

The Little Country and Civilian into Soldier are the New Zealand equivalents, very roughly, of these books, which are reprints in a cheap edition, sponsored by the Commonwealth Literary Fund, which I hope is as important as it sounds.

—David Hall

FOLK-LORE FOR CHILDREN

MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF MAORILAND
By A. W. Reed, A. H. and A. W. Reed.

THE author is disarmingly frank about his intentions. This book, he says, in a foreword, is "obviously not intended for the student, nor will anything new be found in its pages. It is an attempt to put into simple form the more popular stories which entertained the old-time Maori." In the face of such a statement, no purpose would be served by submitting this collection of Maori legends to those critical tests of scholarship and scientific research which one would properly apply to a work making more pretentious claims than this one does. It is, of course, possible that the anthropologists, the historians, and the other experts on Maori lore might come out in support of Mr. Reed. On the other hand, they might pull him to pieces. That is perhaps unlikely: but the issue is really irrelevant. The only question that does need to be answered is whether this is a satisfactory book for the children of New Zealand for whom Mr. Reed intends it, "in the hope that they may learn to treasure their heritage of ancient story." The answer to that question would seem to be almost enthusiastically in the affirmative, judging by the test which is most valid in the circumstances: that is, by submitting it to children and observing whether they find it interesting and enjoyable. At any rate, that was the reaction of the two children to whom this reviewer gave the book to read. The result might be different in other cases, but that seems doubtful (though naturally much depends on the age of the child; under ten would probably be too young).

Without referring to his original sources, it would be hard to say to what extent Mr. Reed is in this case an anthologist rather than an author, and to what degree he has rewritten the old stories and not merely collected them. But the tales as he presents them have variety, vigour, and colour, and there is a very generous helping not only of stories but also of illustrations. There are, in fact, 50 full-page illustrations in black and white, mostly by George Woods, but there are also a number by W. Dittmer, which first appeared in *Te Tohunga* in 1907 and are now republished. Children will possibly prefer the strong, simple line of Woods to the symbolism of Dittmer. There are also four plates in colour, and the book is attractively printed and bound. Fifteen shillings may seem a lot to pay for a children's book (though by to-day's standards it isn't), but those who hold it in their hands, look through it, and notice how much has been put into it, are not likely to feel that they are being asked an excessive price.

BOOKS ABOUT BIRDS

BIRD WATCHING. By Mollie Miller Atkinson, A. H. and A. W. Reed, Wellington.
PODGY THE PENGUIN. By L. E. Richdale. Printed for the author by the Otago Daily Times.

MRS. ATKINSON began by writing about birds for children, and has now made some studies for grown-ups. Mr. Richdale began with grown-ups and

(continued on next page)

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