FOREST AND BIRD

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NEW ZEALAND NATIVE BIRD PROTECTION SOCIETY (INC.)

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Cover picture by courtesy of Sidney Porter in the "Avicultural Magazine" (England).

THE NEW ZEALAND NATIVE BIRD PROTECTION SOCIETY (Inc.)

Invites all those who have respect for our wonderful and unique native birds, all those who realise the great economic and aesthetic value of birds, all those who wish to preserve our unrivalled scenic beauties, to band together with the Society in an earnest endeavour to fully awaken public interest and secure efficient preservation, conservation and intelligent utilisation of our great heritage.

With the co-operation, appreciation and assistance of the general public New Zealand can stand unrivalled. Without such our forests will be hopelessly marred and destroyed by fire, animals and wasteful exploitation.

The subscriptions are—Life members £5, Endowment members £1 per annum. The ordinary subscription, adults 5/-, children 1/-. Endowment members comprise those who desire to contribute in a more helpful manner towards the preservation of our birds and forests. Besides this, we ask for your co-operation in assisting to conserve your own heritage. Is it not worth while?

We aim at issuing only accurate information, all of which is checked by leading authorities. No remuneration is asked by any of our officers. Your contribution goes solely towards better informing others.

THE NEW ZEALAND NATIVE BIRD PROTECTION SOCIETY (Inc.).

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OBJECTS—To advocate and obtain the efficient protection and preservation of our native birds, enlisting the natural sympathy of our young, unity of control of all wild life, and the preservation of sanctuaries, scenic reserves, etc., in their native state.

Affiliated with the Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the British Empire (of which the Prince of Wales is Patron) and with the International Committee for the Protection of Wild Birds.

A HAPPY FAMILY OF NATIVE GREY DUCKS IN KAPITI SANCTUARY.

Neglected Duty of the State.

YEAR after year the New Zealand Native Bird (and Forest) Protection Society and other organisations, which set national welfare above selfish sectional interests, have to urge successive Governments and Departments of State to carry on courageously and efficiently with various duties on behalf of the present generation and posterity. In comparatively minor matters, where a temporary advantage may be gained by certain insistent elements of the community, a Government may be quickly moved into action, but in the far-reaching field of statesmanship, where the prosperity of the whole country may be at stake, disastrous neglect and delay can be seen, all too frequently.

What a time it has taken to convince the authorities that the huge increase of destructive deer in the native forests must bring ruin eventually to thousands of farms unless an effective campaign is undertaken against the pests! Again, in the case of erosion in high country, the authorities are not yet properly alert, despite the long-sustained educative campaigns carried on by the Bird (and Forest) Protection Society and other public-spirited bodies. Consider, too, the Scenic Reservations and Bird Sanctuaries. Surely it should be a clean-cut function of the State to keep these places inviolate, but complaints of neglect and attempts at individual exploitation are frequent. It is well to give a reminder that the vast majority of New Zealanders would favour a strict policy of conservation of native forests and birds. Naturally they prefer national welfare to selfish sectionalism.

Cry of the Kea for Help.

Clamour of Short-sighted Graziers.

Again the users of sheep-runs, held on peppercorn rentals in Alpine country of the South Island, are clamouring for extinction of the kea, at the taxpayers' expense. All the old hearsay nonsense against this bird is being aired again by persons who hope to scare the Government. Therefore, the main feature of this "Bulletin" is a timely defence of a much-maligned bird, the reprint of a special article written by a well-known authority on birds, Mr. Sidney Porter, for the "Avicultural Magazine," published by the English Avicultural Society. Mr. Porter spent more than six months in New Zealand, where he made very careful observations of many species of birds, particularly the kea. His high reputation for accurate study commands respect for his comments on the kea.

It is well to remind the Government that action in the Alpine country should not be against the kea, which helps to conserve the soil-protecting flora there by distributing seeds, but against the farmers whose tussock-burning practices are destroying Nature's insurance policy. The shallow soil, lying on debris, is bared by those offenders, and the way is left clear for the free play of erosive forces which threaten the much more valuable and more extensive farming lands of the lower levels. The farmers of alluvial valleys and the plains—if they are really interested in their own welfare—should urge the Government to resume the high tussock country and prohibit the burning and grazing that menace the better farming areas. Such procedure would be a matter of common-sense for the common-weal. The comparatively small band of high-country agitating graziers against the kea may be fairly described as a little tail trying to wag the big body of farming.

Thousands of feet above sea-level, on the highest ranges of the Southern Alps of New Zealand, amid scenes of unparallelled splendour, where the glittering snow-capped peaks of New Zealand's highest mountains pierce the celestial blue of the Southern skies, in regions of eternal snow and ice, where the great blue-green glaciers roll almost imperceptibly down from the highest peaks, at the very limit of the stunted alpine growth, *we find that strangest of strange birds, the kea, to my mind the most fascinating and peculiar bird I have ever come across.*

For countless æons of time this highly aberrant parrot has fought the elements and won its battle, becoming in the course of time perfectly adapted to its environment. But, alas, on the coming of man to its mountain fastness, the kea found an enemy against whom

the odds were a million to one against winning. In vain has it battled against the blizzards of a million years; at one swift stroke, comparatively speaking, its death knell was sounded.

That the kea will become extinct is a matter of much speculation on the part of naturalists. Some say that owing to the inaccessibility of its haunts it will never be shot out, but there are few spots now in the South Island of New Zealand where the sheep farmers have not penetrated, and the kea is to the average sheep farmer what a red rag is to a bull. Other observers state that the kea will linger on only in the places where it is protected. I am not in a position to make a statement either way except that in passing through a great portion of the Southern Alps I only saw this parrot at Mount Cook where it is protected.

If it does become extinct, perhaps they will tell us that, after all, it might have been a mistake about its carnivorous habits, but it will be too late then!

A Bogey Business.

Everything is being done to foster the idea about the kea's feeding upon mutton. Children in schools are taught about a horrible rapacious bird which feeds on the kidneys of living sheep. People who should know very much better have cases set up in museums with half a dozen keas in the act of devouring the carcass of a lamb heavily daubed with crimson paint.

Most people, naturalists included, love to add a little sensationalism, often at the expense of truth, to what otherwise appears to them dry scientific fact. Any out-of-the-way trait in the life of an animal is at once seized upon and enlarged beyond recognition, such as the fictitious remnants of the third eye in the tuatara (*Sphenodon punctatum*), a very rare and primitive form of lizard found only on some islands of New Zealand. And so it is with the kea. The association of this bird and sheep seems inseparable. Every time we see a kea pictured in a scientific book, in the background there are usually two of these "monsters" in the very act of tearing out the kidneys of a sheep. *To my mind it would be just as incongruous to represent human beings every time they were pictured, to be feasting on a mutton chop*, and I'm sure that humans are far more entitled to be shown eating sheep than these parrots. For the majority of people feed at least once or twice a week on a sheep's carcass, and that is far more than the average kea does.

In fact, I still have to be convinced that this bird kills sheep at all. No one I ever met had ever seen a kea kill a sheep, except one man whom I met, who said that he had seen two hundred killed in a night! I hardly liked to say that he was lying; so I merely said that at that rate they might easily dispense with the services of the slaughterman. *But with the tales of sheep-killing it is always the old story of someone who knew someone else whose friend had seen them.*

No bird in the world is more malignantly libelled than the kea, and usually by people who know nothing whatever about it.

A Hardy Alpinist.

It is hard to imagine a bird, belonging to a family whose members are confined solely to the tropics, being able to sustain itself in such inhospitable regions, especially in the winter time, and sometimes even in the summer when bitter winds and furious blizzards roar up the alpine valleys where the kea makes its home. For days at a time torrential rains beat down, and the valleys fill up with drifting clouds and mists. Sometimes the winds are so strong that it is impossible to stand upright.

Not only does this bird manage to maintain itself, but it is able to "do itself very well" as they say in Yorkshire. With a specially adapted beak it digs amongst the alpine vegetation finding succulent roots, etc.; it also feeds to a great extent on the berries of the dwarfed trees. It is a remarkable thing that some of the stunted trees which grow only a few feet high bear larger berries than the same species which grow to a height of a hundred feet or more in the low-land forests. Most of the droppings which I examined contained the seeds of various alpine plants; as these were intact *the bird must act as the distributing agent for many of the berry-bearing shrubs of those regions.*

I have often seen them pull out quite large stones from the hill-sides obviously looking for something underneath; possibly for grubs or insects of some sort.

Natural Entertainers.

Keas are fascinating birds to watch; never in my travels have I met a bird of such interest. The chief trait in its character is unbounded curiosity. One has only to sit down quietly, especially in the evenings, and in a quarter of an hour or so one is surrounded by a crowd of these inquisitive birds. They never seem to alight near one, but usually a distance away and with a kind of a hop, skip, and a jump gradually get closer and closer until at last one is surrounded on every side by throngs of quietly speculating birds. They came within a few feet showing not the slightest fear. It is rather embarrassing and reminds me of going into an African village at the back of beyond and becoming in time the centre of attraction to a crowd of dusky youngsters who seem to have gathered from nowhere. The birds watch every action and examine every article left lying about. Sticks, cameras, glasses, coats, etc., come in for the closest scrutiny. At first the birds touch each article very gingerly with the tip of their beak, then they feel it with their tongue and when at last they feel that it is safe it is dragged away.

A stranger they seem to recognize and crowd around, but the ordinary people at one of the rest huts at Mount Cook they seem to

take little notice of. A new extension to the hut was being built and the birds showed the greatest interest in the wood and tools which were lying about. Everything unusual they examined with the greatest interest. They would also come round and watch the workmen at their various jobs.

A carrot is a great attraction to them; if it is cut into small pieces it will attract a crowd. If one throws the pieces towards the birds they dodge as quick as lightning out of the way as though they expected a stone or some other missile to be thrown; then they come up cautiously and pick up the bits. Sometimes a bird will tolerate another quite close to it, and at other times they make furious digs at each other. It is very amusing to watch a bird trying to push another away with its foot, especially if it is trying to push it over the cliff. The one on the defensive will hang on as long as possible until it is finally forced to take flight. *Sometimes a bird will trot up to another and affectionately lay its head against the other's.*

A Human Element.

I think the fascination of the kea lies in the fact that it has such a human element in its nature. I could have spent months watching them and their curious habits. I often wondered whether, if only their persecutors knew them as intimately as I did, they would have the heart to massacre them as they do.

Thanks to the untiring efforts of the New Zealand Native Bird Protection Society and a few other enlightened people, the Government subsidy has been taken off the head of the kea. At one time it was 7s. 6d., then it dropped to 5s., later to 2s. 6d., and now it is nothing at all.

It was not for love of the kea that the subsidy was taken off; far from that. The argument the N.Z.N.B.P.S. used was: why should the taxpayer have to pay for ridding the sheep farms of birds? Why should a man buy a farm over-run with keas and the taxpayer be asked to pay for the clearance and give him a good income into the bargain? Why did not the Government pay for rats, mice, rabbits, etc.? There was a publicity campaign, and a deputation saw various Ministers. The money question saved the day. It was the old, old story of why should some one pay for some one else. The old saying, "The hand that signs the cheque book rules the world" is very true. The fate of the kea didn't matter a little bit. They could have pleaded for ever for the bird, but when the money question came up, ah, well! That was a totally different matter!

A Case of Personal Profit.

When the subsidy of 5s. per head was being paid many shepherds supplemented their incomes by shooting the birds. They would take up small pea rifles and at a distance of a few feet would

kill half a dozen keas. The heads would be cut off and sent to the nearest depot and the killer would be awarded 5s. per head. This meant quite a nice little income. It is little wonder that these men, and also farmers, were anxious to keep alive the rumour about the keas' sheep-eating propensities.

Travellers come into the alpine regions where the bird is found, ask a few questions about it, usually never see the birds at all, then write a book. The two following are extracts from such types of books:—"These most destructive creatures are found in great numbers at the foot of snow mountains and kill the sheep by fastening their strong claws to the wool while they tear the flesh and eat out the livers," and again:—"The kea has a strange history. Once it lived on berries and grubs but years ago it became fond of mutton, and according to widely credited accounts it is very destructive to sheep. Alighting on the back of a sheep, the kea fixes its claws in the wool or flesh and quickly makes an opening with its two-inch beak." And so the lies grow. This kind of tosh is usually written by people who know nothing whatsoever about the habits of this bird, but who jump at any bit of sensationalism to enliven the otherwise dull pages of their literary products.

Ornaments of the Alps.

I was going to say that the kea is completely terrestrial, but that is pretty obvious, for it lives mainly above the tree line, but it is also a bird of the air, spending almost as much of its time in that element as upon the ground. It is a wonderful sight to see a flock of these birds wheeling round and round in the brilliant and intense sunshine in the rarefied atmosphere of the great ice peaks.

They are transformed from the dull greenish birds which we see in captivity or in museums; for it is then that we see the bright yellow-spotted flight and tail feathers and the beautiful bright orange under-wing coverts. *In its proper setting the kea is a beautiful bird, often the only splash of colour in the sombre, desolate and stony valleys.*

I was astonished to find another bird which one does not usually associate with alpine regions, namely the southern black-backed gull (*Larus dominicanus*) with which the kea consorts. I have often seen a flock of keas and gulls mingled together wheeling overhead.

The call of the kea, when once heard, is never forgotten, for it is very distinctive. It is somewhat between the mewing of a seagull and the yelp of a dog. Sometimes the birds will make a call like that of a cat; at other times there is a strangely human sound in the calls.

They are extremely noisy birds, especially when on the wing and up in their mountain home. Few other sounds are to be heard except the continual thunder of falling avalanches or the cracking of the ice in the glaciers. When in the air the tips of the primary flight

feathers are separated and upturned like those of an eagle; in fact the bird looks very hawk-like when in flight and this, no doubt, lends colour to the sheep-eating tales.

An Asset for Mount Cook

Around the Ball Hut by the Tasman Glacier at Mount Cook (12,349 feet) the keas are fairly numerous; there must be from fifty to sixty in the locality. Fortunately they are protected by the authorities at the Hermitage, the hostel at Mount Cook. But there are even people, including certain members of Parliament, who are using every effort to get them destroyed, and yet *never in the history of the Hermitage has a kea been known to touch a sheep, although there are hundreds around there, and keas and sheep live on quite friendly terms.*

A garbage dump at the foot of a stony cliff at the Ball Hut was a great attraction to the keas. They found many scraps to their liking, especially potato peelings. Their inquisitive nature also led them to spend a good deal of their time examining various objects such as tin cans, bottles, etc. There were one or two wild cats to be seen consorting with the parrots, and though the cats wandered in amongst the keas, the birds took not the slightest notice of them.

The sexes are easy to distinguish. The male bird appears to have the cere and the skin round the eye yellow, while in the female it is black. The lower mandible in the male is also a much brighter yellow; he also has a much lighter-coloured cap. I have never seen this way of sexing the kea mentioned before, but I am almost sure this is correct. I thought at first that the dark-coloured birds might be the young ones, but there are several in the Wellington Zoo which have been there for a considerable time and the skin still remains dark. I am open to correction, though, on this matter.

Like many other New Zealand birds this parrot is semi-nocturnal, and can be heard flying around long after the night has fallen. It can also be heard before the dawn in the mornings. With the four birds which I brought back to England, I found that most of the feeding was done at night. They roost in crevices in the rocks, under overhanging boulders or beneath the thick, matted alpine bushes.

Safe Nesting-Places.

The keas nest in deep holes in the rock, usually in places utterly inaccessible to human beings. This is one thing that has been to a large extent the salvation of the kea. During the whole time that "The Hermitage" has been in existence no one has ever found a single nest, and yet the guides are always penetrating to very remote parts.

I was at Mount Cook in April, and was told that the young ones had been round for a month or so. By allowing four weeks for incubation and six weeks for the young in the nest, it must be some time in December when the eggs are laid.

It has been reported that eggs have been found in July, which would be in the midst of the very severe alpine winter; one would hardly think that the birds would nest then.

The guide residing at the rest hut by the Tasman Glacier told me that the keas have a habit of flying up onto the central ridge of the roof with small stones and then letting them roll down the corrugated iron, the birds being amused apparently by the noise.

The colour of the kea blends perfectly with the alpine vegetation and yet the bird certainly needs no protective agency, for until the coming of man it had no enemies except the elements.

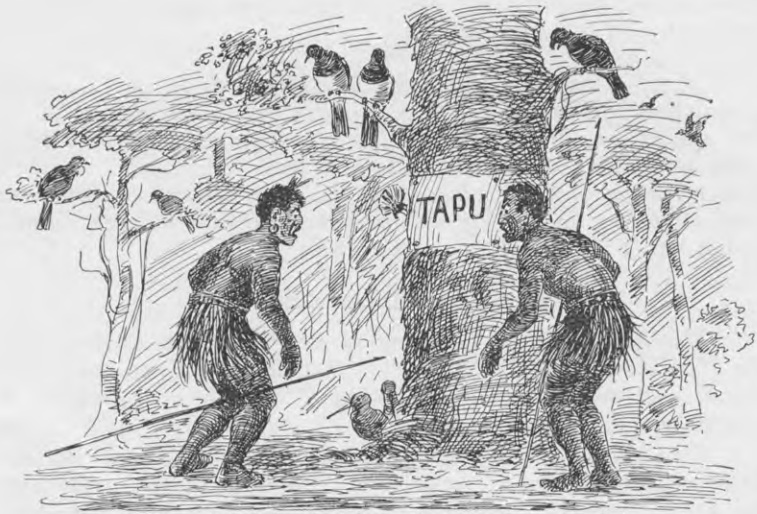
One would think that this hardy parrot would do well in an outdoor aviary in England, but in its native sphere it does not meet with the damp clinging cold of the English winter. In spite of the bitter and intense cold there are long periods of brilliant sunshine which are quite unknown in the Homeland in the winter time. Recent attempts at importing keas into England do not seem to have been very successful. A few years ago twelve were captured and sent to the London Zoological Society on board the *Tahiti* on her last unfortunate voyage, and although it was a long time before the boat sank, the keas were deemed to be not worth saving. Two more were brought home by the captain of a certain ship, who, rather than bother to inquire about the parrot restrictions, threw them cage and all, into the London Docks. A couple of birds were sent to me last year but they succumbed just before they reached these shores, mainly owing, I think, to the effects of mutton broth upon which they were largely fed. I was more successful in landing four birds in June of last year (1933).

Named From Its Cry.

It is said that the bird is called the kea after its cry and it does not need a great stretch of imagination to pick out the particular cry which resembles a long drawn out "Ke—ah."

Cold does not seem to effect them much, for I have seen them sit for lengthy periods on the ice crags of the glaciers. They do not seem to mind the extreme coldness to their feet; in fact they seemed to enjoy it.

The birds seem to feed to a certain extent on the juicy roots of a certain mountain tussock grass. I noticed that they always pulled the sections out of the middle of the clump, never at the sides; after the edible portion was chewed off, the fibrous part would be rejected. In captivity the birds feed mainly on roots, such as carrots, kumeras (the native sweet potato), swedes, etc. They are also fond of biscuits; they seem to take very little seed of any sort, although the ones at the Wellington Zoo seem to be fed solely on dry maize. I think mealworms would be beneficial in lieu of the grubs which they get in the wild state. The kea makes one of the most delightful pets that it is possible to imagine and in my opinion ranks second to none in intelligence. Even in the old days before there were any restrictions on



In Old time New Zealand, Bird Protection was'nt nearly the problem it is nowaday's; Partly because of wise Tapu Laws.

And partly because some of the birds were well able to look after themselves.

Alas! many descendants of the Maoris, who regarded bird-life as natural capital to be carefully conserved, are now illegal killers of pigeons and other native birds.

New Zealand birds the kea was only very occasionally imported and then only to Zoos. Very few, I think, have been in private hands. Given a large outdoor aviary and a heap of large stones or rocks I see no reason why it should not breed.

Those in authority at Mount Cook offered to let me take away several keas. I already had four, which I believe are cock birds. I was offered hens, but somehow *I had not the heart to take the birds away from their happy little protected colony.* Perhaps if they had been in danger of extermination from the sheep farmers it might have been a different thing. My own birds came from a different district, and in time I may be able to procure hens.

Typical of New Zealand.

The kea stands for something so essentially New Zealand; not the New Zealand of to-day, but of that land of strange anomalies where, until the coming of the "pakeha," the unique vegetation and strange bird life reigned supreme.

Like all the other natural products of that country, it does not fit in with the scheme of things now. Barren hill-sides, destitute of the alpine vegetation, barbed wire fences, and corrugated iron sheds are no proper setting for the kea. Every native product is sacrificed on the altar of Mammon. The sheep farmers have extended their domains right up to the snow line and all the alpine flora has been burnt off; no single ledge or patch where a sheep might get a mouthful of grass has been spared.

The farmers in those regions, being true Britishers, had to kill something, and in those days before the introduction of the chamois and the thar the only living things were the sheep and the keas, so the kea had to pay the price. As he was not on the list of conventional sporting birds, an excuse had to be made for massacring this good-natured and inquisitive bird, so they said that he ate the sheep. To make this worse they said he ate the kidneys from living sheep. These stories are very much on a par with the stories told in the English country side of nightjars sucking goats' milk, of eagles carrying off children, and of cuckoos changing into hawks on the approach of winter.

Most observations of the ordinary person about birds are incorrect. It is quite an easy matter for a person to see keas examining a dead sheep, for they are exceedingly inquisitive birds, and for the rumour to grow and grow until it was seized upon as a commercial proposition.

"Stuffing" The Public.

In a New Zealand magazine appeared an article written some little time ago by a journalist obviously of the sensational school, and judging by the literary ability displayed, he had been taught by that

highly efficient system which is guaranteed to produce a fully fledged journalist in the short space of six months by the simple method of postal lessons. Judging by his aptitude to produce the sensational, he would have been far better reporting murder cases than investigating the habits of the kea. After a long discourse on the blood-thirsty habits of this bird, absolute and conclusive proof was brought forward—a photograph of a kea with a huge lump of mutton just torn from the living sheep. It was entitled "Guilty." *What evidence was there to be brought forward to dispute this? The photographer's trump card, "a camera cannot lie." No, but sometimes photographers do! It doubtless had convinced some people, but it didn't quite convince me, for the kea was stuffed, and very badly stuffed at that!*

The journalist would possibly get £5 for his article and a unique photograph, and the case against the bird was again strengthened. So after all the kea is a good commercial proposition for some people. Talking about that reminds me of a little story which I heard from a one-time gold prospector. A few years ago when seeking the precious metal in the most southerly part of New Zealand, he came across a professional kea hunter, where there were no sheep or likely to be any. He told the prospector that he was not such a fool as to seek the elusive metal, as the kea heads proved a veritable gold mine for him.

I also met in the South Island a person who had been a companion in nearly all parts of the bush where the kea is found, with one of New Zealand's well known naturalists, and he stated that they had never in all their travels come across an authentic case of the kea killing sheep.

The kea, like a picture which needs a frame to set it off, also needs a fit setting. Seen in an aviary or cage, he isn't the same bird as the one seen amid the glittering snow-capped peaks of his native home. Bluebells in a jam jar are not like those in the misty blue haze in the beech woods in the spring. And so it is with the kea. He loses a great deal of his charm when taken out of his proper setting. I have taken people to see the keas and they have usually been astonished when they saw them. "Why, that can't be a kea; it's a nice bird; I always thought it was a horrible thing, something like a vulture," is the remark usually made by the lay person on seeing the kea for the first time.

Between the years of 1920 and 1928 the Government paid a subsidy on over twenty-nine thousand kea heads.

I was told of a district on the western slopes of the Alps where kakas and keas were found in the vicinity, but I was told that the two birds, although so closely allied, never consorted together.

Perhaps I have talked too much about this bird, but I must ask to be forgiven, for to my mind it is one of the most interesting birds in the whole world, and so many lies have been written about it that I feel I must say something to vindicate its character.

The Curse of Stray Cats.

Preying on Birds Everywhere.

"They're Getting Our Birds" is the title of an arresting article by Mildred Garner in the August issue of "Nature Magazine." The writer mentions the terrible toll of beautiful and useful birds taken by cats—chiefly vagrants—in the United States of America. "It is because stray cats are most active at night that the average person has no idea how numerous they are," remarks Miss Garner. "They are with us now to the extent of one cat to each person. . . . These 120,000,000 cats are in a strange position, quite outside the rule of the forest. They hunt, but are not hunted. They kill, but are not killed. There is nothing to stop their frightful depredations unless we do."

Miss Garner quotes the following passage from a bulletin of the United States Department of Agriculture:—

Vagrant cats are usually hungry, mangy, and diseased, and quickly revert to wild habits and characteristics. They are rapacious, cautious and unsocial. They mingle with valued cats and contaminate them by transmitting disease and parasites, and have been known to disseminate disease among human beings—diphtheria, paralysis, tuberculosis. They become skilled hunters, and seriously menace song, insectivorous and game birds and poultry. As a measure of public safety and to assist in conserving valuable birds, and as an act of mercy to the cats themselves, all unowned cats should be destroyed."

It is estimated that the 120 million Stray Cats of the U.S.A. kill at least 50 birds each in a year. New Zealand's "strays" are equally destructive.

The total of New Zealand's stray cats probably far exceeds the tally of human population (about 1,600,000). Thousands of them have been deliberately released in lonely places by motorists who wished to be rid of them. Others have been left behind by occupants of public-works camps and other camps. It is really more important to insist on the license principle for the ownership of cats than for dogs, but it is proving very difficult to persuade the authorities to give any serious heed to the grievous nuisance of cats. Is it to be another case of waiting until the trouble is too widespread for remedy?

The Great Dr. Cockayne.

Valiant Friend of Forests and Birds.

New Zealand's native forests and birds have many friends, but not all of these are persistently active. The woods and their feathered inmates lost a powerful champion when Dr. Cockayne, a world-famous scientist, died in Wellington on 8th July. Here is a tribute which the New Zealand Native Bird Protection Society published in many newspapers:—

"His spirit of service will not pass away. His work for the world will carry on through centuries, and his name will be honoured by generations whose birth is far away in the future. Not many men or women have immeasurable gifts of mind and will-power to make their achievements perpetually helpful to the whole wide world. Such is the fame won unselfishly by Dr. Cockayne in botanical research. Not as a pedant, but as a constructive philosopher, he devoted himself to this study and gained a marvellous store of knowledge beneficial to humanity.

"He was a warm lover of New Zealand's beautiful forests and birds, a love impressively seen in his foreword, 'The Cry of the Forest,' in the album published last year by the Native Bird Protection Society. 'Were we gifted with magic hearing,' he wrote, 'the cry of the trees, 'Give us back our birds,' would fall upon our ears. So, too, the feathery kowhai would exclaim, 'Why should I year by year display my golden blossoms with no friendly birds to visit them eager for their nectar?' Shall we New Zealanders allow our few remaining birds to grow fewer and fewer until, as has happened to some, they will be gone for ever? Shall we not rather, loving the forests as we do, seek to fill them again with the birds which should be so dear to us—birds, most of them pure New Zealanders, whose coming into the world dates back into the ages."

Valleys of Lost Hope.

Nature's Revenge for Man's Folly.

Here is a story of "The Valley of Lost Hope," in the Mississippi region, told by B. W. Jones in the July issue of "American Forests" —just the kind of story that can be told of some valleys of lost hope in New Zealand—the story of Nature's revenge for man's folly in going against her insurance policy of forests for the protection of top soils.

More than a century ago, a settler, Tom Hamer, took up some wooded land in hilly country of the Mississippi. He hoped to establish a prosperous farm, which would be a permanent home for his descendants. Affairs went well enough for some years, until Nature began to inflict punishment for mistakes. In little more than half a century the Hamer estate became a "Valley of Lost Hope."

"Much of the timber had been cut from the land," the chronicle runs, "and through the annual application of fire to the woods the natural covering of the soil had been either partially or wholly destroyed. The rains came, and soon small washes began to appear about the farm, growing larger and larger each passing year through the action of water and frost. This process gradually destroyed outright a large

AN AMERICAN "VALLEY OF LOST HOPE."
Due to the stupid destruction of protective forest. New Zealand has worse "Lost Hopes" from the same cause.

part of the valuable farm land, and cut the remainder up into small irregular plats, rendering it unfit or unprofitable to till. Not only were the fields on the upland ruined through erosion, but the rich bottom lands were covered with deposits of sand washed from the gullies above."

Other "Lost Hopes" of the Mississippi district are mentioned in an official report. "The extent of the eroded area and the advanced stage of gullying makes the undertaking a stupendous one," it is stated. "It is difficult to describe the ruin that has been wrought or to estimate the losses that have been incurred in this once productive and prosperous farming region. Unhindered soil erosion, proceeding at a rapid rate for many years, has already laid waste 4,000,000 acres of former fertile uplands, and threatens to drive impoverished farmers from depleted lands. The eroded soils are furthermore the source of destructive spring floods."

That statement applies truly to various parts of New Zealand, where much of the national estate has already been lost, and more is being scoured away.

Need of Real Sanctuaries.

"What is a Bird Sanctuary?" is the title of the main article (written by Mabel Wright) in the July-August issue of "Bird-lore" (official organ of the American Audubon Societies). After a very interesting description of twenty years' work in the making of "Bird-craft Sanctuary" (about fifty miles from New York City), the writer remarks:—

"A *real sanctuary* must have a *high fence* and an *intelligent warden*, and enough money to lift it over the hard spots and casualties, and by the mercy of Heaven we have all three. Remember that the warden has killed many cats which have scaled the 'deterrent' fence in the twenty years, and still they come! He is always on the watch when an alarm-note sounds. What would have happened if there had been no cat-deterrent fence? Sentimental folk, who often think otherwise, should know that if a person with daily experience keeps to the same opinion for twenty years there must be something in it, and also that if a place is made attractive to birds, it is bound to attract their enemies. 'Where the carrion is will the eagles gather.' Hence a warden is a necessity in a sanctuary."

Many a time, the New Zealand Native Bird Protection Society has stressed the vital importance of intelligent effective wardenship and fencing of sanctuaries, but the ideal is still far from realisation.

Peril of Oil on Coasts.

Sentence of Death for Birds.

Already the pollution of some stretches of New Zealand's coastal waters by oil-waste from ships has brought death to many sea-birds. Events have proved that the present law, which limits the ban against pollution of territorial waters (reaching only three miles from the shores), does not go nearly far enough. The protected coastal zone of the United States of America has a width of a hundred miles — a necessary safeguard for the birds. Similar action is required throughout the world.

A FRIENDLY VISITOR FROM THE SEA TO-DAY MAY BE A VICTIM OF OIL-SCUM TO-MORROW.

Bird-lovers of Great Britain and several other countries have been striving earnestly for international action on behalf of the menaced birds—a compulsory installation of oil-separators in ships—but progress is sadly slow, because there is much powerful opposition, which does not usually show its head in the open.

Happily, it is likely that the New Zealand Harbour Boards' Association, at its next conference, will give a stimulating lead to the Government here. A remit, sponsored by the chairman of the Wellington Board, emphasises the need of an amendment of the law.

If each member of the N.Z. Native Bird Protection Society persuades at least one relative or friend to join this year, he or she will be doing a good deed, not only for forests and birds, but for national welfare.

Show Your Bulletin to Your Friends and Invite Them to Apply for Free Copies!

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