

THE CASE FOR THE HAWK.

(By DR. T. GILBERT PEARSON, President National Audubon Societies, U.S.A. *Extracted from "Bird Lore."*)

With the development of interest in the propagation of game-birds for field-sports, there has come into use in this country an old word with a new meaning. It was borrowed from the Grouse Moors of Europe. The word is "vermin," and is applied to all creatures which prey, even to a very limited extent, on game-birds. Often the attitude is taken that all "vermin" should be destroyed wherever found. The object is to aid in increasing the number of game-birds, not that such birds may multiply so there may be more of them to enjoy the beauties of this earth, perform greater service as insect-destroyers, and give pleasure to more bird-lovers, but primarily that they may exist in sufficient numbers to give the gunner a reasonable opportunity to secure good shooting when in the open season he goes afield. As stated on former occasions I would, therefore, define "vermin," as "Any wild creature that kills something you want to kill."

It is perfectly natural and altogether commendable that the gamekeeper should desire to protect his birds, that the farmer should seek to guard his poultry, and that the fruit-grower should discourage depredations on his cherry-crop. Self-interest, without which the activities of the workaday world would cease, demand that guardians be zealous in protecting their property-rights. Furthermore, it is wise that they take all means to make effective such guardianship, *provided* they do not interfere with the self-interest of their neighbours. The operation of an abattoir is entirely a legitimate business, but should not be conducted in a residential section lest offence be given other people possessing property-rights.

If a cherry tree is raided by a Robin, the owner of that cherry tree has the recognised fundamental right to protect his fruit, but he does not have the right to start shooting all the Robins of the neighbourhood. The bird is of value to all agriculturists and gardeners of the community because of the great numbers of insects and caterpillars it destroys, and such gardeners and agriculturists have property-rights that the cherry-raiser must respect. If a Hawk catches a young Pheasant in a breeding enclosure, we may readily concur in the gamekeeper's wish to dispose of the Hawk, but there are many who would not agree with the idea that the gamekeeper automatically has the right to make war on all Hawks found within the boundaries of the county or State. Very few people breed Pheasants, but many make their