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BOOKS

Maori Church and School

THE STORY OF TE AUTE COLLEGE. by R. R. Alexander: 15s.

RANGIATEA, the Story of Otaki's Maori Church, its First Pastor, and its People, by Eric Ramsden: 25s.

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A MAORI. by Reweti T. Kohere (with the aid of the New Zealand Literary Fund). All published by A. H. and A. W. Reed.

(Reviewed by A.M.)

THERE are personal links between these three books dealing with the impact of Christianity on the Maori. Archdeacon Samuel Williams, founder of Te Aute College, superintended the building of Rangiataea, the Maori church at Otaki, and the Reverend Reweti Kohere was a pupil at Te Aute under its great headmaster John Thornton, and remembers Archdeacon Williams.

The history of Te Aute College is a localised history of Maori education. As the cradle of the Young Maori Party, Te Aute was the primary cause of the movement that raised the people from despair to hope and action. Many of the leaders in peace and war have been Te Aute old boys. The author tells us that at one stage in the second war they comprised, with one exception, all the officers of the Maori Battalion. Mr. Alexander's book is not a literary history, but it is valuable as a well-documented record of the college's rise to its long-occupied pre-eminent position, through difficulties of finance, Maori criticism, fire and earthquake, and never-ending controversy about the best kind of education. The author includes biographies and reminiscences of old boys, the school roll year by year to 1950, and data about scholarship and games. There are over 30 well-chosen illustrations.

Mr. Ramsden's story of the Maori church at Otaki, which the late Bishop Bennett describes in an introduction as "the oldest of our real Maori churches," extends to a history of Christianity in the Waikanae-Otaki area, with excursions into national and Anglican policy for the Maori. He links Rangiataea with the sacred homeland centre Ra'iataea, which he has visited in the Society Islands, and tells in detail the story of the Anglican Church on the southern west coast from Hadfield's arrival in 1839 to the Rangiataea centennial ceremonies at Otaki in 1950. To a subject that he loves, Mr. Ramsden has brought great industry, the methods of a historian, including full documentation, and the ability to cast his tribute in literary form. Hadfield, who became Bishop of Wellington and Primate, is the hero, and the author rightly notices the absence of a biography of this great missionary, so perceptive of the true interests of both races and so fearless in expressing himself. Te Ruaparaha is another leading figure, and pains are taken to depict him as less black than the traditional portrait. From the New Zealand as well as the local point of view, this is an important book. The illustrations are admirable.

In his autobiography, a sequel to his *Story of a Maori Chief*, Mr. Kohere tells in simple and often moving language of his childhood in the Ngati-porou wilds, his education at primary school, Te Aute and Canterbury College, his school teaching, and his work in the church. Eventually he settled on a farm-parsonage near the East Cape (on a

stipend of £75) so that he might bring up his children on his own "paternal ground." He still lives there. In him two cultures are blended, and he has a firm hold on the great simplicities of life.

A GREAT THINKER

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS: PHILOSOPHICAL TEXTS, selected and translated by Thomas Gilby; Geoffrey Cumberlege; Oxford University Press. English price, 12/6.

THE *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas Aquinas is invariably included in lists of the world's best books, but its author wrote much else, and these works should be looked at if the full range of his thought is to be known. Thomas Gilby, who edits this selection, explains that his purpose has been to reveal the rational foundation of the theology. It is therefore the natural wisdom of Aquinas—as against the supernatural, "the infused knowledge of things in the revelation of the divine mysteries"—which provides the texts.

Father Gilby admits that St. Thomas is an "intractable" author for an anthologist: "His mind works laconically at a level and sustained speed . . . the unit of thought is the treatise, not the phrase; the style is sober, expository, and repetitive, the ideas more exciting than the images and richer than the vocabulary." Nevertheless, the editor has assembled quotations which are pointed and packed with ideas. It is difficult to open the book at random without finding a text which sets one furiously to think. And although the wisdom is embedded firmly in scholasticism it is often surprising to remember that the words were written 700 years ago. Is not, for instance, a theme used in modern novels incipient in this sentence?—"Evil cannot be known simply as evil, for its core is hollow, and can be neither recognised nor defined save by the surrounding



NGAIO MARSH, whose new novel "Opening Night" is to be reviewed by Francis Jackson in the ZB Book Review session on February 24. Mr. Jackson will also speak about Josephine Tey's "Daughter of Time," and other books for review the same evening are: "Shadows Move Among Them," by Edgar Mittelholzer (John R. Cole); "Is This What I Wanted?" by John Guthrie (O. N. Gillespie); and "Life Has Kept Me Young," by Harold M. Watkins (Dr. G. H. Scholefield)