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sion of missionary plants were Christian precepts first ventilated on the wilds of Tutira.

Hard upon the heels of Children of the Church come Burdens of Sin — "plants or seeds dropped on Tutira by many Pilgrims, some of them living animals, some larger members of the vegetable kingdom itself, and some of them not living at all, insensate, inanimate, though endowed with motion." Then again, in another fascinating chapter, Guthrie-Smith describes the Pedestrians. Once more let him speak:

About forty plants have attained their goal by pedestrianism — not, of course, by unbroken continuity of root-stretch from beginning to end of the journey, but by repeated portages over short distances. . . . Neither do I mean to affirm that these wayfarers have been too proud to have accepted from time to time a short lift on a roadman's shovel, the warm shelter of a stomach, the grip of a mane or pastern, a brief trundle on the wheel of a dray or buggy, the hospitality of a friendly hoof or woolly shank, the assistance down-hill of a brimming water-table. They have, nevertheless, to all intents and purposes reached Tutira on their feet.

And so with birds and animals. The book is not just a bald record of that and so is now an inhabitant of Tutira, that such a native has disappeared beneath an alien onslaught. The how, when, and why of every individual is vividly pictured.

#### Emotion Recollected in Tranquillity

Wordsworth it was, I think, who described poetry as "emotion recollected in tranquillity." That is an apt description of the spirit in which Guthrie-Smith approached his task. Youthful enthusiasms are remembered, not in the light of disillusion, but humorously and lovingly. There is no bitterness in remembrance of disasters. In his own words, "None, moreover, but pleasant memories remain—even the disasters of the past retain not their sting, but the remembrance of the antidote applied." The trials of native leasehold tenure, the exasperation growing into desperation over delayed renewals of leases; even the final break-up of Tutira (except for a block surrounding the homestead), for closer settlement, leaves no trace of bitterness. The story is told with all the blandness of large tolerance, and in the ripeness of its author's rich wisdom. Without haste it unfolds itself with a wealth of fascinating detail that is both

illuminating in its information and delightful in its entertainment. Here and there is a halt by the wayside while the author digresses into a footnote which is here, as in his account of the plucer sheep on page 383, a marvel of condensed information, and there, as on page 384, a philosophically humorous revelation of how the love of a piece of land can become a Frankenstein threatening to enslave one's very soul.

The temptation to quote again from "Tutira" is almost, but not quite, irresistible. It is not my object to lay its treasures bare to you, but to whet your appetite for your own discovery of them. To me "Tutira" is the greatest book in

every sense, including that of literary art, yet written in New Zealand, the greater because it is of New Zealand. Whether you agree with my judgment or scorn it is of little moment. What does matter to me is the hope that anything I have been able to say so haltingly, so unworthily of the book itself, may lead at least a few to read it for the first time, a few others to re-read it, not as mere documentary history of a few thousand acres of New Zealand soil, but as an epic of a phase of our life, and of a small corner of our land, that has been told with that feeling and expression which sets its author among the elect, the artists of this world.

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