

natives after all', 'Natives don't understand kindness, even from a priest'. Fr O'Neill sitting for hours patiently gathering stories of Nutu the Creator, Saia the Evil Spirit, Porekanu and Sanauga the good and mischievous Little People, and comparing these with Catholic faith and Irish legend, was working in the great tradition of Ricci and De Nobili. Mission work should never be the imposition of beliefs and practices from outside, many of them reflecting the history of European Catholicism rather than the essential development of the faith and life of the Church. It must begin from a desire to learn and understand, to assimilate and encourage others to retain, whatever is of most value in a culture or way of life.

The book has been written up from a diary, written at the end of the day's work or march in camps and village rest-houses. It is interesting to hear of communal property-systems among the Melanesians, or of judicial sentence by denunciation, unenforced yet leading infallibly to suicide or flight into exile; yet this is not an anthropological work. There is a lot of discussion of missionary methods, but again this is not a handbook of missiology. The style is direct and lively, though one may wonder if the bluff Irish heartiness does not occasionally become something of a pose.

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DISPUTED QUESTIONS, by Thomas Merton; Hollis and Carter, 21s.

*Disputed Questions* is not really a satisfactory title for this book (as the author himself almost admits). Something like *Living Questions* or *Relevant Questions* would perhaps have been more indicative of its contents. Part of the trouble is that the questions raised throughout this book are simply not disputed enough — this itself is one of the author's major themes. Merton, from the sanity of his monastery, and by no means cut off from the world in spirit and understanding, is able to suggest to us, in part at least, where lie the roots of our present malaise. His concern is to bring out in most human terms the significance of *person* as against the false significance of *individual*. He ranges far and wide, from Russian literary dilemmas to the monks of Mount Athos, from the problem of sacred art to the meaning of Christian solitude. Admirers of *Elected Silence*, says the blurb, will rediscover here the Merton they know, but admirers of *No Man is an Island*, I also suggest, will see here how he has been able to project further, and with such value, the significance of the doctrine which he outlined to us there.

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