

Milner's impressionable mind. He found there a 'model' of scholarly, civic and personal worth that invited emulation.

There was another such model. In his first year at Nelson College he came to know, despite a four year age gap, Ernest Rutherford, then completing his scholastic triumphs by becoming dux and going off on a scholarship to take his double first at Canterbury College. A friendly association formed that continued until Rutherford's death. The first step he took on the day of his arrival at Canterbury College, after having been met by a boyhood friend, Joe Craig, was to visit Rutherford. As he wrote to his mother:

After having lunch (one of 3 good courses) Joe & I went to Rutherford's lodgings (not so good as ours but he pays more)⁶ & had a long talk with him. He is now B.A., has won a Senior Scholarship in Maths. & is going in for double 1st class honours this year. We went to the University & they took me all over it, introducing me to a lot of students, B.A.'s M.A.'s etc. by the score.⁷

He continued to see Rutherford while an undergraduate and benefited from the latter's experience and good counsel. In the first weeks of university life a further letter to his mother reveals how he took Rutherford's example to heart:

Prof. Cook, Rutherford & others down here think that N——must have got 3rd class honours, & they all look down on such a thing. M.A.'s are nothing here; we turn 'em out, First Class, Second, & 3rd Class by the dozens every year; & Rutherford at the end of this year will be an M.A. with Double First Class Honours & also a B.Sc. . . . You are thought nothing of here if you get 3rd class honours in the M.A., or even second-class for the matter of that, though they are all better than plain M.A.⁸

In later years, while the master in charge of the Nelson College magazine, the *Nelsonian*, he carefully chronicled Rutherford's career and achievements in the Old Boys column. When Rutherford gave his celebrated lecture on radium in relation to the earth's internal heat before the Royal Society in London in May 1904, the *Nelsonian*, dissatisfied with what it termed a mere 'curt telegraphic announcement' in the New Zealand press, came out with a five-page detailed survey, pieced together from English and local sources by Milner's guiding if non-scientific hand. The friendly link between them was well illustrated by Rutherford's acceptance in 1925, despite a crowded itinerary, of an invitation to address the boys at Waitaki. I recall the evident mutual liking and respect—and the *bonhomie* of their relations. Rutherford gave assembled Waitakians a taste of mirth when he recalled that at Nelson College he had once had occasion to 'correct' the Rector when he was just 'a little lad'. In 1929, when Waitaki's Rector had his first and only visit to England, Rutherford welcomed him at