

INFLUENCE OF MAN ON ANIMALS.—It is quite obvious that the influence of man has been generally inimical to the larger beasts and birds. The edible species he has killed off for food; the carnivores he has killed off as competitors and enemies of his own. In Britain alone we have destroyed or driven away the urus, the reindeer, the bear, the wolf, the beaver, and the wild boar; while we have almost exterminated the bustard, the seal, and the white cattle of Chillingham, and have lately reintroduced by artificial means the long locally extinct capercaillie. The red deer survives only by careful preservation; the fallow deer is doubtfully indigenous; the pheasant is an acclimatized alien. So, in New-Zealand, the Maories had destroyed the moa before white men reached the island; in Mauritius the dodo only just lived on long enough to be inaccurately described; in Behring Strait the peculiar marine mammal allied to the manatee was killed off by the earliest European explorers. The walrus and the seal even now threaten to become extinct; the European seas are getting fished out; the bison and the peccary will soon be driven out of America; the wapiti is even now becoming scarcer every year. In short, man is and has always been exterminating all the larger animals everywhere, and we may even question how considerable a part he may have borne in the destruction of some among the great extinct creatures of the quaternary period. He has almost certainly killed off the reindeer in its wild form, and he may have assisted the glacial epoch in killing off the mammoth, the cave bear, and the woolly rhinoceros. Wherever man appears, the large beasts and birds begin to disappear. It is only against small creatures that he is helpless, in exact proportion to their smallness. He can do little against the sugar-cane rat or the ordinary mouse; still less against the army worm or the 17-year locust, and almost nothing, it would seem against the phylloxera or the Colorado beetle. And when he comes to deal with the microscopic organisms which invade his very veins as Yellow Jack or typhoid fever, it appears that his best chance lies in actually introducing a small colony of the enemy in attenuated and comparatively innocuous forms into his own system. On the other hand, it does not follow that universal civilization or the general establishment of the highest existing type of man over the whole world will necessarily lead to the total extinction of all the larger birds and mammals. There can be little doubt that many must go—the lions, tigers, pumas, and jaguars, which indeed are already disappearing; the hippopotamus, the rhinoceros, the bison, and perhaps even the whale, which are not likely to be artificially preserved. But many have been and will be spared, because here again the action of man differs widely from that of the lower animals. Alone among carnivorous creatures, he has intelligence enough to preserve some of each useful kind for breeding; not quite alone among herbivorous and frugivorous species, he keeps a little of each edible plant for seed. It seems probable that certain highly specialized early types, such as the sabre-toothed lions, have become extinct through the too absolute perfection of their carnivorous structure. They were peculiarly adapted for killing the large mammals of their own period; and, when they had succeeded in killing off the whole race, they died out themselves for want of food, because they were too specialized in their enormous sabre-like teeth and heavy heads to compete with other and lighter types of cats, such as the ordinary lions and tigers, in the pursuit of smaller prey like deer and antelopes. But when man has once reached the pastoral stage, he does not eat up all the animals which he can get; he domesticates some of them, and only kills those superfluous ones which he does not need for breeding purposes. It is this stage which really marks the difference between what we call natural and artificial selection. Man, the hunter, scarcely differs much from other animals in his influence upon the general fauna, except in so far as he picks off the very best and largest of each kind; with pastoral and agricultural man we rise to a new level, where the useful kinds are definitely and consciously selected and favored, instead of being ruthlessly destroyed. Henceforth animals and plants survive, not because they are inedible, but because they are edible.—*The Pall Mall Gazette*.

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