

THE LATE FRANK HUTCHINSON OF RISSINGTON, HAWKE'S BAY

By W. H. GUTHRIE SMITH

In Mr. Frank Hutchinson's death at Rissington on April 6th an honoured and widely known personality of Hawke's Bay has passed away. The Hutchinsons came originally from Yorkshire and are among the numerous Quaker families who have done much, very much, for New Zealand. With his parents, brother, and sisters, Mr. Hutchinson, then a lad of 13, reached New Zealand in 1881. He was educated at the famous Quaker School of Bootham, York, the Napier High School and Wellington College. Nine years later was founded the well-known Rissington Romney stud flock. Mr. Hutchinson's stud work was very much to him. Until the last two or three years he was always to be seen at the various stock shows and many will miss his friendly greeting and characteristically whimsical comments on men and creatures and things. Mr. Hutchinson was a genuine country man, happy in his surroundings and eager to pass on his enthusiasm. He was one of those fortunate persons deservedly domiciled in the country, to whom life on the land was the best of birthrights. He had much of the wide interest of his uncle, Sir Jonathan Hutchinson, in many branches of science. For some time indeed he worked in his famous relative's Haslemere Educational Museum, England, still a model to other institutions of the kind. Without claiming rank as a specialist in any department of botany he possessed a wide acquaintance with our New Zealand flora.

The problems of geology and zoology were perennial interests. His tastes were very catholic. From mountain top, sea beach and certainly not least from the saline swamps of Hawke's Bay previous to the uplift of 1931 spoil was forthcoming after each visit. With the half humorous, half shamefaced look of the school boy bidden to empty his pockets of their miscellanies, he would decant his cargo of rubbish, as he was wont to term it. After the challenging interrogatory look would duly follow self-laughter at himself and his collector's proclivities. Then, last and best of all, eager recollections wise comments and observations. Pur-

suits and studies so pleasant to himself he loved to share with others. Many young folk must date their earliest real interest in Natural History to their first acquaintance with him. For many years he gave informal talks on scientific and country matters at Hereworth, Woodford House, St. Luke's, Queenswood, and other schools in Hawke's Bay. "The East Coast Naturalist," written out and handed from subscriber to subscriber, was founded by him at a very early date. He wrote papers on many subjects in the excellently produced "Forerunner." In correspondence with his friends he disclosed a delightful gift of humorous expression. His short stories have never been published. They reveal a unique and original mind. They were reserved for his ain folk and his ain fireside. With such proclivities and tastes it was not surprising that he should have sorrowed over the rapid disappearance of the forests of New Zealand and the native birds so plentiful in the 'eighties. In 1918 he bought a fine block of unspoilt virgin bush at Puketitiri, particularly well set off by its dense wind-smoothed fringe of high country scrub growth and its yellow foreground of native tussock. Purchases of this kind, like virtue, are their own reward. Any man working on these unselfish, far-sighted lines necessarily foregoes personal benefits. For such an object—and this is too often forgotten—the owner is contented if not to scorn delights, at least to forego delights and live laborious days. Whilst Mr. Hutchinson's energies endured he did his personal best to preserve his forest area from the thousand perils that endanger such property. Then because of failing health he did what he had always intended to do, handed over his charge as a gift to the Dominion. This purchase was not the chance whim of a wealthy man, an evanescent by-thought paid for, and passing out of mind. Doubtless it was paid for, not in coin but in personal frugalities and self-denials. The impressive concourse of friends in all walks of life at his funeral bears witness to the high esteem felt for him and to the true appreciation of an unassuming, unselfish life.