

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*