

debris from the deforested inland country that the industrious Chinaman has had to continue raising his protecting stop-banks until now some rivers run at a higher level than the surrounding arable lands. Every now and again, however, the river confinement fails to hold the sudden rush of the mighty waters; the river breaks down its banks, flooding hundreds of square miles and carrying Chinamen, huts, bamboo fences and everything movable down towards the sea. There are, however, plenty of Chinamen, and directly the floods subside the drowned ones are replaced by others, who for the time till the rich silt robbed by the waters from the inland hills and deposited by the flood, calmly awaiting their turn to follow their predecessors down to the sea when next the flood breaks loose. Japan, on the other hand, has learned her lesson and for thousands of years has so well managed her agricultural and forest lands that erosion has almost been mastered, despite a dense population of 80,000,000. Are we doing likewise in New Zealand? Readers are invited to look round and see the denuding of the soil on hill and mountain slopes, and remember that Nature decrees that the fittest shall survive. Our forest service, of course, know all about these matters, but so far have failed to give sufficient attention to this the higher side of forestry; rather has their work been confined to the timber side of forestry alone, and well might the mere exploiting of our indigenous forest be considered the only thing possible when the position is so absurd that they have not even got control of the forests assigned to them so far as the inhabitants beneficial or otherwise are concerned, and we hear of purely sporting bodies talking about State forests as "our deer forests." Could forest absurdity reach greater heights? Let us again remember Nature decrees in all things that the fittest shall survive be it nation, bird, fish, insect or plant.

Such places as the Sahara Desert were once considered to be raised sea bottoms, but modern thought now believes the Sahara to be the original home of *Homo sapiens* (intelligent Man), a perhaps over-flattering term—otherwise the Garden of Eden—but *Homo sapiens* learned to use or rather mis-use fire and sharp-edged tools, with the result that he destroyed the forest and left behind what we now see. Shall we here in New Zealand follow in the usual footsteps of the Anglo-Saxon *Homo sapiens*, or be wise in time and learn to sacredly conserve the remnant of our irreplaceable indigenous forests, and thereby avoid the superhuman task of substituting them with vastly inferior exotic forests, so far as water conservation is concerned, and at a cost which New Zealand could not in the remotest degree afford or even contemplate.