

The Ferns of New Zealand (1890). Thomas Kirk's *The Forest Flora of New Zealand* (1899) was illustrated with drawings by various artists of the Survey Department, notably Hugh McKean, Hugh Boscawen, David Blair and Augustus Hamilton. Like Kirk, Thomas Cheeseman did not himself do the drawings for his *Illustrations of the New Zealand Flora* (1914), but Cheeseman's demands could not be satisfied in this country and he selected Matilda Smith of the Royal Herbarium at Kew to prepare drawings, which were then lithographed by John Nugent Fitch. *The Illustrations* provides an appropriate cut-off point, as nothing comparable was to be published for a number of years, and photography would become the principal means of illustrating botanical works from this time on.

The text is aimed at the general reader rather than the specialist in botany, art or history. Dr Sampson's information comes chiefly from existing published sources, which he acknowledges fully. One error arising from inaccurate unpublished source material should be mentioned. Thomas Frederic Cheeseman did not marry Ellen Cawkwell, as stated on page 124. Ellen was in fact his mother: he married Rose Keating. There is also an inconsistency in the form of name used to refer to Dumont d'Urville. Although Dr Sampson explains that this form is in fact the explorer's correct surname, he himself uses the incorrect form D'Urville.

The forty-eight full-page plates (thirty in colour) are as close as possible to facsimile size and are amply annotated with botanical and common name, a description of the species, and other relevant details. The design of the book, with plates arranged in groups, means that plates do not always appear in the chapter to which they relate. However, the book is not lengthy enough for this to be a major problem. The quality of reproductions is high and works in a variety of media, including water-colour, engravings, lithographs and chromolithographs, are illustrated. The colour reproduction is praiseworthy for its accuracy — often a problem in the case of delicate watercolours or hand-colouring. A select bibliography leads the reader to more specialised works and there is an adequate index, which covers botanical and common names of plant species, thereby making a glossary unnecessary.

The overall design is attractive, with a clear type-face and generous margins. While not a work of original scholarship, this book is very useful in collecting and summarizing information from a variety of scattered sources and presenting it in an assimilable fashion. The price keeps it within the range of a number of readers to whom it may appeal on various counts.

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The Amuri: A County History. By W. J. Gardner. The Amuri County Council, Culverden, 1983 (2nd edn). 492 pp. N.Z. price: \$35.00.

THE AMURI COUNTY has made a fortunate choice of historian, a local son with a deep affinity for his region, who also happens to be a leading New Zealand historian with a special interest in regional history. And Gardner has been fortunate in his region which, as he notes (p.475) 'has what must rank among the best natural county boundaries in New Zealand', and which has sustained a small population (3061 in 1981)

with an unusually coherent history, arising from its almost single-minded devotion to the pastoral and agricultural development of the land. It is salutary to remember that the first edition of this book appeared a decade before the *New Zealand Journal of History* was founded. It says much for the thoroughness of Gardner's original research, the balance of his presentation, and the maturity of Canterbury history in the 1950s, that it seems quite appropriate for this second edition to consist of the unrevised original text plus a new chapter on the Amuri in the early 1980s.

In a disarmingly frank preface to the original edition Gardner discusses the problems facing the regional historian and explains his own approach. While writing as 'one who knows and loves his district above all others' he has also attempted to set it in the context of other districts, and to see its place in the complex process of the overall history of the country. He acknowledges that he enjoyed the detective work of following explorers, and found the runholders an easy canvas to work on, with their limited numbers and richness of records; but township history was 'slow and difficult', and the small settlers also were difficult because of their numbers, their failure to keep records, and an attitude that 'we are not history'. With the farm settlements he has in fact done a very creditable job, but with the townships he has certainly left very much yet to be done. In the new final chapter he offers some interesting general conclusions about Amuri 'urban' life, while admitting that he writes of it only as an outsider. One of the strengths of the content of the book is that it succeeds in giving a good overall survey, together with definitive treatments of some aspects, while leaving clearly acknowledged areas of omission or inadequate treatment, to challenge the future historian.

In his interpretation Gardner takes a realistic view of the tangled skein of human motives, frankly recording self-interest and bigotry, but in a relaxed and urbane tone. He leaves the impression that a combination of civilized values and elements of altruism in county leadership led eventually to reasonably wise consensuses on most issues. But those who see class and conflict as more deeply ingrained in human society will find a good deal of material here for reading the story their way. Over the last thirty years social historians and sociologists have greatly heightened our awareness of the experience and contributions of the common man, but Gardner's *Amuri* does not have a dated feel. The common man is well represented here, both deeply embedded in the narrative, and brought into focus in individual vignettes from time to time. Many of the issues that have come to the forefront in historical and sociological debate since 1956 are adumbrated here, but it is no discredit to the author that he does not consider adequately all the questions which the 1980s are asking. One thing he does give with depth and insight, in a way which later generations may not easily recapture, is an understanding of man's wrestling with the land and the forces of nature, and a feeling both of what the land did to the men, and the men to the land. It is a farmer's view of history that senses basic truths too easily overlooked by the urban-bred historian of the 1980s, in an over-concentration on social interaction.

An 'Addenda and Corrigenda' to the first edition (pp.491-2) is easily overlooked until it is too late to be of use. One or two slips remain uncorrected. Hastings is not in Kent (p.95 footnote) and the fourth extract on p.297 is surely misdated. It is a pity the index was not placed at the end and updated to cover the new chapter. The book is very adequately sourced, well illustrated, and attractively produced. All round, it is an encouraging illustration of the enduring qualities of good workmanship.

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