

*The Verse of Edward Tregear*, Palmerston North, 1989, in which he says that 'By present standards Tregear's poetry is not great literature, or even great New Zealand literature'. It is not great literature by any standards, though one of his poems has been anthologized.

Tregear's aim, Howe says, in both his verse and his studies, was the intellectual colonization of New Zealand, to discover our identity, to make singing in a songless land. Unfortunately his songs are tuneless.

Much of Tregear's life was devoted to Polynesian studies. In 1885 he published a book, *The Aryan Maori*. He was neither the first nor the last person to claim that the Maori were Aryan, but through his method of comparative philology, he took the idea to absurd lengths. He claimed that the Maori language preserved, 'in an almost inconceivable purity', the ancient Aryan language. It also held embalmed memories of animals and other things that the Maori had never seen. 'Kahui', flock or crowd — herd — for instance, was 'gau' or 'cow'. A.S. Atkinson ridiculed this notion, demonstrating, by Tregear's method, that the word 'kakapo' preserved the Aryan origins of a 'cock and bull' story. Howe defends Tregear when he calls this 'a most unfortunate criticism'. However, Tregear did more serious work. He was able to look to his *Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary* (1891) for his 'remembrance'.

Kerry Howe's researches have been assiduous. Tregear's daughter told me in the 1950s that many of his papers were burned when her parents moved to Picton in 1921, but Howe has tracked down numerous manuscripts. The biography is well written and interesting, an important contribution to our rapidly advancing knowledge of late nineteenth and early twentieth century history.

KEITH SINCLAIR

*University of Auckland*

*The Stratford Inheritance*. By Ian Church. Stratford District Council, P O Box 320, Stratford, 1990. 264 pp. NZ price: \$39.00 + postage \$3.00.

THE WRITING of New Zealand local histories has been transformed in the last two decades by the influence of academics entering the field, and by the broadened expectations of local councils who often fund such works. However, *The Stratford Inheritance* stands firmly within the earlier tradition of local history writing, and exemplifies the limitations of that genre.

The history of Stratford is divided into four sections. Part One gives a brief summary of early Maori history, interesting for its outline of Maori tracks across Taranaki. There follows a contracted record of Maori conversions to Christianity, the wars and land sales. More space could have been given to this vital period.

Part Two (The Communities) follows the development of Stratford district in small geographical segments, sometimes treated road by road. While this method is perhaps appropriate to a district where each road radiating out from the Stratford centre became the core of a community, the rationale for this is not made explicit; the overall development of the county, its crises and changes, are obscured by the minutiae in this multiplication of mini-histories. The absence of a satisfying map makes it difficult for an outsider to trace the links in the pattern, and the significance of detailed information is undermined. Part Two concludes with a chapter on rural society which contains moving

and funny episodes, from the poignancy of influenza epidemic losses, to the frustrations of organizing under-powered filmshows in the 1940s.

Part Three, which traces the working life and economy of Stratford, is the most valuable in the book. It outlines the fluctuating fortunes of sawmilling, the struggles to break in farmland, the boom in dairy exports, and shows the author's ability to integrate government legislation, village settlements, and individual enterprise. He has succeeded where many local historians do not, in tracing the district's development through the twentieth century, up to the scarcity of land for recent generations ('What was not solved was what to do with surplus children'), and diversification into deer and goat farming and horticulture in the 1980s.

Part Four outlines the founding and unification of Stratford and Whangamamona councils, and the contributions of council chairmen and engineers. This is followed by a long section on the construction of roads, bridges and railways, and conveys some sense of the dependence of settlers on these arteries.

In the brief conclusion to the book, Ian Church provides a good analysis of changes in the Stratford region; this is missing in most of the earlier sections and these comments would be more valuably placed with the relevant facts, rather than as an endpiece. It is unfortunate too, that the author in a well-researched volume, shows little awareness of recent trends in social history or oral, rural and feminist history, and the importance of these disciplines to regional history. His near-to-final comment in the book, 'The conservatism of the county can be seen in the absence of women councillors', could be applied to the format and material of his text. The selection of photographs highlights this: there are fine photographs of rodeos, stock-yards and bush-milling, and one intriguing one of Edwardian women in a nail-hitting contest. Very few other women are entered in this history. Family life and children are similarly overlooked in most sections. Seddon's remark on visiting a Strathmore school, on 'the young white slaves of the back-blocks', could have been valuably pursued.

The detailed research of *The Stratford Inheritance* provides a basis for future historians, but more importantly a challenge to move beyond its limitations, to extend the variety of sources used by local historians, and to re-examine our vision of what and whom regional histories should embrace.

MARGARET McCLURE

*Auckland*

*New Zealand and Japan, 1945-1952: The Occupation and the Peace Treaty.* By A. Trotter. The Athlone Press, London, 1990. 231 pp. UK price: £25.00.

IN WRITING this book, Ann Trotter could not have chosen a more difficult topic. Not only does she discuss the occupation and the peace treaty, but she also weaves in the impact of the war, and the genesis of the Anzus treaty. She set herself a sizeable task, and the lack of other secondary works covering this period has forced her to provide considerable detail while at the same time attempting to maintain a clean line of narrative and analysis. The result is a book which is scholarly, readable and informative but which stops short of thematic generalizations: there are many examples of fine judgment, but in the end Trotter seems reluctant to knit these into a sustained argument. The search for security,