

I later learned that official directions had been issued to exterminate both the thar and the chamois. Some few weeks previously between 60 and 70 chamois and perhaps a few thar had been killed by official "cullers" in that one short eight-mile area that we had visited.

On the second day we set out on our hunt towards Mt. Sefton. Nothing was seen in the morning, but about 4.0 p.m. we picked up with our glasses a thar and a fawn. This was my first view of this unique species of the goat family—larger than our famous wild mountain goat (a trophy of the Rockies that figures high in any sportsman's ambition).

It was quite late when we spotted several large dark bodies in a group. "Big boys!" said Jimmy. "Perhaps we can reach them before it's too dark."

It was an exciting stalk. Jimmy did an excellent piece of work and got me within 60 yards of them. My heart gave a bound to heaven when, as I shot, I saw one big boy fall in a heap to the brook below. "Pump it into the others," said Jimmy. He too was excited. "No," said I, "I've got my trophy and what more could I want." It had been a grand stalk. I had brought down a fine big bull (Billy we'd called him). My cup of sporting pleasure was filled to the brim. I did not remember having had a greater thrill from any trophy I have ever taken. But it was a narrow squeak. Darkness fell. It all happened in the last few minutes of the second and last day that had been left to me.

"This Is Called Culling"

The story that Jimmy had told to me during the day, however, had lingered in my mind and the joy of my successful hunt was battling with what seemed to me a tragedy. During those several weeks previous to our visit the "cullers" had been acting on the policy of extermination of the thar and chamois in that area. In the territory we had just been in during our second day, they had killed 37 thar on one mountain side, and 17 on another side, and in addition to those well over 500 had, in the general area, been killed within the year.

"What was done with them?" I enquired. "Oh, nothing," was the answer. They were left to rot where they fell.

This is called "culling."

My interpretation of culling in no way is applicable to carrying out orders to kill everything in sight. My understanding of "culling" is a process of carrying out a carefully studied plan based on scientific conservation—the greatest good for the herd in question. For example: how many animals can the territory support? How many animals (roughly) are there ranging that territory? Are there too many bulls? For the proper conservation of the herd should the population be built up or are there too many mouths to feed in order to produce healthy stock? The answer to these questions might suggest a carefully planned "cull." This we do with our game herds in the Yellowstone Park.

Indiscriminate killing is foreign to our concept and yet one cannot blame the so-called "cullers." As far as I can find out they are only executing an adopted and authorised policy. Nor can I blame the individual skin hunters. They, too, are working on an accepted policy. However, it can only bring a query into my mind. Is it wise to carry on this policy, at least in all areas, reservations and elsewhere? Furthermore, will the love for the sport of hunting and fishing grow with a growing country as it has in the United States? And may I

further query: What will the inheritance be for future generations? You see I am always thinking of the pattern and experience of our own country.

Mountain Flora

I was informed by one person while at the Hermitage that the thar and chamois were destroying the mountain flora. I only know that in the area we covered I saw many mountain plants—"now sleeping"—that still survive, including the beautiful mountain lily. I know that in the United States few people undertake trips into the distant wilds to view the mountain flora. Yet we have great love for flowers, as have the people of New Zealand. I have been charmed with the countless flower gardens surrounding so many homes.

On the other hand, countless persons organise trips to many areas to view, to photograph, and to hunt wild game. While I was in the South Island I overheard one lady visitor from London express great disappointment at not having seen any wild game in a country where, she had been told, it abounded. What report will she bring home? It apparently means something to her.

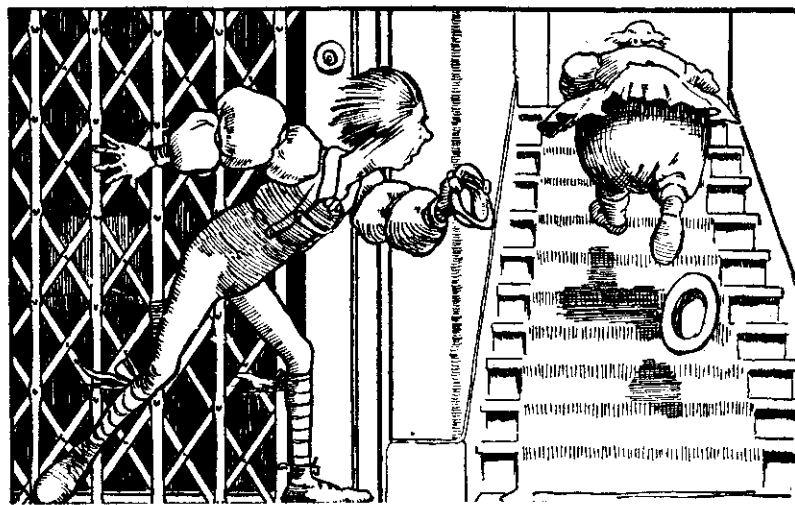
Economic Aspects

It has been suggested to me by several people that conservation of game and the stopping of unlimited killing would mean the loss of jobs to many men—especially those employed by the Government. I can only say that in our country it has not worked out that way. Throughout our hunting areas employment is given to many men in the way of guiding, packing, transportation, wrangling, cooking, etc., while our reservations require "cullers" (as I understand the word), wardens, rangers, managers, fire guardians, etc. We even do much in the way of opening up and maintaining countless trails, particularly through our national parks. All these activities require the services of many men. It has grown to be a big business.

I repeat again: New Zealand has shown it can raise the largest wapiti heads in the world. The red deer have the largest antlers of all the deer. We have no red deer in the United States, nor have we the Japanese deer nor the fallow deer. Has England the thar or the chamois? No. Has Canada? No. Has the United States these animals? No. Has Australia? No. Has New Zealand? Yes.

Of course it was wholly unimportant to anyone except myself and those who had done so much on my behalf whether or not I personally secured a trophy. However, how wonderful it would be if I could only have brought home with me a report that any sportsman in search of a thar or chamois could with almost absolute certainty secure his trophy within a comparatively accessible territory and within a comparatively easy reach of a luxurious hunting lodge. But how can I ignore the results of the policy that directs the so-called "culling?"

Perhaps I have said too much already, but how can two men who class themselves as sportsmen, and come from the United States, not view with deep interest the varied wild life that ranges New Zealand's mountain areas, its forests, its hillsides, as well as its lakes and streams? Does New Zealand appreciate its present position—its opportunity to support a paradise of game? Does it want to pass this rare privilege on to generations to come? Will it knowingly or unknowingly follow what might easily be the tragic pattern of the United States before they awoke?



"Old Father William"—with apologies to Lewis Carroll and Sir John Tenniel

"You're a middle-aged man yet you run up the stairs
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"When I was at school" Father William replied,
"I was chased up to bed with a cane,
So now when I'm racing from old Father Time
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