

resources. By the end of the eighteenth century some four to five thousand pa had been built in the North Island. Not all of these were then occupied. Archaeological excavations have revealed the practice of abandoning pa and the rebuilding of new sites, often close to the older ones. Military defeat and the diminution of power associated with the old site, and perhaps the former leadership, is presumably the explanation for this recurring practice.

The book pretends to be no more than a beginning and it serves this purpose well. The text and illustrations ably support and illuminate each other. It is marred somewhat, however, by carelessness with quotations (several of which are rough paraphrases, in actuality), inaccuracies with some of the bibliographic references, and on one occasion (p. 47) a place name: Motiti island is the correct form. Some tidying up from the oral form in which these chapters were first presented (as the 1974 Macmillan Brown lectures at Auckland University) it seems should have been observed more carefully. But *Prehistoric Maori Fortifications* makes available to a wider audience some of the ideas and problems of the current state of archaeological research on the major military, residential, and economic unit of Maori society.

JUDITH BINNEY

University of Auckland

Ernest Dieffenbach — Rebel and Humanist. By Gerda Elizabeth Bell. The Dunmore Press, Palmerston North, 1976. 165 pp. N.Z. price: \$10.75.

Dieffenbach's *Travels in New Zealand* has long been recognized as a most perceptive commentary on the New Zealand scene in the early 1840s. In this short biography Dr Bell sets the author in his European context, thus giving an added breadth and value to his observations on New Zealand. But the man himself she has not been able to bring to life. Partly this is due to her rather awkward style, which at times reads more like draft notes than a finished narrative, but it is partly also the fault of her subject. Ernest Dieffenbach gave little of himself away, even in letters to his family — if one may judge from the translation of a couple published in 'a rather obscure place; the *Intelligenzblatt für die Provinz Oberhessen im allgemeinen, den Kreis Frieberg und die angrenzenden Bezirke im besonderen*', Friedberg, November 1840.

As the above-quoted source note indicates, Dr Bell's research into Dieffenbach's European background has been exhaustive and a considerable amount of information has been unearthed about this young German political refugee who became the New Zealand Company's naturalist. Yet the main conclusion to be drawn from all the new material is that Dieffenbach's New Zealand mission was the high point of his career. This biography, in consequence, will chiefly interest New Zealand readers, for whom rather more searching and checking of the New Zealand content of the book would have been an advantage. One wonders, too, whether an article by Dieffenbach, published in a German periodical in 1846 and described by Dr Bell as 'a short and provocative history of the rise and fall of the New Zealand Company' might not have been worth a translation in full, as an appendix.

R. M. ROSS

University of Auckland