

## THE URGE OF THE PAST.

(By J. PATTISON, R.A.O.U.)

Man and the domesticated animals of to-day retain many tendencies that belong to or are inherited from ancestors of the long, long ago. Domesticated animals have come from wild animals, and man himself was once a wild animal. Both demonstrate the survival of savage instincts and tendencies which were helpful in the dim and distant past.

When we see the domesticated dog turn round and round on the hearth rug preparatory to lying down, we see him reproducing a useless process, one which is without utility to-day, but which was useful to his primordial ancestors when they wished to make a comfortable bed among tall prairie grass or reeds. Similarly, the domesticated cow wears daggers on her head which are of no use whatever to her to-day, but rather a disability under her altered environment, but were useful to her wild ancestors in defending themselves and calves from the attacks of wolves, dogs, tigers and all the larger carnivora. Mankind also shows savage survivals which, no doubt, were helpful in the long ago, but to-day are regarded as useless, atavistic and immoral. Stealing, cheating, revenge, lying and the desire for war and the killing of every living thing were necessary in the eons behind us.

The primordial man was possessed of crude weapons, and had a continual struggle against nature in procuring his food. Hunting birds and animals became an instinct with him. This long continued practice survived down to very recent times; that being so, one can understand how difficult it is for man to cast it off. It is this urge of the past that causes men such as Zane Grey, Captain Mitchell, and many of the wealthy men of England and New Zealand, to take pleasure in the killing of Swordfish and Mako, and other sharks in the Northern waters. It is this savage survival which impels anglers to kill fish in our lakes and rivers, and gunmen to shoot both native and imported birds. No consideration is shown to the animals, fishes, or birds by those who desire to slay for pleasure.

When we read of those of high and low degree going out to shoot duck, quail, swans, pheasants, and other beautiful birds, just for the joy of destroying, we can certainly regard the advance of civilization as being very tardy, and that of altruism as exceedingly slow.