

A FAMOUS DOCTOR TO HIS PATIENT, A COUNT

The Doctor: "To think that there are men capable of killing this harmless little songster!"

The Count: "You are an idealist, my dear doctor."

The Doctor: "No, they call it sentimentality and only sneer at it. Let them sneer as much as they like, I do not care. But mark my words! The time will come when they will cease to sneer, when they will understand that the animal world was placed by the Creator under our protection and not at our mercy; that animals have as much right to live as we have, and that our right to take their lives is strictly limited to our right of defence and our right of existence. The time will come when the

mere pleasure of killing will die out in man. As long as it is there, man has no claim to call himself civilised; he is a mere barbarian, a missing link between his wild ancestors who slew each other with stone axes for a piece of raw flesh, and the man of the future. The necessity of killing wild animals is indisputable, but their executioners, the proud hunters of today, will sink down to the same level as the butchers of domestic animals."

"Perhaps you are right," said the Count, looking up in the sky once more as we turned our horses and rode back to the Castle.

(Extract from "San Michele," by Dr. Axel Munthe.)

Individually the goat is the most destructive of all plant-eating mammals. Owing to its agility it is able to open up tracks into localities which were hitherto inaccessible to animals not so sure-footed and thus assists deer and their like in their destructive work. St. Helena, Cyprus, Greece, Turkey, and many other lands have grievously suffered as the result of the ravages of goats. In New Zealand we have the common goat, angora goat, chamois and thar busy in very considerable numbers, seriously destroying protective forests and much other vitally essential high-country plant life.

Photo courtesy Royal, Nelson.

