concerned were sailing-ships. In spite of a few slips like this, he seemed to approve of our efforts, and when the book came out he presented each of us with an autographed copy.

Those who came just as sightseers, to be shown round the Library are still more difficult to recall, though I do remember two American ladies who wanted to see 'some da-a-h-cuments signed by Ca-aptain Co-o-ok' in an accent which I found so fascinating that I had to restrain an impulse to say, 'Oh, do say that again!'

The procedure was for us to take the visitors through the Library, showing them anything that we thought would interest them, and then

they were supposed to sign the visitor's book which stood on a table in the passage-way, opposite the door into the office. Sometimes in the case of overseas visitors, once they had signed the book they seemed to be in some sort of trouble. A strained look would come over their faces and their hands would slide towards their pockets. 'To tip, or not to tip?' That was the question. I would leave them in their misery for a moment or two, and then say 'There's no charge', which seemed the best way of dealing with the matter and with a relieved look and polite thanks they would take their departure.

Once I had been showing a honeymoon couple round and the young husband insisted on leaving five shillings for the staff, in spite of my protests, so I accepted it and said I would put it in the tea-money. On another occasion, when I was showing an old gentleman out at the front door, he shook hands warmly and left something in my palm which at first glance looked like a penny and I thought perhaps he was a little eccentric and liked to go round distributing pennies to people he met. A closer look showed that it was a discoloured half-crown, but by that time the old gentleman was away down the street and I could do nothing about it, so that went in the tea-money too.

This was, I think, the same old gentleman who took a particular interest in the Library because he had worked for the firm of W. and G. Turnbull for many years. He took a long look at Walter Turnbull's portrait, over the fireplace. 'Yes,' he said, 'it's very like him. He was a hard man, but he was a just man.'

Then he went on to tell me that one of his first jobs was to go up with the first load of newsprint for the Blundells when they were starting the *Evening Post*. He helped with the loading of the dray and then Mr Turnbull drew him aside and said, 'Now, boy, you're to go along with the driver and see that these rolls of paper are delivered properly. And boy, mind you come back with the cash!'

The portrait of Walter Turnbull had a special interest for me after I learnt from an uncle of mine that there was a curious sort of link between the Turnbulls and my mother's family. Both families came from the small town of Peebles in Scotland. Walter Turnbull had a drapery shop in the town and my grandfather, John Bathgate, was agent for the Union Bank of Scotland, and with his family lived in the Bank House which had a frontage on the main street and a fairly large garden at the back. The house was later on occupied by John Buchan, afterwards Lord Tweedsmuir, author of his own particular brand of 'thrillers', and many other publications. His mother and his sister, who wrote as 'O. Douglas', lived on there for several years.

The Turnbull house was somewhere further back and my grandfather gave Mr Turnbull permission to take a short cut through the bank garden, so that he could get home more quickly.

My uncle said that when he was a small boy playing by the stream that ran at the bottom of the garden, he would often see 'Wattie Turnbull' making his way home for his mid-day meal.

Nobody could possibly have thought that many years later, on the other side of the world, the niece of that small boy would be caring for the treasures collected by the son of the older man.

Some years after I had retired from the Library, and while I was living in Napier, I went on a trip overseas and was able to walk down the main street of Peebles looking for the Bank House, which was quite easy to find because on the wall beside the outer door there was still a brass plate saying, 'John Buchan, Writer'. (This did not refer to Lord Tweedsmuir's literary work. In Scotland a 'writer' means a lawyer.)

I went inside and explained that my grandfather had once occupied the house – now turned into offices – and I asked if I could look out over the garden at the back. I was shown into a room with a wide modern window and there was the garden, mostly grass and shrubs, sloping down to the little stream, just as my uncle had described it. But I couldn't see any sign of another house further back. It may have been hidden by trees or it may have been pulled down and so disappeared altogether.

There were other visitors – Important People who came to see Mr Andersen or to be shown some of the treasures in the Library – and these we did not come in contact with as a rule, though sometimes we would have liked to. One we were determined to get a glimpse of was George Bernard Shaw. It had been arranged that he and Mrs Shaw would spend about an hour with Mr Andersen looking at the Rare Book collection, and we thought the best way to see him would be to watch for them coming out again into the hall. Neglecting our work we listened for the sound of opening doors and when we heard this, we slipped down on to the half-landing so that we could look down into the hall. As they came out of the small room G.B.S. caught sight of the figures on the stairs and looked up right at us, so we had a splendid view of him and I can at least say that I once saw George Bernard Shaw.

In 1933 C. R. H. Taylor was appointed Deputy-Librarian and after his study trip to the United States and elsewhere, on a Carnegie Grant, some changes were made in the Library arrangements. The door was left open so that people could come in freely, the staff was enlarged and became much younger, and cataloguing methods were brought up-to-date especially with the introduction of the multigraph for reproducing the cards. I learnt how to cope with the thing, more or less, but never really got the hang of it, as I have no mechanical aptitude whatever.

Naturally World War II brought changes to the Library and the

staff especially. When the war moved into the Pacific to safeguard the Library's treasures, Mr Taylor, by this time Librarian, arranged for a great many of the books to be housed in a room on the top floor of the Public Trust Office in Masterton, a work that was spread over several months and which meant occasional trips to Masterton for two or three of the staff at a time. This made a pleasant break in the usual routine.

While Mr Taylor was with the Army Education and Welfare Service in the Pacific in the last year or two of the war, I became Acting Librarian, which I enjoyed very much – largely I am sure because of the loyal co-operation I had from the staff. That makes a lot of difference.

Once, while the books were in the process of being moved to Masterton, it was found necessary to have some new shelves built and I was sent up on my own to keep an eye on the work, and do some unpacking and arranging of the books. I was having a wonderful time – getting books into their classes, matching up volumes that had got separated from their sets and dipping into books that perhaps I hadn't looked at for years. I cast a glance round at the workmen, busy on their job, and thought: 'Poor things – what a life! Nothing to do but saw wood and hammer in nails all day!'

Towards the end of the afternoon one of the carpenters, sitting astride the top of a book-case and hammering in some final nails, looked down on me, pityingly. 'I wouldn't have your job for anything,' he said, 'nothing to do but look at books all day.'

Alice Woodhouse

[1] Miss Tweeddale was followed by Miss O'Donnell. On Miss Brouard's retirement a married couple, Mr and Mrs Brown, were resident custodians until the evacuation of the building in 1953. (Editor)

JUBILEE YEAR

The Library bequeathed to New Zealand by Alexander Horsburgh Turnbull (1868–1918) was opened to the public on Tuesday, 28 June 1920. It was decided that the Jubilee of the Library should be observed in 1970, rather than in 1968, the jubilee of the bequest and the centenary of the founder's birth. This followed the precedent set in 1945, when the twenty-fifth anniversary of the opening of the Library was celebrated. As the second world war was then still in progress, the occasion was marked only by a meeting at the Library on the afternoon of 5 July 1945. In the unavoidable absence of the Minister of Internal Affairs (Honourable W. E. Parry), a statement from him was read by Mr J. W. Heenan, the Under-Secretary. The Government was represented by the Ministers of Education (Mr Mason), Defence (Mr Jones) and Agriculture (Mr Roberts). Among others present were Mr J. C. Andersen the first Chief Librarian and Professor I. A. Gordon, President of the Friends.

The Honourable H. G. R. Mason, QC, praised 'the pre-vision' of Alexander Turnbull and spoke in commendation of the Friends of the Turnbull Library. He also mentioned that 'a scheme to co-ordinate a national library service had not been lost sight of, and was again making progress'. Afternoon tea was served and the guests inspected a special exhibition. *The Evening Post* ran a special article on the Library that day, and next day reported the function.

The official Fiftieth Jubilee celebrations commenced on the evening of Tuesday, 30 June 1970, with an address entitled *The Library and the Cosmos* by Professor J. C. Beaglehole, OM. The recognised world authority on Captain James Cook, RN, Professor Beaglehole has for many years been the Library's most distinguished reader. Alexander Turnbull had paid particular attention to building up a remarkably comprehensive collection of books and manuscripts relating to the exploration of the Pacific. The strength of the holdings on Cook has been immeasurably increased by the photo-copy material presented by John Beaglehole, accumulated in the course of his editing of Cook's *Journals* over quarter of a century.

The Beaglehole address, given under the aegis of the Trustees of the National Library, is published in this issue of the *Record* and off-prints will also be available. Ill-health prevented the attendance of Sir John Ilott, KT, Chairman of Trustees, 1966–70. In his stead the chair was taken by the Honourable D. J. Riddiford, MP, MC, Minister of Justice, and a member of the Trustees' Special Committee for the Turnbull Library. An audience of about one hundred, invited from all parts of New Zealand, packed the limited space of the Exhibition Room which had been cleared of the display cases. For the first time in fifty years the

Library had been closed that afternoon while staff prepared for the evening function. The Reading and Reference Rooms on the first floor were also cleared and guests assembled there for drinks before the address was given on the second floor, and returned downstairs for coffee and conversation afterwards.

Mr Riddiford, as Chairman, congratulated the Library on the achievements of its first fifty years and spoke of the need for a National Library building which would house the Turnbull collection appropriately. When introducing the Speaker he spoke not merely of his distinguished editorial achievement but of his contribution to the work of the New Zealand Historic Places Trust. Although the occasion was intentionally informal, and no vote of thanks was given, the Minister paid a graceful tribute to Professor Beaglehole at the conclusion of the address.

The second official function was a preview of the Jubilee Exhibition, when over one hundred and fifty guests attended the opening on Thursday, 9 July, by the Honourable B. E. Talboys, MP, Minister of Education. This reception, at 5.30 pm was also given by the Trustees of the National Library. When introducing Mr Talboys, the Chief Librarian (Mr A. G. Bagnall) urged the Minister to do his best to inspire Government with a sense of urgency in the construction of the National Library building, sketch plans for which had been authorised. He good-humouredly reminded the Minister that Professor Beaglehole earlier in the year had enjoined librarians to rise, march on Parliament, and, if necessary, chain themselves to the steps of Parliament Buildings in support of a building. He also paid a tribute to the work of the staff in preparing for the Jubilee, and to Mr Murray-Oliver and others in particular for their work in mounting the exhibition and preparing its catalogue.

The Minister said how fitting it was that the Jubilee should be celebrated in the present Library, the home of Alexander Turnbull, before the regrettable but necessary transfer of the Library to temporary premises next year. He discouraged the Chief Librarian from leading a protest movement to Parliament Buildings, but, not surprisingly, made no commitment about the timetable on the erection of the National Library building. He spoke of the priceless heritage which New Zealanders had in the Turnbull Library, perhaps more widely known overseas than in New Zealand itself. He hoped that the exhibition would induce more New Zealanders to visit and use the Library.

The Jubilee Exhibition has been designed to show not only a small selection of the more important and interesting items acquired by Mr Turnbull, but also some of the innumerable gifts and purchases added to the Library in the past fifty years, maintaining the tradition and interests of the founder. Not least among these are a few of the

major purchases made in recent years by the Alexander Turnbull Library Endowment Trust Board. Because of limited display space, pictures predominate in the exhibition, but examples are also included of manuscripts, rare books and maps. A catalogue of the exhibition distributed gratis to Friends is available at the price of 25 cents per copy.

Throughout the two weeks following 30 June, Messrs Kirkcaldie and Stains kindly presented a window display of material from the Library on the Lambton Quay frontage of their department store in the heart of the city. This attracted much attention and brought many more visitors to the Library, especially as it coincided with Trentham Race Week when people from other parts of the country were in Wellington. Apart from a small display at the Library of photographs and other items relating to Mr Turnbull, photographs were not used at this time, as in August Kirkcaldie and Stains Limited will present a further window display, together with a major exhibition in the store, devoted entirely to photographs from the Library's extensive collection, which constitutes the National Photograph Collection.

For many years the Library was open to the public, for inspection only, on Sunday afternoons, until staffing difficulties made this impossible. For the Jubilee, however, the Library was open on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, 11–12 July. Two conducted tours were offered on each afternoon. Thanks to a feature article in *The Evening Post* in advance, the occasion was almost embarrassingly successful, with some 300 visitors taking advantage of this opportunity to visit an institution of which many, on their own admission, had been somewhat in awe. The press, radio and television all gave publicity which added to the success of the Jubilee. Even more pleasing, new acquisitions have been promised from people who had not previously realized the scope and functions of the Library.

The final official Jubilee function was presented by the Friends of the Turnbull Library on the evening of Thursday, 16 July. Dr McCormick addressed an invited audience of over one hundred on Alexander Turnbull – *Some Biographical Reflections* (published also in this issue of the *Record*.)

The most lasting product of the Jubilee will be the publication by the Library of a biography of Alexander Turnbull, which has been commissioned from Dr E. H. McCormick, MA (DIPHONS) of Auckland. Eric McCormick is noted for his *Letters and Art in New Zealand,* one of the outstanding volumes in the Government's 1940 Centennial series; *New Zealand Literature:* a survey (1959) and his definitive works on Frances Hodgkins, *The Expatriate* (1953) and *The Works of Frances Hodgkins in New Zealand.* Dr McCormick, sometime Hocken Librarian, made a preliminary study of Turnbull for his three lectures given to commemorate the jubilee of that library in 1960, which covered also

Dr Hocken and Sir George Grey. They were published by the University of Otago Press as *The Fascinating Folly: Dr Hocken and his Fellow Collectors* (1961).

The first of the Turnbull Monograph series, *New Zealand or Recollections of It* (1963) was edited by E. H. McCormick from the unpublished 1834 manuscript purchased by Mr Turnbull in 1904. He also prepared a small brochure on Sir William Fox, the man and the artist, to accompany the Library's publication, *The Fox Portfolio*.

As well as Friends, many former members of the Library staff attended. After the address, sherry and coffee were served in the Reading and Reference Rooms.

As the President of the Friends of the Turnbull Library (Canon Nigel Williams) is abroad, the chair was taken by Professor D. F. McKenzie of the committee of the Friends. He mentioned that Dr McCormick 'had already been introduced to us by Professor Beaglehole – his only peer in scholarship. Alpha and Omega are one and the same'. He also quoted Aldus Manutius as saying that 'Printers create libraries without walls'. Professor McKenzie added that 'good libraries create scholarship without walls'. He remarked how appropriate it was that the formal functions of the Jubilee should have commenced and concluded with addresses by New Zealand's two most eminent scholars, Professor Beaglehole and Dr McCormick, both of whom had been so closely associated for so long with the Alexander Turnbull Library.

It was pleasing to note that among those present at one or other of the functions was a foundation member of the Library staff, Miss Q. B. Cowles, Miss A. Woodhouse whose reminiscences are also included in this issue, and Mrs Iris Winchester, some sixteen years with the Library and Acting-Librarian from January to April 1966. The former Chief Librarians C. R. H. Taylor and J. R. Cole also were present.

SIR JOHN ILOTT

We have pleasure in including as part of this record a message from Sir John Ilott as Chairman of Trustees which was published in the Jubilee programme. For reasons of health Sir John resigns from this office as well as from the positions of Chairman of the Trustees' Committee for this Library and its Endowment Trust from 31 July 1970.

Sir John's lengthy association with the Library and his gifts to it are known to many. On the formation of the Friends of the Turnbull Library in 1939 he became its first President and more recently his outstanding donation to the Library of a collection of illuminated manuscripts and other works was described in an earlier issue (*Turnbull Library Record* [first series] no XIV March 1960, pp 4–5). During the setting up of the National Library he was concerned that appropriate safeguards for Turnbull should be made when the National Library Bill was being considered, while appreciating the need for this development and the reasons for the inclusion of the Alexander Turnbull Library in the National Library. As the first Chairman of Trustees he presided over every meeting from the first in April 1966 until that of 30 June 1970 when he formally tendered his resignation. His services to the National Library and in particular to Turnbull as Chairman of its Committee and of the Trust in the critical first years will long be remembered.

MESSAGE FROM SIR JOHN ILOTT

CHAIRMAN OF TRUSTEES

It gives me great pleasure as Chairman, both of the Trustees of the National Library of New Zealand and its Committee for the Alexander Turnbull Library, as one who knew the late Alex Turnbull personally, and as a donor of incunabula and illuminated manuscripts, to extend my best wishes to the Library, its Friends, staff and users on this occasion.

The magnificent inheritance bequeathed to the Crown has been well fostered and strengthened. The country's resources should perhaps have permitted more rapid development and extension of the Library's housing and some parts of its collections. Nevertheless, we can fittingly take pride in what has been achieved in the fifty years of its corporate existence.

For the future, as part of the National Library of New Zealand, the Alexander Turnbull Library, preserving its separate identity and character, will fulfil an extended role. Its responsibilities for services and research needs, particularly associated with our literature and its written and graphic records in all media must and will develop to the enrichment of our national life.

FURTHER PUBLICATIONS
(continued from back cover)

Two new sets of greeting cards, reproduced from prints in the Library, have now been issued by The Friends of the Turnbull Library.
From aquatints by John Webber and after John Cleveley, respectively:

Ship Cove, Queen Charlotte Sound, February 1777 and *The Death of Captain Cook, February 1779.* Both cards are in colour, approximately 6 x $7\frac{3}{4}$ ins, and sell at 25 cents each.

Six engravings from the copper-plates in the British Museum (Natural History) made from watercolours prepared for Banks from Parkinson's sketches on Cook's first voyage. The subjects are:

Kaka-beak, Koromiko, Convolvulus, Native Iris, Dandelion, and *Tree Fuchsia.* In black and white; the cards are 10 cents each.

THE FRIENDS OF THE TURNBULL LIBRARY

The Society known as the Friends of the Turnbull Library was established in 1939. The objects of the Society are to promote interest in the Alexander Turnbull Library, to assist in the extension of its collections, and to be a means of interchange of information relating to English literature, to the history, literature, and art of New Zealand and the Pacific, and to all matters of interest to book-lovers. The Society carries out its objects chiefly by means of periodic meetings and the production of publications, of which the *Turnbull Library Record* is the main one. Correspondence and enquiries regarding membership should be addressed to the Secretary, The Friends of the Turnbull Library, Alexander Turnbull Library, Box 8016, Wellington.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS FROM THE ALEXANDER TURNBULL LIBRARY

Published for the Library by the Government Printer:

McCORMICK, E. H. — *Tasman and New Zealand: a bibliographical study.* (Bulletin number 14) 1959. 72p, plates 75 c.

MARKHAM, Edward — *New Zealand or Recollections of It,* edited with an introduction by E. H. McCormick. (Monograph series, number 1) 1963. 114p illus. (some plates in colour) $3.00.

BEST, A. D. W. — *The Journal of Ensign Best, 1837–1843,* edited with an introduction and notes by Nancy M. Taylor. (Monograph series, number 2) 1966. 465p plates (col. frontis.) $3.50.

Published by the Alexander Turnbull Library Endowment Trust Board:

The FOX PRINTS and the FOX PORTFOLIO

Three reproductions in colour of watercolours by Sir William Fox, two being in the Nelson area and one of Otaraia Pa on the Ruamahanga. Coloured surface of each, approximately 9 x 12 ins. *$2.00 each, with descriptive leaflet.* ALSO six other prints – Kaiteriteri; Lake Rotoroa: Tiraumea river; Tuakau; Hokitika; Pohaturoa rock – with a brochure by Dr E. H. McCormick. Edition of 2,000. Portfolio $14\frac{1}{2}$ x $18\frac{1}{2}$ ins. *Sold as a set of 6, at $10 or singly at 3$ each.*

The BARRAUD PRINTS 1967:

Wellington 1861; Lake Papaitonga, Horowhenua; The Barracks, Napier. Coloured surface, approximately 10 x 15 ins. *$2.00 each, with notes.*

The EMILY HARRIS PRINTS

New Zealand flower paintings Rangiora, Blueberry, Mountain cabbage-tree, Coloured surfaces, approximately 18 × 12 ins. Edition of 2,500. $2.00 each, with notes; *set of 3, in illustrated folder, $6.00.*

MAPLESTONE PRINTS

Hawkestone Street, Wellington; New Plymouth; Scene near Stoke Nelson. All 1849. Format and price as for Emily Harris prints.

Published by the Friends of the Turnbull Library:

Captain James Cook's chart of New Zealand (1769–70), reproduced from the original in the British Museum by courtesy of the Trustees. Approximately 14 x 14 ins. Price 20c.

Offprints of the articles on S. C. Brees in November 1968 *Turnbull Library Record* available 25c.

(See also inside back cover)

Set in 'Monotype' 10 pt and 12 pt Bembo and printed by the Pelorus Press Ltd. Auckland, New Zealand