

In toiling hands the spinning axes rang,
Till crashing one by one, the great ranks fell:
Hark! As they lay a grim bush spirit sang:
"Brothers, the Bush . . . Will take revenge . . .
farewell!"

COLLECTORS AS EXTERMINATORS.

A cynic has said that "collectors have no consciences." Many stories are told of some men and women—unquestionably respectable in their ordinary lives—who have resorted to queer ruses in obtaining specimens for their collections. Rare native birds in New Zealand have suffered severely at the hands of collectors.

The kind of mischief that they do is memorably described in a book, "Rare, Vanishing and Lost British Birds," edited by Linda Gardner (Secretary of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds) from notes and publications of the late W. H. Hudson, the world-famous naturalist.

"It is very difficult," Mr. Hudson wrote, "to determine which of the following three inveterate bird-destroyers have done, and are doing, the most to alter, and, from the nature-lover's point of view, to degrade the character of our bird population—the Cockney sportsman, who kills for killing's sake; the game-keeper, who has set down the five-and-twenty most interesting indigenous species as 'vermin' to be extirpated; or, third and last, the greedy collector whose methods are as discreditable as his action is injurious."

In later years Mr. Hudson came more and more to the conviction that the collector is by far the greatest and most dangerous enemy of the three.

Far too much collecting has been permitted in New Zealand. The time has come for either a total prohibition of collecting or a very strict limitation of permits, with effective safeguards against their abuse. A responsible officer should accompany any one who has been granted a permit to kill "protected" native-birds.

RECORD BROODS OF WEKA.

For four years I practically bred wekas (writes Mr. C. Lewis) when I lived in a hut at Parapara. Regularly one hen would hatch out three broods in the season, but now that record has been broken by a man living about two miles from my old hut. This season one of his wekas has hatched out four broods, and she stands by the side of the owner's dog in the hut to be fed.