

Our Vanishing Wild Life

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

THERE has just been published an unusual book¹ on the extermination of the beautiful and wonderful forms of wild life which is now going on with such appalling rapidity. It contains a discussion of the methods to check this extermination and to preserve the birds and mammals the loss of which can literally never be repaired. The writer, Mr. Hornaday, is the director of the New York Zoological Park, a trained naturalist, an explorer of and dweller in the world's waste spaces, a man who has been a mighty hunter in the proper sense of the word, but whose chief work for many years has been the effort to preserve and not destroy wild life. The foreword is written by Henry Fairfield Osborn, President of the New York Zoological Society.

As President Osborn says in his introduction, the United States at this moment occupies a lamentable position as being perhaps the chief offender among civilized nations in permitting the destruction and pollution of nature. Our whole modern civilization is at fault in the matter. But we in America are probably most at fault. The civilized people of to-day look back with horror at their mediæval ancestors who wantonly destroyed great works of art, or sat slothfully by while they were destroyed. We have passed that stage. We treasure pictures and sculptures. We regard Attic temples and Roman triumphal arches and Gothic cathedrals as of priceless value. But we are, as a whole, still in that low state of civilization where we do not understand that it is also vandalism wantonly to destroy or to permit the destruction of what is beautiful in nature, whether it be a cliff, a forest, or a species of mammal or bird. Here in the United States we turn our rivers and streams into sewers and dumping-grounds, we pollute the air, we destroy forests, and exterminate fishes, birds, and mammals—not to speak of vulgarizing charming landscapes with hideous advertisements. But at last it looks as if our people were awakening. Many leading men, Americans and Canadians, are doing all they can for the Conservation movement.

One phase of this Conservation movement is the preservation of the noble and beautiful forms of wild life in this country. It is to

this phase that Mr. Hornaday devotes himself. As he points out, it is not merely folly, it is wickedness, to permit a small number of our people, perhaps two or three per cent, to destroy the animals and birds in which the other ninety-seven per cent have an equal ownership, and in which the posterity of all of them should have an equal interest. The true sportsman, the nature-lover, the humanitarian—in short, all good citizens of all types—should read this book and should respond to the appeal Mr. Hornaday makes. We need drastic action. Song-bird slaughter should be stopped absolutely, of course, and so should the slaughter of water-birds. For game the bags should be strictly limited by law, all spring shooting should be stopped, and in most places there should be long close seasons, and, as regards many birds and mammals, absolute prohibition of killing at all. Congress should protect all migratory birds.

This was once a great game country. It is now in large part an absolutely gameless country, a country with less game than is found in most European countries, and the game is rapidly disappearing even from where it still exists. The wild antelope and the prairie chicken are on the point of following the wild bison and the passenger pigeon into memory. A few States have done their duty as to a few animals. Sheep are protected in Colorado—really protected, not nominally protected only—and have increased in consequence. Moose have been protected and have increased in Maine and New Brunswick. Deer have been protected, and have increased astonishingly, in Vermont, and indeed throughout New England. The elk have been thoroughly, but unintelligently, protected in the Yellowstone Park. Additional winter grounds should be provided for these Yellowstone Park elk, and moreover, as Mr. Hornaday points out, it is imperatively necessary that provision should be made for hunting and killing cows and young bulls (not old bulls, of which there are now too few). The Vermont deer are now so plentiful that there should be more hunting of them permitted. The elk in the Yellowstone Park are the only North American animals which have been so well protected in our preserves that their increase has outstripped the food supply, and in consequence multitudes now perish in the most miserable way by starvation.

¹Our Vanishing Wild Life. By William T. Hornaday. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

The National and State game reserves offer fine examples of what can be done by adequate legislation. The work of the Pennsylvania Game Commission is singled out by Mr. Hornaday for special praise; and it is worth remembering that only by such genuine game preservation by the State or Nation will it ever be possible to give to the farmer, the mechanic, and the clerk the chance to do hunting which otherwise is strictly confined to the millionaire and the market gunner.

The pleas made by Mr. Hornaday for the whooping crane, the upland plover, the California condor, for grouse, egrets, the wood duck, the blacktail deer, the California elephant seal, and other animals, are not only convincing, but should excite our legislators, sportsmen, and nature-lovers to active work. All our people should wake up to the damage done by the migratory sheep bands which are permitted to pasture on, and to destroy, the public domain. There should be international agreement to put down the iniquitous feather trade. It seems inconceivable that

civilized people should permit it to exist. Money is needed for the missionary work which Mr. Hornaday has started. Our rich men should realize that to import a Rembrandt or a Raphael into this country is in no shape or way such a service at this moment as to spend the money which such a picture costs in helping either the missionary movement as a whole, or else parts of it, such as the preservation of the prongbuck, or the activities of the Audubon Society on behalf of gulls and terns. The Ward-McIlhenny bird preserve, recently given to Louisiana by Mr. Edward A. McIlhenny and Mr. Charles Willis Ward, is already a nursery of priceless value for the preservation of egrets.

This book should be studied in every legislature. I commend it to women's clubs just as much as to farmers' associations. It should be read by all intelligent, far-sighted, and public-spirited men and women throughout the Union. Moreover, when they have read it, let them not be content with impatient indignation, but let them do all they can to act on the advice it contains.

THE DEAD DREAM

BY MADISON CAWEIN

Between the darkness and the day,
As, lost in doubt, I went my way,
I met a shape, as faint as fair,
With star-like blossoms in its hair;
Its body, which the moon shone through,
Was partly cloud and partly dew;
Its eyes were bright as if with tears,
And held the look of long-gone years;
Its mouth was piteous, sweet yet dread,
As if with kisses of the dead;
And in its hand it bore a flower,
In memory of some haunted hour.

I knew it for the Dream I'd had
In days when life was young and glad;
Why had it come with love and woe
Out of the happy Long-Ago?—
Upon my brow I felt its breath,
Heard ancient words of faith and death,
Sweet with the immortality
Of many a fragrant memory;
And to my heart again I took
Its joy and sorrow in a look,
And kissed its eyes and held it fast,
And bore it home from out the past—
My Dream of Beauty and of Truth,
I dreamed had perished with my Youth.