

Alexander Turnbull's bookplates

PENELOPE GRIFFITH

*The surest way of acquiring a love for books and a library of your own is to secure the services of a good artist and have him design for you a bookplate.*¹

Alexander Turnbull's bibliophily and inspiration to collect needed no goad and it was some six years after acquiring his first New Zealand book that he commissioned his first bookplate from the well-known London illustrator Walter Crane. However, following a trend among ex-libris users, he did go on to have further designs executed, of which there are eight examples identified here.² Unfortunately they cannot all be documented as to date or artist.



Figure 1

The Crane bookplate (Figure 1) was commissioned and paid for in advance (10 guineas) in June 1891, when Turnbull was in London. The pen and ink drawing was sent to him on 8 July, but