

women. Their labour was voluntary and their reward was in their work. Although we know that Archdeacon Williams was the designer of the major part of the Church, we do not know who carved the altar rails or who wove the lace work for the panels. The creative genius of the Maoris dominated the European form imposed on it, and, without any self-conscious change, made a perfect building unique in architectural history.

The first trees for the Church were cut in 1844. The Maoris at once set about felling with fierce energy, and two beautiful trees were broken to splinters in falling. This created great distress, and cast a gloom on the work. Mr. Hadfield, the Resident Missionary, showed the Maoris how to make a bed of branches for the trees to fall on, and they cut the tree for the ridge pole, which fell on the bed prepared for it in perfect condition. The ridge pole is 86 ft. long. This triumph pleased the Maoris very much, and they went on with the work until all



the trees needed for the building were cut. They were then taken to Otaki and laid on the ground, where the Church was afterwards built. Each tree had to be drawn by the Maoris from the bush to the beach and along the beach to Otaki, a distance of 8 miles. Mr. Hadfield became ill. So there the fallen trees lay for four years, and became quite overgrown with hutiwai.

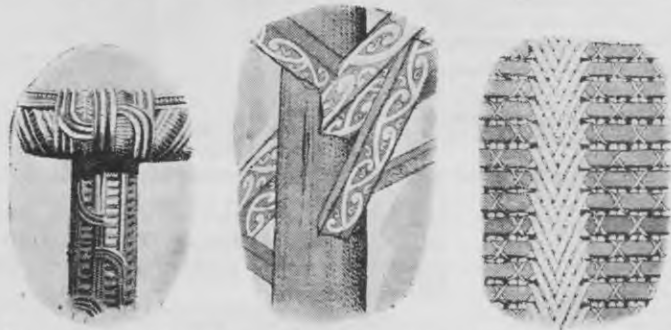
The building of the Church was begun in 1848 under Mr. Williams' supervision. "It was a lively scene; men and women all at work from early dawn to dark, the men working at the pillars and

slabs which were all smoothed by adze, not cut by machinery, and the women working at the lace work for the panels." In November, 1849, the opening and thanksgiving service was held. The seats were not put in for some years as the Maoris preferred sitting native fashion on the floor.

Built of wood and reed the fabric of the Church is less permanent than reinforced-concrete

churches will probably prove to be. In spite of the fact that it has twice been repaired since it was built, the Church is now showing, noticeably in the reed panels, signs of decay. An offertory box asking for donations for repairing the Church hangs in the Church porch.

We can hope that when the restorer does begin his work he will not take his cue from



Above, left to right: Carved altar rail; totara pillar with beams and stays in red and white Maori design; and part of a reed wall panel. Opposite: Looking toward the Church door. Over the doorway you can see one of the reed wall panels which alternate with totara pillars.