



Mission House.

The Mission at Ruatoki.



A brief history of the Maori Mission at Ruatoki, Bay of Plenty, in the Diocese of Waiapu, will make us understand its need and its importance.

In 1903 the Chief Kereru sent his daughter, Rotu, to be trained at Hukarere School, Napier, our Diocesan School for Maori Girls. Here coming under Christian teaching, and under the splendid influence of the Misses Bulstrode, she was baptised and confirmed.

In 1905 she left school, and went to the Mission House at Whakarewarewa, Rotorua, for training in mission work. Here she worked with an English lady, Miss Doyle, a woman of saintly character. She remained there for about a year, and then she wrote to Bishop Williams— then Bishop of Waiapu— saying that although she was quite happy, she was all the time thinking of her own people at Ruatoki, who were living in heathen darkness. Could she go home, and carry the message of love to them. The Bishop consented, and she and Miss Doyle (who was moved at Rotu's earnest entreaty) went to Ruatoki together. The only house available was nothing more than a wooden hut. It was not even watertight. Here they began their work. They got the children together, housing those whom their parents allowed to come to them, and in this way the sowing began which was soon to bear precious fruit. They realised they must begin with the children, getting them away from their heathen surroundings into a Christian atmosphere; and steadily and patiently teaching them. As the work grew the small house was enlarged, first by adding one wing, then another, and soon it became the centre of a strong Christian influence. Then came visible results. Some of these heathen children were baptised, after careful preparation, and confirmed (on the steps of the Mission House), and five girls were subsequently sent to Hukarere School.