

Sketch of the Work of the Catholic Church
A Bibliographic Note

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Alexander Turnbull in May 1910 was given a printed report by R. Coupland Harding entitled *Sketch of the Work of the Catholic Church for the Last Half-Century, in the Archdiocese of Wellington*. A. G. Bagnall recorded this in the *New Zealand National Bibliography*, adding a note:

Prepared for presentation to Pope Leo XIII on occasion of Golden Jubilee. WTu copy unbound in folder with one leaf ([2] p.) letter of transmittal from Archbishop Redwood forwarding "purse of gold (£500) . . . and this Book-Album . . .". Coupland Harding & J. R. Blair told A. H. Turnbull that only 3 or 4 copies printed and apart from the Pope's copy this the only survivor (with p. 49-56 in photocopy only).

In September 1987, the author identified the presentation 'Book-Album' in the Vatican Library in Rome.

The heavy leather-covered volume is 40 cm tall and has some kinship with Victorian leather-bound ledgers in its corded and tooled spine. The front and back covers are overlaid with marquetry work in native timbers, the design being based on their colour variations. The craftsmanship is superb but not as high a standard as the Austrian work in the National Museum. The Alexander Turnbull Library copy would appear to be an offprint of the printed section. The title page in varied colours is the same but the three page illuminated address is missing as is the mounted portrait of the Archbishop on the following page. The Turnbull copy has the page with its ornate friezes but the space for the portrait is blank. The remaining pages are the same, seven missing earlier being supplied in photocopy from a similar offprint in the library of the Marist Fathers. There is no Album section. This comprises 196 photographs, each individually numbered to coincide with their reference numbers in the printed text. They are mounted on 38 cm leaves in appropriate clusters.

The collection and compilation of material took just under six months. On 12 May 1887, the Archbishop issued from Hawera a circular to each of his priests calling for 'photos of themselves and their confreres, and of their churches, schools, presbyteries, etc. together with a short sketch of [their] mission from its origins down to our day'. These were to be forwarded before the end of June. The proceeds of special collections for 'the purse of gold' were not required until 16 September. A letter in French by the Archbishop dated 5 November 1887 to M. Le Commandant Filippo Tolli in Rome explains that the 'Book-Album'