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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK KILLING FOR SPORT: ESSAYS BY VARIOUS WRITERS ***

KILLING FOR SPORT

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KILLING FOR SPORT

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ESSAYS BY VARIOUS WRITERS

WITH A PREFACE BY
BERNARD SHAW

EDITED BY HENRY S. SALT

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NOTE

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During the past twenty-five years, chiefly owing to the action of the Humanitarian League in giving continuity to what had previously been only an occasional protest, the subject of certain cruel pastimes, called by the name of "sports," has attracted a large share of public attention. The position of the League as regards the whole question of "sport"—*i.e.*, the diversions and amusements of the people—is this, that while heartily approving all such fair and manly recreations as cricket, rowing, football, cycling, the drag-hunt, etc., it would place in an altogether different category what may be called "blood-sports"—*i.e.*, those amusements which

involve the death or torture of sentient beings.

But as it is recognised that humane reform can only come by instalment, and that legislation cannot outrun a ripe public opinion, the League has asked for *legislative* action only in the case of the worst and most demoralising forms of "blood-sports"—viz., those which make use of a tame or captured animal, and not one that is really wild and free. For the same reason the League pressed, and pressed successfully, for the abolition of the Royal Buckhounds, not because that particular hunt was in itself more cruel than others, but because it stood as the recognised and State-supported type of a very degraded pastime. "Your efforts have gained their reward," wrote George Meredith to the League on the occasion of the Buckhounds' fall, "and it will encourage you to pursue them in all fields where the good cause of Sport, or any good cause, has to be cleansed of blood and cruelty. So you make steps in our civilisation."

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But these steps in civilisation have not been easily made. It is not as widely known as it ought to be that since the prohibition of bull and bear baiting, more than half a century ago, there has been practically no further mitigation of those so-called sports which in this country absorb a great part of the thoughts and energies of the wealthier classes. The Acts of 1849 and 1854, which prohibited the ill-usage of domestic animals, gave no protection to animals *feræ naturæ*, except from being "fought," or baited; and the Cruelty to Wild Animals in Captivity Act, of 1900, applies only to those animals that are actually in confinement, or are released in a maimed condition to be hunted or shot. Thus, while humane feeling has steadily progressed, legislative action has obstinately stood still; and while we shake our heads at the cruel sports of our great-grandfathers, we are ourselves powerless to stop present brutalities which are as intolerable to humane thinkers *now* as were bull and bear baiting *then*.

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In a civilised community, where the services of the hunter are no longer required, blood-sports are simply an anachronism, a relic of savagery which time will gradually remove; and the appeal against them is not to the interested parties whose practices are arraigned—not to the belated Nimrods who find a pleasure in killing—but to that force of public opinion which put down bear-baiting, and which will in like manner put down the kindred sports (for all these barbarities are essentially akin) which are defended by similar sophistries.

At a time when widespread attention is being drawn to questions concerning the land, it is especially fitting that the part played by the sportsman should not be overlooked, and that not only the cruelty, but the wastefulness of the practice of breeding and killing animals for mere amusement, should be made clear.

By including in this volume a number of recent essays, the work of several writers (each of whom is responsible only for the views expressed by himself), it has been possible to present the subject of sport as regarded from various standpoints, and in a fuller light than has ever been done before. The book, in fact, is the first one in which the humanitarian and economic objections to blood-sports have been adequately set forth.

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PREFACE^[1]

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By BERNARD SHAW

Sport is a difficult subject to deal with honestly. It is easy for the humanitarian to moralize against it; and any fool on its side can gush about its glorious breezy pleasures and the virtues it nourishes. But neither the moralizings nor the gushings are supported by facts: indeed they are mostly violently contradicted by them. Sportsmen are not crueller than other people. Humanitarians are not more humane than other people. The pleasures of sport are fatigues and hardships: nobody gets out of bed before sunrise on a drizzling wintry morning and rides off into darkness, cold, and rain, either for luxury or thirst for the blood of a fox cub. The humanitarian and the sportsman are often the self-same person drawing altogether unaccountable lines between pheasants and pigeons, between hares and foxes, between tame stags from the cart and wild ones from the heather, between lobsters or *paté de foie gras* and beefsteaks: above all, between man and the lower animals; for people who are sickened by the figures of a *battue* do not turn a hair over the infantile deathrate in Lisson Grove or the slums of Dundee.

Clearly the world of sport is a crystal palace in which we had better not throw stones unless we are prepared to have our own faces cut by the falling glass. My own pursuits as a critic and as a castigator of morals by ridicule (otherwise a writer of comedies) are so cruel that in point of giving pain to many worthy people I can hold my own with most dentists, and beat a skilful sportsman hollow. I know many sportsmen; and none of them are ferocious. I know several humanitarians; and they are all ferocious. No book of sport breathes such a wrathful spirit as this book of humanity. No sportsman wants to kill the fox or the pheasant as I want to kill him when I see him doing it. Callousness is not cruel. Stupidity is not cruel. Love of exercise and of feats of skill is not cruel. They may and do produce more destruction and suffering than all the neuroses of all the Neros. But they are characteristic of quite amiable and cheerful people, mostly lovers of pet animals. On the other hand, humane sensitiveness is impatient, angry, ruthless, and murderous. Marat was a supersensitive humanitarian, by profession a doctor who had practised successfully in genteel circles in England. What Marat felt towards marquesses most humanitarians feel more or less towards sportsmen. Therefore let no sportsman who reads these pages accuse me of hypocrisy, or of claiming to be a more amiable person than he. And let him excuse me, if he will be so good, for beginning with an attempt to describe how I feel about sport.

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To begin with, sport soon bores me when it does not involve killing; and when it does, it affects me much as the murder of a human being would affect me, rather more than less; for just as the murder of a child is more shocking than the murder of an adult (because, I suppose, the child is so helpless and the breach of social faith therefore so unconscionable), the murder of an animal is an abuse of man's advantage over animals: the proof being that when the animal is powerful and dangerous, and the man unarmed, the repulsion vanishes and is replaced by congratulation. But quite humane and cultivated people seem unable to understand why I should bother about the feelings of animals. I have seen the most horrible pictures published in good faith as attractive in illustrated magazines. One of them, which I wish I could forget, was a photograph taken on a polar expedition, shewing a murdered bear with its living cub trying to make it attend to its maternal duties. I have seen a photograph of a criminal being cut into a thousand pieces by a Chinese executioner, which was by comparison amusing. I have also seen thrown on a screen for the entertainment of a large audience a photograph of an Arctic explorer taking away a sledge dog to shoot it for food, the dog jumping about joyously without the least suspicion of its human friend's intentions. If the doomed dog had been a man or a woman, I believe I should have had less sense of treachery. I do not say that this is reasonable: I simply state it as a fact. It was quite evident that the lecturer had no suspicion of the effect the picture was producing on me; and as far as I could see, his audience was just as callous; for if they had all felt as I felt there would have been at least a very perceptible shudder, if not an articulate protest. Now this was not a case of sport. It was necessary to shoot the dog: I should have shot it myself under the same circumstances. But I should have regarded the necessity as a horrible one; and I should have presented it to the audience as a painful episode, like cannibalism in a crew of castaways, and not as a joke. For I must add that a good many people present regarded it as a bit of fun. I absolve the lecturer from this extremity of insensibility. The shooting of a dog was a trifle to what he had endured; and I did not blame him for thinking it by comparison a trivial matter. But to us, who had endured nothing, it might have seemed a little hard on the dog, and calling for some apology from the man.

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I am driven to the conclusion that my sense of kinship with animals is greater than most people feel. It amuses me to talk to animals in a sort of jargon I have invented for them; and it seems to me that it amuses them to be talked to, and that they respond to the tone of the conversation, though its intellectual content may to some extent escape them. I am quite sure, having made the experiment several times on dogs left in my care as part of the furniture of hired houses, that an animal who has been treated as a brute, and is consequently undeveloped socially (as human beings remain socially undeveloped under the same circumstances) will, on being talked to as a fellow-creature, become friendly and companionable in a very short time. This process has been described by some reproachful dog owners as spoiling the dog, and sincerely deplored by them, because I am glad to say it is easier to do than to undo except by brutalities of which few people are capable. But I find it impossible to associate with animals on any other terms. Further, it gives me extraordinary gratification to find a wild bird treating me with confidence, as robins

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sometimes do. It pleases me to conciliate an animal who is hostile to me. What is more, an animal who will not be conciliated offends me. There is at the Zoo a morose maned lion who will tear you to pieces if he gets half a chance. There is also a very handsome maneless lion with whom you may play more safely than with most St. Bernard dogs, as he seems to need nothing but plenty of attention and admiration to put him into the best of humors. I do not feel towards these two lions as a carpenter does towards two pieces of wood, one hard and knotty, and the other easy to work; nor as I do towards two motor bicycles, one troublesome and dangerous, and the other in perfect order. I feel towards the two lions as I should towards two men similarly diverse. I like one and dislike the other. If they got loose and were shot, I should be distressed in the one case whilst in the other I should say "Serve the brute right!" This is clearly fellow-feeling. And it seems to me that the plea of the humanitarian is a plea for widening the range of fellow-feeling.

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The limits of fellow-feeling are puzzling. People who have it in a high degree for animals often seem utterly devoid of it for human beings of a different class. They will literally kill their dogs with kindness whilst behaving to their servants with such utter inconsideration that they have to change their domestic staff once a month or oftener. Or they hate horses and like snakes. One could fill pages with such inconsistencies. The lesson of these apparent contradictions is that fellow-feeling is a matter of dislikes as well as of likes. No man wants to destroy the engine which catches him in its cog-wheels and tears a limb from him. But many a man has tried to kill another man for a very trifling slight. The machine, not being our fellow, cannot be loved or hated. The man, being our fellow, can.

Let us try to get down to the bottom of this matter. There is no use in saying that our fellow-creatures must not be killed. That is simply untrue; and the converse proposal that they must be killed is simply true. We see the Buddhist having his path swept before him lest he should tread on an insect and kill it; but we do not see what that Buddhist does when he catches a flea that has kept him awake for an hour; and we know that he has to except certain poisonous snakes from his forbearance. If mice get into your house and you do not kill them, they will end by killing you. If rabbits breed on your farm and you do not exterminate them, you will end by having no farm. If you keep deer in your park and do not thin them, your neighbors or the authorities will finally have to save you the trouble. If you hold the life of a mosquito sacred, malaria and yellow fever will not return the compliment. I have had an interview with an adder, in the course of which it struck repeatedly and furiously at my stick; and I let it go unharmed; but if I were the mother of a family of young children, and I found a cobra in the garden, I would vote for "*La mort sans phrase*," as many humane and honorable persons voted in the case, not of a serpent, but of an anointed king.

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I see no logical nor spiritual escape from the theory that evolution (not, please observe, Natural Selection) involves a deliberate intentional destruction by the higher forms of life of the lower. It is a dangerous and difficult business; for in the course of natural selection the lower forms may have become necessary to the existence of the higher; and the gamekeeper shooting everything that could hurt his pheasants or their chicks may be behaving as foolishly as an Arab lunatic shooting horses and camels. But where Man comes, the megatherium must go as surely as where the poultry farmer comes the fox must go unless the hunt will pay for the fox's depredations. To plead for the tiger, the wolf, and the poisonous snake, is as useless as to plead for the spirochete or the tetanus bacillus: we must frankly class these as early and disastrous experiments in creation, and accept it as part of the mission of the later and more successful experiments to recognize them as superseded, and to destroy them purposely. We should, no doubt, be very careful how we jump from the indisputable general law that the higher forms of life must exterminate or limit the lower, to the justification of any particular instance of the slaughter of non-human animals by men, or the slaughter of a low type of man by a high type of man. Still, when all due reservations are made, the fact remains that a war of extermination is being waged daily and necessarily by man against his rivals for possession of the earth, and that though an urban humanitarian and vegetarian who never has occasion to kill anything but a microbe may shudder at the callousness with which a farmer kills rats and rabbits and sparrows and moles and caterpillars and ladybirds and many more charming creatures, yet if he were in the farmer's place he would have to do exactly the same, or perish.

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In that case why not make a pleasure of necessity, and a virtue of pleasure, as the sportsmen do? I think we must own that there is no objection from the point of view of the animals. On the contrary, it is quite easy to shew that there is a positive advantage to them in the organization of killing as sport. Fox hunting has saved the existing foxes from extermination; and if it were not for the civilization that makes fox hunting possible, the fox would still be hunted and killed by packs of wolves. I am so conscious of this that I have in another place suggested that children should be hunted or shot during certain months of the year, as they would then be fed and preserved by the sportsmen of the counties as generously and carefully as pheasants now are; and the survivors would make a much better nation than our present slum products. And I go further. I maintain that the abolition of public executions was a very bad thing for the murderers. Before that time, we did exactly as our sportsmen now do. We made a pleasure of the necessity for exterminating murderers, and a virtue of the pleasure. Hanging was a popular sport, like racing. Huge crowds assembled to see it and paid large prices for seats. There would have been betting on the result if it had been at all uncertain. The criminal had what all criminals love: a large audience. He had a procession to Tyburn: he had a drink: he was allowed to make a speech if he could; and if he could not, the speech was made for him and published and sold in great numbers. Above all, such fair play as an execution admits of was guaranteed to him by the presence of the public, whereas now he perishes in a horrible secrecy which lends itself to all the abuses of secrecy. Whether the creature slain be man or what we very invidiously call brute,

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there is no case to be made against sport on its behalf. Even cruelty can justify itself, as far as the victim is concerned, on the ground that it makes sport attractive to cruel people, and that sport is good for the quarry.

The true objection to sport is the one taken by that wise and justly famous Puritan who objected to bear baiting not because it gave pain to the bear but because it gave pleasure to the spectators. He rightly saw that it was not important that we should be men of pleasure, and that it was enormously important that we should be men of honor. What the bear would have said if it had had any say in the matter can only be conjectured. Its captors might have argued that if they could not have made money by keeping it alive whilst taking it to England to be baited, they would have killed it at sight in the Pyrenees; so that it owed several months of life, with free board and lodging, to the institution of bear baiting. The bear might have replied that if it had not been for the bear pit in England they would never have come to hunt for it in the Pyrenees, where it could have ended its days in a free and natural manner. Let us admit for the sake of a quiet life that the point is disputable. What is not disputable by any person who has ever seen sport of this character is that the man who enjoys it is degraded by it. We do not bait bears now (I do not quite know why); but we course rabbits in the manner described in one of the essays in this book. I lived for a time on the south slope of the Hog's Back; and every Sunday morning rabbits were coursed within earshot of me. And I noticed that it was quite impossible to distinguish the cries of the excited terriers from the cries of the sportsmen, although ordinarily the voice of a man is no more like the voice of a dog than like the voice of a nightingale. Sport reduced them all, men and terriers alike, to a common denominator of bestiality. The sound did not make me more humane: on the contrary, I felt that if I were an irresponsible despot with a park of artillery at my disposal, I should, (especially after seeing the sportsmen on their way to and from their sport) have said: "These people have become subhuman, and will be better dead. Be kind enough to mow them down for me."

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As a matter of fact there is always a revulsion against these dehumanizing sports in which the killing can be seen, and the actual visible chase shared, by human beings: in short, the sports in which men revert to the excitements of beasts of prey. Several have been abolished by law: among them bear baiting and cock fighting: both of them sports in which the spectators shared at close quarters the excitement of the animals engaged. In the sports firmly established among us there is much less of this abomination. In fox hunting and shooting, predatory excitement is not a necessary part of the sport, and is indeed abhorred by many who practise it. Inveterate fox-hunters have been distressed and put off their hunting for days by happening to see a fox in the last despairing stage of its run from the hounds: a sight which can be avoided, and often is, by the hunters, but which they may happen upon some day when they are not hunting. Such people hunt because they delight in meets and in gallops across country as social and healthy incidents of country life. They are proud of their horsemanship and their craftiness in taking a line. They like horses and dogs and exercise and wind and weather, and are unconscious of the fact that their expensive and well equipped hunting stables and kennels are horse prisons and dog prisons. It is useless to pretend that these ladies and gentlemen are fiends in human form: they clearly are not. By avoiding being in at the death they get all the good out of hunting without incurring the worst of the evil, and so come out with a balance in their favor.

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Shooting is subtler: it is a matter of skill with one's weapons. The expert at it is called, not a good chicken butcher, but a good shot. When I want, as I often do, to pick him off, I do so not because I feel that he is cruel or degraded but because he is a nuisance to me with the very disagreeable noise of his explosions, and because there is an unbearable stupidity in converting an interesting, amusing, prettily colored live wonder like a pheasant into a slovenly unhandsome corpse. But at least he does not yap like a terrier, and shake with a detestable excitement, and scream out frantic bets to bookmakers. His expression is that of a man performing a skilled operation with an instrument of precision: an eminently human expression, quite incompatible with the flush of blood to the eyes and the uncovering of the dog-tooth that makes a man like a beast of prey. And this is why it is impossible to feel that skilled shooting or fox-hunting are as abominable as rabbit coursing, hare-hunting with beagles, or otter-hunting.

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And yet shooting depends for its toleration on custom as much as on the coolness with which it has to be performed. It may be illogical to forgive a man for shooting a pheasant and to loathe him for shooting a seagull; but as a matter of plain fact one feels that a man who shoots seagulls is a cad, and soon makes him feel it if he attempts to do it on board a public ship, whereas the snipe shooter excites no such repulsion. And "fair game" must be skilfully shot if the maximum of toleration is to be enjoyed. Even then it is not easy for some of us to forget that many a bird must have been miserably maimed before the shooter perfected his skill. The late King Edward the Seventh, immediately after his recovery from a serious operation which stirred the whole nation to anxious sympathy with him, shot a stag, which got away to die of just such internal inflammation as its royal murderer had happily escaped. Many people read the account without the least emotion. Others thought it natural that the King should be ashamed, as a marksman, of his failure to kill, but rejected as sentimental nonsense the notion that he should feel any remorse on the stag's behalf. Had he deliberately shot a cow instead, everyone would have been astounded and horrified. Custom will reconcile people to any atrocity; and fashion will drive them to acquire any custom. The English princess who sits on the throne of Spain goes to bullfights because it is the Spanish fashion. At first she averted her face, and probably gave offence by doing so. Now, no doubt, she is a *connoisseuse* of the sport. Yet neither she nor the late King Edward can be classed as cruel monsters. On the contrary, they are conspicuous examples of the power of cruel institutions to compel the support and finally win the tolerance and even the enjoyment of persons of full normal benevolence.

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But this is not why I call shooting subtle. It fascinates even humane persons not only because it is a game of skill in the use of the most ingenious instrument in general use, but because killing by craft from a distance is a power that makes a man divine rather than human.

"Oft have I struck
Those that I never saw, and struck them dead"

said the statesman to Jack Cade (who promptly hanged him); and something of the sense of power in that boast stimulates every boy with a catapult and every man with a gun. That is why there is an interest in weapons fathoms deeper than the interest in cricket bats and golf clubs. It is not a question of skill or risk. The men who go to Africa with cameras and obtain photographs and even cinematographs of the most dangerous animals at close quarters, shew much more skill and nerve than the gentlemen who disgust us with pictures of themselves sitting on the body of the huge creatures they have just killed with explosive bullets. Shooting "big game," like serving as a soldier in the field, is glorified conventionally as a proof of character and courage, though everyone knows that men can be found by the hundred thousand to face such ordeals, including several who would be afraid to walk down Bond Street in an unfashionable hat. The real point of the business is neither character nor courage, but ability to kill. And the greater cowards and the feebler weaklings we are, the more important this power is to us. It is a matter of life and death to us to be able to kill our enemies without coming to handgrips with them; and the consequence is that our chief form of play is to pretend that something is our enemy and kill it. Even to pretend to kill it is some satisfaction: nay, the spectacle of other people pretending to do it is a substitute worth paying for. Nothing more supremely ridiculous as a subject of reasonable contemplation could be imagined than a sham fight in Earls Court between a tribe of North American Indians and a troop of cowboys, both imported by Buffalo Bill as a theatrical speculation. To see these grown-up men behaving like children, galloping about and firing blank cartridges at one another, and pretending to fall down dead, was absurd and incredible enough from any rational point of view; but that thousands of respectable middle-aged and elderly citizens and their wives, all perfectly sober, should pay to be allowed to look on, seems flat madness. Yet the thing not only occurred in London, but occurs now daily in the cinema theatres and yearly at the Military Tournaments. And what honest man dare pretend that he gets no fun out of these spectacles? Certainly not I. They revived enough of my boyish delight in stage fights and in the stories of Captain Mayne Reid to induce me to sit them out, conscious as I was of their silliness.

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Please do not revile me for telling you what I felt instead of what I ought to have felt. What prevents the sport question and every other question from getting squarely put before us is our habit of saying that the things we think should disgust us and fill us with abhorrence actually do disgust us and fill us with abhorrence, and that the persons who, against all reason and decency, find some sort of delight in them, are vile wretches quite unlike ourselves, though, as everyone can see, we and they are as like as potatoes. You may not agree with Mr. Rudyard Kipling about war, or with Colonel Roosevelt about sport; but beware how you pretend that war does not interest and excite you more than printing, or that the thought of bringing down a springing tiger with a well-aimed shot does not interest you more than the thought of cleaning your teeth. Men may be as the poles asunder in their speculative views. In their actual nervous and emotional reactions they are "members one of another" to a much greater extent than they choose to confess. The reason I have no patience with Colonel Roosevelt's tedious string of rhinoceros murders in South Africa is not that I am not interested in weapons, in marksmanship, and in killing, but because my interest in life and creation is still greater than my interest in death and destruction, and because I have sufficient fellow-feeling with a rhinoceros to think it a frightful thing that it should be killed for fun.

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Consider a moment how one used to feel when an Irish peasant shot his landlord, or when a grand duke was blown to pieces in Russia, or when one read of how Charlotte Corday killed Marat. On the one hand we applauded the courage, the skill, the resolution of the assassin; we exulted in the lesson taught to tyrants and in the overthrow of the strong oppressor by the weak victim; but we were horrified by the breach of law, by the killing of the accused at the decree of an irresponsible Ribbon Lodge under no proper public control, by the execution of the grand duke without trial and opportunity of defence, by the suspicion that Charlotte Corday was too like Marat in her lust for the blood of oppressors to have the right to kill him. Such cases are extremely complicated, except for those simple victims of political or class prejudice who think Charlotte Corday a saint because she killed a Radical, and the Ribbonmen demons because they were common fellows who dared to kill country gentlemen. But however the cases catch us, there is always that peculiar interest in individual killing, and consequently in the means and weapons by which individuals can kill their enemies, which is at the root of the sport of shooting.

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It all comes back to fellow-feeling and appetite for fruitful activity and a high quality of life: there is nothing else to appeal to. No commandment can meet the case. It is no use saying "Thou shalt not kill" in one breath, and, in the next "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Men must be killed and animals must be killed: nay, whole species of animals and types of men must be exterminated before the earth can become a tolerable place of habitation for decent folk. But among the men who will have to be wiped out stands the sportsman: the man without fellow-feeling, the man so primitive and uncritical in his tastes that the destruction of life is an amusement to him, the man whose outlook is as narrow as that of his dog. He is not even cruel: sport is partly a habit to which he has been brought up, and partly stupidity, which can always be measured by wastefulness and by lack of sense of the importance and glory of life. The horrible murk and grime of the Pottery towns is caused by indifference to a stupid waste of sunlight,

natural beauty, cleanliness, and pleasant air, combined with a brutish appetite for money. A *battue* is caused by indifference to the beauty and interest of bird life and song, and callousness to glazed eyes and blood-bedabbled corpses, combined with a boyish love of shooting. All the people who waste beauty and life in this way are characterized by deficiency in fellow-feeling: not only have they none of St. Francis's feeling that the birds are of our kin, but they would be extremely indignant if a loader or a gamekeeper asserted any claim to belong to their species. Sport is a sign either of limitation or of timid conventionality.

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And this disposes of the notion that sport is the training of a conquering race. Even if such things as conquering races existed, or would be tolerable if they did exist, they would not be races of sportsmen. The red scalp-hunting braves of North America were the sportingest race imaginable; and they were conquered as easily as the bison they hunted. The French can boast more military glory to the square inch of history than any other nation; but until lately they were the standing butt of English humorists for their deficiencies as sportsmen. In the middle ages, when they fought as sportsmen and gentlemen, they were annihilated by small bodies of starving Englishmen who carefully avoided sportsmanlike methods and made a laborious business (learnt at the village target) of killing them. As to becoming accustomed to risks, there are plenty of ways of doing that without killing anything except occasionally yourself. The motor-cyclist takes more trying risks than the fox-hunter; and motor-cycling seems safety itself compared to aviation. A dive from a high springboard will daunt a man as effectually as a stone wall in the hunting field. The notion that if you have no sportsmen you will have no soldiers (as if more than the tiniest fraction of the armies of the world had ever been sportsmen) is as absurd as the notion that burglars and garroters should be encouraged because they might make hardier and more venturesome soldiers than honest men; but since people foolishly do set up such arguments they may as well be mentioned in passing for what they are worth.

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The question then comes to this: which is the superior man? the man whose pastime is slaughter, or the man whose pastime is creative or contemplative? I have no doubt about the matter myself, being on the creative and contemplative side by nature. Slaughter is necessary work, like scavenging; but the man who not only does it unnecessarily for love of it but actually makes as much of it as possible by breeding live things to slaughter, seems to me to be little more respectable than one who befouls the streets for the pleasure of sweeping them. I believe that the line of evolution leads to the prevention of the birth of creatures whose lives are not useful and enjoyable, and that the time will come when a gentleman found amusing himself with a gun will feel as compromised as he does now when found amusing himself with a whip at the expense of a child or an old lame horse covered with sores. Sport, like murder, is a bloody business; and the sportsmen will not always be able to outface that fact as they do at present.

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But there is something else. Killing, if it is to give us heroic emotions, must not be done for pleasure. Interesting though the slaying of one man by another may be, it is abhorrent when it is done merely for the fun of doing it (the sportsman's way) or to satisfy the envious spite of the worse man towards the better (Cain's way). When Charlotte Corday stabbed Marat, and when Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh shot the Regent Murray, they were stung by intolerable social wrongs for which the law offered them no redress. When Brutus and his fellow-conspirators killed Cæsar, they had persuaded themselves that they were saving Rome. When Samson slew the lion, he had every reason to feel convinced that if he did not, the lion would slay him. Conceive Charlotte Corday stabbing Marat as an exercise of manual and anatomical skill, or Hamilton bringing down the Regent as a feat of marksmanship! Their deeds at once become, not less, but more horrifying than if they had done them from a love of killing. Jack the Ripper was a madman of the most appalling sort; but the fascination of murder for him must have been compounded of dread, of horror, and of a frightful perversion of an instinct which in its natural condition is a kindly one. He was a ghastly murderer; but he was a hot-blooded one. The perfection of callousness is not reached until a life is sacrificed, and often cruelly sacrificed, solely as a feat of skill. Peter the Great amusing himself by torturing his son to death was a revolting monster; but he was not so utterly inhuman in that crime as he was when, on being interested by a machine for executing criminals which he saw in a museum on his travels, he proposed to execute one of his retinue to see how the machine worked, and could with difficulty be brought to understand that there was a sentimental objection to the proceeding on the part of his hosts which made the experiment impossible. When he tortured his son he knew that he was committing an abomination. When he wanted to try an experiment at the cost of a servant's life he was unconscious of doing anything that was not a matter of course for any nobleman. And in this he was worse than abominable: he was deficient, imbecile, less than human. Just so is the sportsman, shooting quite skilfully and coolly without the faintest sense of any murderous excitement, and with no personal feeling against the birds, really further from salvation than the man who is humane enough to get some sense of wickedness out of his sport. To have one's fellow-feeling corrupted and perverted into a lust for cruelty and murder is hideous; but to have no fellow-feeling at all is to be something less than even a murderer. The man who sees red is more complete than the man who is blind.

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The triviality of sport as compared with the risk and trouble of its pursuit and the gravity of its results makes it much sillier than crime. The idler who can find nothing better to do than to kill is past our patience. If a man takes on himself the heavy responsibility of killing, he should not do it for pastime. Pastimes are very necessary; for though a busy man can always find something to do, there comes a point at which his health, his sanity, his very existence may depend on his doing nothing of the smallest importance; and yet he cannot sit still and twiddle his thumbs: besides, he requires bodily exercise. He needs an idle pastime. Now "Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do" if the idler lets his conscience go to sleep. But he need not let it go to sleep. There are plenty of innocent idle pastimes for him. He can read detective stories. He can

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play tennis. He can drive a motor-car if he can afford one. He can fly. Satan may suggest that it would be a little more interesting to kill something; but surely only an outrageous indifference to the sacredness of life and the horrors of suffering and terror, combined with a monstrously selfish greed for sensation, could drive a man to accept the Satanic suggestion if sport were not organized for him as a social institution. Even as it is, there are now so many other pastimes available that the choice of killing is becoming more and more a disgrace to the chooser. The wantonness of the choice is beyond excuse. To kill as the poacher does, to sell or eat the victim, is at least to act reasonably. To kill from hatred or revenge is at least to behave passionately. To kill in gratification of a lust for death is at least to behave villainously. Reason, passion, and villainy are all human. But to kill, being all the time quite a good sort of fellow, merely to pass away the time when there are a dozen harmless ways of doing it equally available, is to behave like an idiot or a silly imitative sheep.

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Surely the broad outlook and deepened consciousness which admits all living things to the commonwealth of fellow-feeling, and the appetite for fruitful activity and generous life which come with it, are better than this foolish doing of unamiable deeds by people who are not in the least unamiable.

G. B. S.

March, 1914.

FOOTNOTES:

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KILLING FOR SPORT

[1]

THE CRUELTY OF SPORT

By GEORGE GREENWOOD

It is a favourite rhetorical device of the vivisectionists to divert argument from the main question into side issues by instituting a comparison between vivisection and the various forms of field-sports, such as pheasant-shooting, for example. It is hardly necessary that I should point out the futility of such controversial methods; for, as Horace long ago taught us, there is no use in an illustration which merely substitutes one dispute for another. Vivisection may be wrong, though pheasant-shooting be right; while if pheasant-shooting be wrong, it is obviously absurd to appeal to it in aid of the cause of vivisection.

But for those who recognise that it is the duty of man to abstain from all practices which involve cruelty to the lower animals, it is important to consider the whole question of sport, and to endeavour to arrive at just and logical conclusions upon the ethical issues which are raised by its pursuit.

Here, at the outset, I think it is necessary, in order to avoid confusion, to attempt some definition of the word "cruelty." By so doing we shall escape the absurdities of those who tell us that all sport is cruel, and yet that its pursuit can, nevertheless, be justified by other considerations. The late Professor Freeman long ago pointed out that those who speak in this slipshod fashion are ignorant of the very elements of logical reasoning. "Cruelty" is a word which carries its own condemnation with it. It denotes something which is morally unjustifiable, just as the word "lie" denotes a morally unjustifiable falsehood. Justifiable falsehoods are not lies, neither can a lie ever be a justifiable falsehood. For the purposes of this paper, therefore, I am content to define "cruelty" as "the unjustifiable infliction of pain." I think that is better than defining it as "the *unnecessary* infliction of pain." For, to take an example, the shooting of a partridge can hardly, in any ordinary case, be looked upon as a *necessary* act. To define cruelty, therefore, as "the unnecessary infliction of pain" would be to settle the question—or, rather to beg it—in such a case, by means of a definition. It is true that the definition which I have preferred leaves the question what is or is not justifiable, in any given case, open for discussion; but that is, of course, inevitable, whatever definition we may adopt.

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If, then, we are compelled to say of any sport that it is cruel, we are compelled also to admit that such sport is morally unjustifiable. Now, sport, according to the general acceptance of that term, is of two kinds. There are, first, sports such as cricket, football, golf, rowing, and many others, which do not involve the taking of animal life; and, secondly, there are the sports of hunting, coursing, and shooting, in all their various branches, which are frequently denoted by the compendious term of "blood-sports"; and it is with the latter class of sports only that this essay is concerned.

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Let us, therefore, examine these blood-sports, and ask ourselves in each case whether they are

cruel, and therefore unjustifiable, or whether, notwithstanding the pain and suffering which they necessarily involve, they are, nevertheless, justifiable forms of amusement and recreation, such as a humane and thinking man need not scruple to indulge in.

But before proceeding farther with the discussion, I must own that I am not a little appalled at the audacity of undertaking such an inquisition. For is it not the boast of our countrymen that England is the home and the motherland of sport? What appellation does an Englishman more ardently desire than that of "sportsman"? "A good sportsman," "a good all-round sportsman," "a fine old sportsman"—what names are more honourable than these? I have frequently heard it said of a man that "he was always ready for a bit of sport," and it was generally recognised that very high praise was implied by such a description. Fox-hunting, hare-hunting, rabbit-coursing, ferreting, ridding, badger-baiting—it was all one to him so long as he could get "a bit of sport"! What higher character could a Briton possibly aspire to? No wonder the man was so popular with his neighbours, and so highly esteemed!

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And so, if we begin to question the humanity or the propriety of any of these forms of amusement, the crushing answer invariably is, "But it's *sport!*" Surely that is amply sufficient! Surely that is final! What more do you want? Sport is always excellent. Sport is an end in itself. Sport is a god worshipped in a thousand temples throughout the length and breadth of the United Kingdom. Let us burn incense on those altars; let us reverently bow the knee at those shrines. Great is God Sport of the Britishers!

Nay, does not our very Empire depend on Sport? Is it not Sport that knits the fibres and fashions the sinews of an Imperial race? It were almost as well, then, to speak disrespectfully of religion itself as to speak slightingly of Sport. And yet, as philosophers, as social students, as humanitarians, we must nerve ourselves even for this perilous quest. We must not shrink. We must not be deterred from pushing our investigation even into the Holy of Holies of this great god which the people of England have set up.

And let us face our worst dangers at once. First, then, I would say a few words about the most honoured and the most celebrated of all our British sports, "the noble science," as it has been called—the glorious sport of fox-hunting.

FOX-HUNTING.

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Now, fox-hunting seems to most of us almost a part of the British Constitution. It takes rank among the best-established of our time-honoured institutions. What would become of the glory of England, were it not for fox-hunting? And speaking as one who in days gone by was, so far as time and opportunity and a shallow purse allowed, a votary of the chase, I can honestly say that the sport has more to say for itself than some who have never fallen under the sway of its fascination are able to realise or understand. Let us see what *can* be said for it.

Great and undeniable are the pleasures of the meet; great the delights of the country-side as the hounds are thrown joyfully into cover, with a burst of melodious chiding. What a picturesque sight! The busy, eager, indefatigable pack; gallant steeds impatient for the coming race, and scarlet coats lighting up the wintry woodland scene! Then the excitement of the "find"; the still greater excitement of the cry, "Gone away! gone away!" hounds in full cry, and the cheery blasts of the huntsman's horn to rally the stragglers in the rear!

And if there be anything at all which can in any way justify the high-sounding title of "the noble science," we may look for it now. For the man who can ride straight to hounds and hold his own over a stiff country must possess some qualities which are not to be despised. He must not only be a fine horseman—and fine horsemen are few and far between—but he must know how to combine courage with judgment, prompt decision with sound discretion. Here for the good rider, whose heart is in the right place, are the true pleasures of the chase.

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But let us now look at the other side of the picture. It has been a splendid run, but the end approaches. The fox has been viewed dead-beat, painfully crawling into a hedgerow, with coat muddy and staring, tongue hanging out of his mouth, brush trailing on the ground. What sight more piteous can be conceived? A few minutes more and his merciless pursuers are upon him; and, to use the words of Whyte Melville, the Laureate of the chase,

"'Twas a stout hill-fox when we found him, but now
'Tis a thousand tatters of brown!"

This, then, is the end, and aim, and object of our sport—"the kill"! It is our pride to be "in at the death." I confess I have often felt no little ashamed of my brother-man—man, that "paragon of animals," "in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god!"—as I have listened to those wild shrieks and yells of "Who-whoop" that proclaim—what? That a little animal has been hunted to its death. And it is this thought from which the thinking man can never escape, and which is to his enjoyment as the canker to the bud—the thought that it is necessary for his pleasure that a poor little animal, in all the agony of terror and exhaustion, should be running for its life before him! And since this is the inevitable concomitant of the sport—even the great and glorious sport of fox-hunting—the thinking man must ask himself, "Am I justified—morally justified—in purchasing my pleasure at such a price?" Can we for a moment doubt what the answer of the thinking man must be? I do not say that all fox-hunters are cruel men; it would be absurd, indeed, to bring such a charge. Many good and humane men—men who would shrink from and abhor anything that they recognised as cruel—are, nevertheless, habitual followers of the hounds. They have persuaded themselves—it is so easy to persuade oneself in accordance

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with one's inclination, especially when the object to which one is inclined has all the sanction of custom and long usage—they have persuaded themselves that the sport is justifiable in spite of the suffering which is its necessary accompaniment and result. Or, perhaps, especially if they are young men, they have not thought about it at all. But I cannot help the belief that, as thought and true civilisation advance, it will be recognised that to seek pleasure in the hunting of any animal to its death is unworthy of a thinking and humane man. If the humane man can do these things, it must be because he has not yet become a thinking man. If the thinking man can do them, it must be because he is not a humane man.

And this conclusion will, I think, be fortified if we consider, very briefly, some of the arguments by which it is sought to justify sport of this kind. We are frequently told that the fox is a thief and a marauder—a robber of hen-roosts—and that, therefore, he must be destroyed. The simple answer to this is that the fox is carefully preserved; that when foxes are scarce in a hunting country they are imported from elsewhere; and that the man who shoots a fox is held up to odium and scorn as guilty of the heinous crime of “vulpicide.”

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But we have no sooner answered this flimsy argument than we are met by another of a quite different character. We are told that if foxes were not preserved to be hunted they would be exterminated; and that a fox, if given his choice, would much prefer to take his chance of escaping the hounds to the alternative of extermination. This is certainly a quaint specimen of the sportsman's logic. We are asked, in the first place, to assume an impossibility—namely, that a fox should be endowed with reason to enable him to consider and come to a decision upon the suggested question; secondly, we have to assume what his answer would be; thirdly, that that answer would be a wise one for the foxes; and, fourthly, that man ought to be bound by it. To this puerile argument it is sufficient to say that the question before us is not what a fox might, in an imaginary and impossible contingency, conceivably think best for himself, but what is right for man to do. If, therefore, the alternative be between the extermination of foxes, by methods as painless as may be, and their preservation to be hunted by man, I cannot doubt in what direction the true interests of humanity will be found to lie.

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To this conclusion, then, I think our reason must inevitably lead us, even with regard to the best and most popular of blood-sports as practised in this country. I do not hesitate to confess that I was brought to it with reluctance, knowing full well the pleasures of riding over a country with hounds in front and a good horse under me. But, in truth, the case seems too clear for argument. On one side are inclination and pleasure, and prescription, and the false glamour of “sport”; on the other side are “that incomparable pair”—humanity and reason.^[2]

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THE WILD STAG HUNT.

But if the inexorable laws of reason and of ethics compel us to cast our vote against “the noble science” of fox-hunting, what shall we say of such sport as the hunting of the red deer in the West of England? Its votaries would fain cast over it the glamour of poetry. They dilate on the glorious country—the woods of Porlock, the bright heaths of Exmoor, the exhilaration and excitement of a wild gallop over a wild country in pursuit of this magnificent wild creature—“the antlered monarch of the waste.” But we have only to turn to the acknowledged textbooks on the subject (such as Collyns's “Chase of the Wild Red Deer,” for example) to learn of the horrible cruelties which are the inevitable concomitants of this much-extolled sport—to learn how the hunted animal, in its terror and despair, will dash over cliffs into the sea, or vainly seek refuge in the waves from its merciless pursuers upon the land. I will not waste time and words over it. I regard it as a cruel form of pleasure which every humane man should shun and shrink from. A relative of mine, who for many years acted as secretary to a fox-hunt in the West of England, and who had a great reputation as a rider to hounds, told me that he had once gone to see the sport on Exmoor, and that nothing would induce him to repeat that experience, so terrible and so disgusting were some of the things which he witnessed there. Alas! that woman should be a participator in such cruel deeds—ay, and pride herself on her rivalry with brutal man! But we know the type. Their eyes are blinded lest they should see, and their ears closed lest they should hear. They know no better. They have never learned to think!^[3]

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Here again we are told there is only one alternative: either these deer must be preserved to be hunted or they must be exterminated. But again, also, there can be no doubt as to what our choice should be. We should lament the loss of these wild denizens of the forest and the moor; but better, far better, would it be that their lives should be ended, as painlessly as may be, by the rifle, than that they should be preserved for a sport which is an outrage upon humanity.

SHOOTING.

I have touched upon hunting; let us now consider the twin-sport of shooting, and let us first consider it in its most favourable aspect. How well do I remember those bright September evenings, long ago, when the rays of the westering sun, striking obliquely on the ruddy clover-heads, bathed them in the rosy light of a summer that still lingered on “the happy autumn fields”! Youth, health, and hope were ours then—youth, health, and hope, and friends! Life lay all before us; and, what was more to the purpose for the present moment, before us, too, were the partridges—a covey scattered among those smiling clover-heads. We go forward to beat them up with all the joy and excitement of that golden time when life has not yet been saddened by the pale cast of thought. The birds rise before us, singly, or in twos. The last shots are fired. The old retriever picks up the fallen game. Then we turn homewards, just as the glorious sun sinks at last

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behind the high Hampshire hills, and "barred clouds bloom the soft-dying day." Were we then guilty of cruelty? I answer "No," because the moral qualities of an act exist only in the mind of the agent,

"For there is nothing either good or bad
But thinking makes it so;"

and it had never occurred to us to question the morality of a sport which gave us such days of happiness, such nights of unbroken repose.

And truly, if we admit, for the sake of argument, at any rate, and making no assumption as against the vegetarian, that it is legitimate for man to use birds and beasts for his food, I see not much that can be justly said in condemnation of shooting such as this. If birds may be used for food, how better can they be killed than by the gun? And thus it appears that it is that much-maligned and much-ridiculed individual the "pot-hunter" who is the best justified of all the shooting confraternity!

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Again, if rabbits must be kept under for the sake of agriculture (a proposition which few will be found to dispute), it is certainly far better that they should be shot than be taken by that hideous instrument of torture, the steel trap, or the hardly less cruel contrivance known as "the wire."

But when we come to the shooting of artificially reared and carefully preserved pheasants, and especially to what is known as "battue shooting," very different considerations arise. Let us take an instance.

The short December day has drawn to a close. There has been warm work in the coverts. A thousand head of game—pheasants, hares, and rabbits—have been brought to bag. In fact, we have had, not indeed a tremendous battue, as these things are reckoned nowadays, but simply "a jolly day's covert-shooting." But now darkness—thick, gloomy, winter darkness—has settled down like a pall upon the woods. There is some snow upon the ground, and with the night has come a sharper frost and a bitter, piercing wind. But what is that to us as we gather together in the warm dining-room, where the lamps are so bright, where the logs burn so keenly, and where thick curtains ward off the draughts of that nipping, eager air, and deaden the sound of the gusts moaning fitfully without? How delightful a festive dinner like this after our day of woodland sport! And yet, as I have raised the first glass of champagne to my lips, a thought has sometimes come to me which has gone nigh to spoil my pleasure. It is the thought of that cover where the fun was so fast and furious, and which literally seemed to swarm with game. I picture it as it is *now* under the darkness of night. There, within sight of the bright lights around which we are so joyously gathered, *there* are scores—hundreds may be—of miserable creatures with mangled limbs and bleeding wounds; some with hind-legs broken, dragging themselves piteously over the frosty ground; some writhing in agony which death comes all too slowly to relieve. Ah, if that wounded hare could speak, as she looks at the line of light streaming from our dining-room windows, what a curse might she not breathe against the cruel savages within! What a contrast! *Here*, light, warmth, and pleasure; *there*, darkness, cold, and pain unspeakable! Are not *these* considerations which should give us pause?

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And can it be denied that the man who has learnt to stand at "a warm corner" unmoved while wounded beasts and birds are struggling or piteously crawling in agony all around him, who can listen unmoved to the terrible cry of the wounded hare—a cry like that of a child in pain—can it be denied that that man, who has so deadened his susceptibility to the sufferings of his humble and helpless kindred of the animal world, has himself suffered grievous injury to that which is best in human nature—that sacred instinct of compassion, wherein some thinkers of no mean order have thought they discerned the origin and the very basis of morality?

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And what a curse to our country is this selfish mania for the preservation of game—preservation for the purpose of destruction! For this are the country-folk warned off from the quiet woodland ways; for this are the children prohibited from entering the copses to gather wild-flowers; for this are enclosures made, barbed-wire fences erected, footpaths and commons filched from the public, and the landless still further excluded from the land; for this must temptation be constantly set before the eyes of the labourer; for this must the offender against the game laws be called up for sentence before a tribunal of game-preservers; for this must the woods and the country-side be denuded of their most delightful inhabitants—the jay and the magpie, with their lustrous plumage and wild cries; the squirrel, embodiment of life and graceful activity, with his curious winning ways; the quaint, harmless, and interesting little hedgehog; the owl, with its long-drawn melancholy note, as it hawks in the summer moonlight—for this must wood-sides be disfigured by impudent notice-boards, telling us, in the arrogant language of the rich Philistine, that "All trespassers will be prosecuted, all dogs destroyed"; for this must millions of innocent creatures be pitilessly condemned to shocking mutilations and atrocious agonies, long drawn out. Such is "Merry England" under the rule of the game-preserver!

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"Strange that where Nature loved to trace
As if for gods a dwelling-place,
There man, enamoured of distress,
Should mar it into wilderness."

I have now briefly considered those blood-sports which are generally spoken of as "legitimate" sports—namely, hunting and shooting. "But," someone will ask me, "what of hare-hunting, and coursing, and otter-hunting—are not these 'legitimate' sports also?"

Well, over these I care not to delay; a few words will suffice for each.

Well has it been said that

“Poor is the triumph o’er the timid hare.”

It is to my mind indeed a pitiable form of pleasure that men should go forth to hunt to death this, the most timorous of animals. Even in the days of bluff King Hal, when humanitarians were indeed few and far between, and it was hardly recognised that men had any duties to the lower animals, there was found a great and good and enlightened man to raise his voice in protest against this sport. “What greater pleasure is there to be felt,” wrote Sir Thomas More in his “Utopia,” “when a dog followeth a hare than when a dog followeth a dog? For one thing is done in both—that is to say, running, if thou hast pleasure therein. But if the hope of slaughter and the expectation of tearing in pieces the beast doth please thee, thou shouldest rather be moved with pity to see a silly, innocent hare murdered of a dog, the weak of the stronger, the fearful of the fierce, the innocent of the cruel and unmerciful.”

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Ought we not to feel some shame if we have not advanced farther than this old teacher of nearly four hundred years ago? But it seems that the age of King George V. has still something to learn from the age of King Henry VIII.

And but a few years later, in the reign of that famous King’s still more famous daughter, in “the spacious times,” when kindness to poor animals was but little thought of, do we not hear the voice of the great poet who is not of an age, but for all time, in an exquisite description of the miseries of the hunted hare?—

“By this, poor Wat, far off upon a hill,
 Stands on his hinder legs, with listening ear,
 To hearken if his foes pursue him still.
 Anon their loud alarums he doth hear;
 And now his grief may be compared well
 To one sore sick that hears the passing-bell.

“Then shalt thou see the dew-bedabbled wretch
 Turn and return, indenting with the way;
 Each envious briar his weary legs doth scratch;
 Each shadow makes him stop, each murmur stay.
 For misery is trodden on by many,
 And, being low, never relieved by any.”

And here let me say that, if some of us have been loud in our protest against hare-hunting by schoolboys (and I refer especially to the case of the Eton beagles), it is because we believe it to be of paramount importance that this duty of kindness to animals should be inculcated upon the young; that this sacred instinct of compassion should be fostered in young minds; and that boys should be restrained from pursuits which tend to deaden this best of all human feelings.

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“’Tis education forms the common mind;
 Just as the twig is bent, the tree’s inclined.”

And who shall say what harm may be done to character, if the men who are responsible for education allow it to be supposed by those under their charge that animal suffering is a thing of no account?

As to otter-hunting, or the “otter-worry,” as it is better called, it is a kind of sport of which I have seen a good deal in bygone days, but which I always found abominable. Let me give one example from my own experience. It is a lovely day and a lovely country. The beautiful River Plym is flowing clear and cool in its lower valley depths, between wood-clad hills. I see before me an old quarry-pool. Precipitous rocks stand over it. One little stream, or adit, alone connects it with the river. At the farther end, away from the entrance of this adit, the hillside slopes more gradually, and is covered with broken fragments of rock and quarried stone. On my left the pool lies open to the woods. We had found an otter in the morning, and it was supposed that the creature had taken refuge in the “clitter of rocks” above the pool. Accordingly, men armed with otter-spears, and aided by terriers, endeavour to dislodge it. Suddenly another otter, much larger than the one we have been hunting, emerges from this retreat and dashes into the water. Instantly the pool is surrounded by excited hunters. A man with a spear stands at the adit-head, blocking that way of escape. The water is alive with swimming hounds, while others stand baying on the banks. Now, an otter can stay long under water, but it must rise at intervals for breath; so, after a pause, we hear the shout of “Hoo, gaze!” and I catch sight of a small dark face and large brown eyes for one moment above the surface of the pool. Again and again, at ever-shortening intervals, I see that face appear and disappear. I can never forget it—that wild, scared face, and the terror of those hunted eyes! There is no possibility of escape. Hounds and “sportsmen”—yes, and “sportswomen” too—surround the pool, and the only exit is carefully and effectually guarded. The otter, wildest and most timid of animals, must either attempt to run the gauntlet or be actually drowned in the pool. Only one thought possesses me—that of sickening compassion for this poor, beautiful, hunted creature. Men—and, good heavens! women too—seem frenzied with the desire to kill. No thought of pity seems to dawn upon their minds. So at length, amid yelling men and baying hounds, the wretched “beast of the chase” is forced for dear life’s sake to try the

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desperate shift of taking to the land, in the vain hope of finding sanctuary in the friendly waters of the Plym, that are so near and yet so far. Vain hope indeed! Scarce twenty yards of flight, and the hounds roll her over. From the carcass thus barbarously done to death the "pads" are cut off as trophies by the huntsman, and the master goes through the ceremony of "blooding" his little son, who has now seen his first "kill." The boy's cheeks and forehead are smeared with blood from one of the dripping "pads," and the "young barbarian" goes home swelling with pride at this savage decoration. What a lesson for him! Thus is the rising generation taught to be gentle and compassionate, and to love "all things, both great and small"! O Sport, what horrible things are done in thy name! How long shall the nation continue to bow the knee to this false god—this bloody Moloch of Sport?

SPURIOUS SPORTS.

But of all the sports of killing which we have hitherto reviewed, this much at least may be said—namely, that they are concerned with the hunting or shooting of wild animals at liberty, in their native haunts. We now have to consider certain other blood-sports, the differentiating feature of which is that they are concerned with the hunting or shooting of animals liberated from captivity for that purpose. Such are rabbit-coursing, the hunting of carted deer, and the shooting of pigeons from traps, which are very commonly referred to as "spurious sports"—a title which they most justly merit. [21]

On pigeon-shooting I will not waste many words. To shoot a strong "blue rock," released from one of five traps, at a rise of between twenty and thirty yards, is not, as some people think, an easy thing to do. On the contrary, it is a very difficult thing to do, the result being that, even when good shots are competing, many birds get away wounded, to die a lingering death. Moreover, if a test of skill be all that is required, the clay pigeon answers the purpose quite as well as, if not better than, the living bird. I might dwell, too, on the injuries sometimes done to the birds when closely packed in hampers for transport purposes. But it is, I think, sufficient to say that it is now generally recognised in this country that the practice of shooting captive birds from traps has about it none of the elements of "sport" properly so-called. It is a mere medium for betting and money-making, or money-losing, without any of those healthy, invigorating, and athletic concomitants which do something to redeem genuine "sport" from the reproach of cruelty; and if cruelty be the unjustifiable infliction of pain, then it can, I think, hardly be doubted that pigeon-shooting must be classed among cruel sports. Of this opinion was the House of Commons thirty-one years ago; for in the year 1883 a Bill passed through that House, on second reading, to put down this spurious sport by law. And to show how poorly it is now esteemed, even in fashionable circles, it may be mentioned that the Hurlingham Club, where pigeon-shooting was once regularly carried on, some years ago decided to prohibit this unworthy practice in their grounds. [22]

It remains to consider the two spurious sports of rabbit-coursing and the hunting of carted deer. Let us take the latter first.

What are the animals employed for this form of fashionable amusement? They are park-bred deer, kept in paddocks or stables, and carefully fed and exercised. It is said on behalf of the "stag-hunters" (so called) that to do the deer any injury is the last thing they wish for; on the contrary, their desire is to recapture the animal alive and well, in order that he or she may afford sport another day. This, doubtless, is true enough; but, unfortunately, the deer is terrified by the chase, and becomes exhausted in the course of it. Unfortunately, too, there are such things as spiked iron railings and barbed-wire fences, to say nothing of walls and other obstacles with which the hunted deer is confronted in his cross-country flight. The result is inevitable, and such as all reasoning men know to be inevitable—namely, that from time to time terrible "accidents," as they are euphemistically called, take place, some of which, but by no means all, find their way into the columns of our newspapers. Thus, to give an example, it twice happened within a period of eight months that a miserable hunted deer impaled itself upon a spiked iron fence at Reading, which in its terror it essayed to jump, but which in its exhaustion it failed to clear. I could give case after case in which a hunted deer has lacerated itself in the attempt to leap a barbed-wire fence; broken a leg, or perhaps (more mercifully) its neck, in trying to clear a gate or wall; cut and wounded itself by jumping on a greenhouse or glass frames; fallen exhausted before the hounds, and been bitten and torn by them; sought refuge in a river, canal, or pond, and been drowned by the pursuing pack. Ten such cases are known to have occurred in six months with one pack only, hunting in the Home Counties, and six tame deer were done to death by that same pack within that period. [23]

These cases formed the subject of questions put by me to the late Prime Minister, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, in the House of Commons. I should like to quote his answer given to one of such questions on March 14, 1907: "If such cruelties are perpetrated, and we can do anything to stop them, I shall be very glad. I am against cruelty of any sort, whether under the name of sport or otherwise. I like it rather less under the cloak of sport than otherwise." Nay, this cruel and contemptible travesty of sport was once, in a lucid interval, condemned, even by that well-known and recognised organ of sport, *The Field*, "the country gentleman's newspaper." For in *The Field* of September 3, 1892, we read as follows:

"If we look at this fiction of chase from an unprejudiced standpoint, we must admit that it is only prescription and usage which enable us to retain it in our sporting schedule and to tolerate it as legitimate. Strictly speaking, it stands on the same footing as bull and bear baiting, both of which have had to go to the wall under the influence of what is called the march of civilization."^[4] [24]

Need I say more? Surely the case is too clear for argument—except, indeed, for certain peers in the Gilded Chamber, whose hidebound prejudice seems to be impervious to reason!

So much for the hunting of carted deer, the spurious sport of the rich. What shall we say of rabbit-coursing, which has been described as the sport of the poor, but which would, I think, be better called “the spurious sport of the spurious poor”? Here, too, I can speak as an eye-witness, and I will repeat the description of what I saw, as it appeared in a London newspaper:

“Wishing to see for myself what goes on at the ‘sport’ of rabbit-coursing, I took train on Sunday morning to Worcester Park Station, whence a walk of about a mile leads to the field where the entertainment is provided. Here was soon gathered together an assembly of about three hundred ‘sportsmen,’ mostly lads and larrikins. There was a large number of dogs, chiefly of the ‘whippet’ breed, and many of them carefully clothed after the manner of greyhounds. The ear was assailed by the noise of continual barking, and the nose by whiffs from a neighbouring sewage farm. After we had waited some little time a van was drawn on the ground heavily laden with large shallow hampers packed with live rabbits. Three or four of these hampers were brought forward to the starting-point; a stout gentleman who carried a revolver and appeared to ‘boss the show,’ gave the order ‘to get behind the ropes,’ some juvenile and promising bookmakers mounted stools, and the fun commenced.

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“Two dogs are led to the starting-point amidst shouts of ‘I’ll lay three to one,’ ‘I’ll lay seven to four,’ etc., quite in the approved sporting style. A man opens a sort of trap-door in the lid of one of the hampers, seizes one of the cowering rabbits by the skin of the back, presents it to each dog alternately, in order, I presume, to excite him to the utmost, still held in one hand by the skin of the back, some thirty-five yards, and then flings it down, whereupon a shot is fired from the revolver, the dogs are released and rush madly for the prey. What follows requires some explanation. Let it be remembered that these are, or were, wild rabbits, among the most timorous of wild creatures; that they have probably undergone the horrible experience of being driven from their burrows by the ferret some days (and who shall say how many days?) before; that they have been sent by rail to town; that they are carted to the scene of action closely packed in hampers; that they are, for a long time previously to being ‘coursed,’ surrounded by shouting men and barking dogs, and that after all this, weak, dazed, and half paralysed with fear, the victim is ‘dumped down’ in the middle of a strange field.

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“The result is what might be expected. He can hardly run, and knows not where to run. Some come straight back into the mouths of the dogs, others make a feeble attempt to seek shelter in the distant hedge. But the result is always the same. In a few seconds the dogs are upon him. The first seizes him by the back or hind-quarters; the second, overtaking the first, and not to be balked of his share of the prey, grabs the victim by the head and shoulders. Then ensues a tug of war, during which the miserable rabbit is frequently more than half disembowelled before he is taken, still alive, or half alive, from the jaws of the dogs. Not one escapes; he is not given a chance. One that was put down a few yards in front of two very young dogs, who were evidently new to the business, might have got away, but when this was seen a large dog was at once sent after the fugitive. I am told that at North Country meetings when a puppy is entered a rabbit is frequently mutilated by having a leg broken or an eye put out; but I saw nothing of this at Worcester Park.

“I should mention that I was joined by a friend from New Malden, well known in the neighbourhood for humanitarian efforts, and that we were at once ‘spotted’ as alien interlopers, and looked at askance in consequence. Possibly the result was greater caution in the management of the proceedings. But we saw quite enough. Fifteen wretched creatures were done to death in forty-five minutes, and the ‘sport’ goes on all day and every Sunday. I counted the steps taken by the man who ran forward with each rabbit, and never did they exceed thirty-five. A really wild rabbit in his own familiar haunts might have some chance at that. But these poor cowering things, tortured to make a hooligans’ holiday! The mere monotony of it was sickening. And yet when a Bill is brought into Parliament to make such abominations illegal, a noble lord, one of the pillars of the Jockey Club, opposes it because it ‘would affect the poorer classes far more than themselves,’ and because it is ‘a piece of class legislation’ (Lord Durham in the House of Lords, *The Times*, March 4, 1902). Why not go back to cock-fighting and bull-baiting at once?”^[5]

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Such are the sports that make England great, that strengthen the muscles and sinews of a conquering Imperial race! Let us rejoice, then, that we have an Hereditary Chamber, where faddists and fanatics are unknown, to throw the ægis of its protection over the pleasures of rich and poor alike, and where the high-souled, high-bred scions of a time-honoured aristocracy magnanimously defend the cherished institutions of our forefathers against the attacks both of blatant democrats and sickly sentimentalists!

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THE ETHICS OF SPORT.

It was said by a noble lord in the Upper House not long ago that “Physical courage and love of sport have been for centuries the distinguishing characteristics of the British race.” Is there any necessary relation between these two things? I take leave to doubt it—indeed, I entirely deny it—if by “sport” these “blood-sports” are intended. But let us set beside this wonderful pronouncement the statement of a cultivated and enlightened Englishman who was for many years resident in Burmah. In that charming book, “The Soul of a People,” Mr. H. Fielding writes as follows:

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“It has been inculcated in us from childhood that it is a manly thing to be indifferent to pain—not to our own pain only, but to that of all others. To be sorry for a hunted hare, to

compassionate the wounded deer, to shrink from torturing the brute creation, has been accounted by us a namby-pamby sentimentalism, not fit for man, fit only for a squeamish woman. To the Burman it is one of the highest of all virtues. He believes that all that is beautiful in life is founded on compassion, and kindness, and sympathy—that nothing of great value can exist without them.”

May not our much-vaunted Christianity learn something from this despised religion of the Buddha, first taught by Gautama on the banks of the Ganges some six hundred years before Christ? For what is it that Buddhism teaches us? It teaches as a first principle to do no harm to any living thing; it teaches mercy without limit, and compassion without stint. Of the Burmese Buddhists we read: “They learn how it is the noblest duty of man, who is strong, to be kind and loving to his weaker brothers, the animals.”

Contrast with that the following, taken at random from among my newspaper cuttings (it is a paragraph from the *Morning Post*):

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June 14, 1904.

“The Carlisle Otter Hounds met at Longtown yesterday, and had the best hunt that has taken place in the Esk for fifty years. A splendid otter was put up at Red Scour, and for four hours he kept men, hounds, and terriers at bay. He left the river several times for the woods and rocks, and ran the woods as cunningly as a fox. Eventually, when climbing a steep rock for a hole, he fell back exhausted into the water, and the hounds despatched him. His body was presented to Sir Richard Graham.”

No thought of pity here for the poor wild creature, hunted, harried, and remorselessly pursued by men and hounds for four mortal hours—in water, through woods, over rocks, ever flying in all the agony of fear, till the last dregs of strength are exhausted, and, on the very threshold of the longed-for refuge, he falls, hopeless and helpless, in the stream, where “the hounds despatched him.” Such is a “grand otter hunt,” the best that had taken place in the Esk for fifty years! Truly we may smile at those holy men of the Buddhists who carried bells on their shoes in order to give warning as they walked to the little creatures in the long grass; but for my part I own that, upon the whole, I would far sooner be classed with these poor sentimentalists, who have seen in their hearts the coming of that “milder day” for which the great poet who sang of “Hartleap Well” so devoutly longed, than with that flower of muscular Christianity, the stalwart Britisher, so distinguished for his love of sport and his contempt for pain—his own generally excepted!

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How, then, stands this question of sport considered as a question of ethics? A great German thinker, as we all know, believed that he had found the very basis of morality in the sacred instinct of compassion. I will not argue whether Schopenhauer was right or wrong in that contention, but this, at any rate, we must all admit—namely, that without compassion all our boasted morality would be but as sounding brass and as a tinkling cymbal. Nay, whether it be or be not the basis of morality, this at least is true that, without compassion, no morality worth having could exist at all.

Let us listen for a moment to Rousseau on this matter:

“Mandeville was right in thinking that, with all their systems of morality, men would never have been anything but monsters if Nature had not given them *compassion* to support their reason; but he failed to see that *from this one quality spring all the social virtues* which he was unwilling to credit mankind with. In reality, what is generosity, clemency, humanity, if not *compassion*, applied to the weak, to the guilty, or to the human race as a whole? Even benevolence and friendship, if we look at the matter rightly, are seen to result from a constant compassion, directed upon a particular object; for to desire that someone should not suffer is nothing else than to desire that he should be happy.... The more closely the living spectator identifies himself with the living sufferer, the more active does pity become.”

And again:

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“How is it that we let ourselves be moved to pity if not by getting out of our own consciousness, and becoming identified with the living sufferer; by leaving, so to say, our own being and entering into his? We do not suffer except as we suppose he suffers; *it is not in us, it is in him*, that we suffer.... Offer a young man objects on which the expansive force of his heart can act—objects such as may enlarge his nature, and incline it to go out to other beings, in whom he may everywhere find himself again. Keep carefully away those things which narrow his view, and make him self-centred, and tighten the strings of the *human ego*.”

It is upon this theme that Schopenhauer becomes so eloquent, and with larger view even than that of Rousseau, as it seems, he brings the lower animals within the protection of his moral system.

“There is nothing that revolts our moral sense so much as cruelty. Every other offence we can pardon, but not cruelty. The reason is found in the fact that cruelty is the exact opposite of *compassion*—viz., the direct participation, independent of all ulterior considerations, in the sufferings of another, leading to sympathetic assistance in the effort to prevent or remove them; whereon, in the last resort, all satisfaction and all well-being and happiness depend. It is this compassion alone which is the real basis of all *voluntary* justice and all *genuine* loving-kindness.... There is another proof that the moral incentive disclosed by me is the true one. I mean the fact that *animals* also are included under its protecting ægis. In the other European systems of ethics no place is found for them, strange and inexcusable as this may appear. It is asserted that beasts have no rights; the illusion is harboured that our conduct, so far as they are concerned, has no moral significance; or, as it is put in the language of these codes, that there are no duties to be fulfilled towards animals. Such a view is one of revolting coarseness—a barbarism

So wrote a young German philosopher some seventy years ago; and all that has since happened in the world of thought has but served to strengthen his teaching as to our duty towards the lower animals. For since he wrote science and thought have become profoundly modified by one of those epoch-making inductions which, at very rare intervals, some great thinker is inspired to make. We have seen the establishment and the almost universal acceptance of the doctrine of evolution, involving as one of its corollaries the unity of life and the “universal kinship” of man with his humbler brethren—or cousins, if you will—of the animal world.

I venture, then, to offer this teaching for my readers’ consideration. In its light I would ask them to view these questions, and if they shall think that that light is the light of reason and truth, then to follow it wheresoever it may lead. I do not think it will lead them to offer fresh hecatombs upon the blood-stained altar of Sport.

FOOTNOTES:

- [2] One of the strongest objections to fox-hunting consists in this, that each season must necessarily be preceded (so at least we are told) by the barbarities of “cub-hunting.” The slaughter of these poor little cubs is cruel and pitiful work. Sometimes, too, a vixen falls a victim to the hounds while her cubs are still dependent on her for their food. No doubt an early ride on a fine September or October morning is a pleasant thing, and the “sportsman” need not know much about what goes on in the coverts, or trouble himself to think about it! But the fact remains that this is a miserable and cruel form of “sport.” And what shall we say of the practice of “digging out” a wretched fox when, perhaps after a long run, he has sought refuge by “going to ground”? Can anything be conceived more callous or more cowardly? Yet educated, and, presumably, thinking men, and women too—Heaven save the mark!—stand by and enjoy the fun! Such is the debasing effect of “sport” upon the human mind and character!
- [3] In the *Westminster Gazette* of August 15, 1908, a woman wrote on “The Enchantments of the New Forest,” and this is what she says: “Anyone with a drop of sport-love in them, given a nag of some kind, will not be a day in the forest before he finds himself chasing some animal, alive or dead.” The sentiment is surely even more deplorable than the grammar.
- [4] It must in fairness be added that the article from which the above extract is made was subsequently repudiated by the editor as being “quite opposed to the line which *The Field* has always taken.” It seems that “by an oversight the article was inserted during the absence of the departmental editor.” I quote it, nevertheless, as showing that over twenty years ago the truth as to this matter had dawned upon the mind of at least one of the leader-writers of a great sporting paper.
- [5] Moreover, there is a sport which, as the Rev. J. Stratton has pointed out, might well supersede rabbit-coursing—viz., whippet-racing. “It cannot be pleaded,” he says, “that if we were to stop the coursing of captured rabbits we should be unduly depriving workmen of recreation, for ‘whippets’ could be employed just as well in races as in chasing rabbits. Of the first of these sports I can speak as an eye-witness. In whippet-racing a course is formed, which is kept free for the dogs by ropes on either side. At one end, men have in hand the whippets that are about to compete, and here stands the starter, holding his pistol. ‘Runners-up’ now come on to the course, carrying in their hands a towel or scarf, and starting from the front of the dogs, and frantically waving the article they hold, and whistling, and calling to the animals, they begin to run towards the far end of the course, where the winning-line is marked out and the judge has taken up his post. When the right moment has arrived, the pistol is fired, and the whippets are liberated, and commence to travel the course with the speed of the wind, the ‘runners-up’ always getting well beyond the winning-point before the dogs overtake them, in order that the latter may pass it at their utmost pace. It is altogether a remarkable sight, and had I never seen the thing, I could not have believed that the little dogs would enter into the contest with the ardour they do.”
- [6] My quotations are from Mr. A. B. Bullock’s translation of “The Basis of Morality,” see pp. 170, 208, 218.

SPORT AND AGRICULTURE

By EDWARD CARPENTER

It has frequently been pointed out that the enthusiasm for “sport” is the relic of a very primitive instinct in man. In that sense it is quite natural. In early days the sheer necessity of pursuing and killing animals for food, or of hunting down and destroying beasts of prey, must have become very deeply ingrained; and the satisfaction of that need became an instinctive pleasure, so much so that oftentimes nowadays the pleasure remains, though the need has long disappeared.

In the village where I live there is a countryman of a very primitive type, who goes almost mad with excitement when the hunt is out. Though over forty years of age, he has been known more

than once to leave his horses with the plough in the field and career wildly after the hounds for two or three hours on end, careless of what might happen to his deserted team. At the public-house afterwards in the evening he recounts in a shrill voice every detail of the "find" or the "kill." "Talk about your oratorios and concerts," he shouts, "*there's no music, I say, like the 'ounds!*" On one occasion when the hunt was baffled by the fox getting into a narrow cleft in some rocks, and with the fall of evening the hounds had to be drawn off, this man positively remained on the spot, watching, all night; and when the huntsmen returned in the morning with a terrier, he followed the terrier as far as ever he could—head and shoulders—into the hole, helped the dog to clutch the fox, and all three—dog, fox, and man—suddenly freed, rolled together down the steep cliff-side into a stream below! Such is the force of the old instinct, and the story helps one to realise the strange conditions of sheer necessity under which primitive man lived, though in the light of actual life and the present day it is ludicrous enough, even if not revolting in its ferocity.

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So far from there being any necessity in this case to rid the country-side from a beast of prey, it is quite probable that the fox in question had been imported from Germany—as a certain number undoubtedly are—simply in order to provide a country squire's holiday! A French lady, herself very fond of riding, told me lately that in her native Burgundy foxes are still very numerous, and have to be hunted down in consequence of the damage they do; but when I informed her that our foxes are largely "made in Germany," and brought over in order to do artificial damage and so be artificially hunted, she laughed almost hysterically—as surely she was entitled to do.

There is this futile artificiality about almost all our "sport." It is one thing to sit all night in the lower branches of a spreading tree just outside some little Indian village, in order to get a chance of shooting the dangerous man-eating tiger as he comes forth from the jungle, and quite another to pot tame pheasants at the corner of a wood, or half-tame grouse as they fly over the "battery" in which you (and a gamekeeper) are safely ensconced. The pheasants have been reared under a barnyard hen and fed by hand till they are as tame as fowls, and the grouse can only be persuaded to fly to the guns by a quarter-mile-long line of "drivers," who with much shouting and waving of flags compel them to rise from the heather. The gamekeeper gets his guinea tip, and you in return get the credit of a large bag secured by his kind assistance! The force of humbug could no further go. The truth is, all this modern "sport" is a simple playing at hunting and shooting.

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And if it were merely playing, though it might be somewhat laughable, there would be no need to protest. But, unfortunately, there are two serious considerations involved, which are by no means "play" to those concerned. One (which has been touched on elsewhere) is the needless cruelty to the animals; the other is the serious ruin of our agriculture and detriment to our farm populations.

The damage done by fox-hunting to fences and crops is obvious enough to everyone. But there are other complications. In a hunting district the tenants far and wide are invited to find homes for the puppies which are being reared for the replenishment of the pack. It is an ungrateful task. The puppy is a pest on the farm; it is in everybody's way, and it has its muzzle eternally in the milk-buckets. Its board and lodging are not paid for; but—oh, gracious compensation!—the farmers who "walk puppies" are given a dinner at the end of the puppy-rearing season, and get their chance of a prize for the best exhibited. Partly in consideration of these favours, but more because they do not want to offend the gentry in general or their own landlords in particular, the tenants put up with these obnoxious additions to their households. Furthermore, as foxes must on no account be killed by private hands, even though they are constantly raiding the farmyards, the owners of the hunt offer compensation for fowls killed or wounded, as they also, of course, do for fences and crops damaged.

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But what a situation for any self-respecting farmer! To see a tribe of "gentlemen and ladies" tearing over his land and making havoc of his new-sown wheat, to find half a dozen fowls some morning with their heads bitten off, to have his wife at her work tumbling over an intruding puppy—and then to have to go, cap in hand, to ask for compensation for all these things! What an unworthy position for him to be in, and how galling to think that his life-work and the very dignity of his profession are so lightly regarded, or that the loss of them can be counted as easily atoned for by a few shillings.

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GROWING GROUSE.

As to the grouse moors, the damage done to agriculture and to the popular interest in connection with them—though it might not appear obvious at first—is very considerable. A hundred years ago the moors in my neighbourhood—as in many other parts of the country—were common lands. The people had rights of pasture over them for their cattle and sheep, they kept down the rabbits, using the latter largely for food, and they were able to grow farm crops up to the very edge of the heather. To-day these same lands—enclosed on the plea of public benefit!—are given over to grouse. The rabbits have become to a great extent the gamekeepers' perquisites, and very valuable "perks" too. They are allowed to swarm, and consequently they not only destroy what pasturage there is on the moors, but, penetrating into the farms along the moor edges, they damage very seriously the cereal and other crops. I know places where I am credibly informed that a hundred years ago oats were commonly grown, but which now are quite impossible for such a purpose. And—such is the sway of the institution—young farmers desiring to shoot the rabbits on their own tenancies are looked askance at and discouraged from doing so for fear they might possibly bag a brace of grouse! When we consider the well-known expense

involved in rearing and shooting these sacred birds, and at the same time the damage, just described, to ordinary agriculture, we have again a sad picture of the prevailing futility. On some farms—especially, I believe, in Devonshire—where grouse are not concerned, but where rabbit-shooting is a favourite recreation of the landlord class—the spinneys and copses are allowed to become so infested with bunnies that general farming is greatly paralyzed in consequence.

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Indirectly in a similar way does pheasant-shooting lead to agricultural damage. In the present day—partly out of fear of Lloyd George and all his works—the tendency of landowners is to sell and make ready money from the old oak and other timber in their woods, and by planting plentiful spruce and fir to turn the plantations into pheasant covers. The number of gamekeepers charged with preserving these plantations multiplies,^[7] and *their* idea of duty consists in the destruction of any and every winged and four-footed creature that might possibly be harmful to the pheasants or their eggs. It would probably surprise the reader to have a complete list of such—and I do not presume to supply it—but it includes hawks and owls of various kinds, jays, magpies, stoats, weasels, and even the beautiful and probably innocent squirrel. All these fall victims to the gun or the trap, and, needless to say, the balance of Nature is seriously upset in many directions. For our purpose here we need only point out the consequent and ruinous swarming of mice and sparrows. The destruction of hawks and owls in particular has led to this result. Clouds of sparrows, ever multiplying, occupy the hedgerows and descend upon the cornfields as soon as ever the corn is ripe, doing countless damage—to which the mice contribute their share. No one who has not witnessed it with his own eyes could believe the loss to the farmer from this cause alone. And again we are struck with the foolishness which allows this to go on merely for the sake of breeding tame birds for the guns of very tame sportsmen.

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The pheasant is a very beautiful bird, and if allowed to breed in our woods under natural conditions, would hold its own in a modest way, and with the other denizens of the woodlands, the squirrels and the jays and the owls and the hawks, would render these places really interesting and delightful resorts. It seems sad that all these animal possibilities should be destroyed for the sake of what is often little more than human brag and bag! As an instance of the unintelligent way in which these things are worked, it may be mentioned that even that stately bird, the heron, is a mark for, and is commonly shot down by, the gamekeeper. And why? Because, forsooth! it not unfrequently feeds upon *trout*. The trout is a sacred fish, and therefore the glorious heron must be shot! Whether the gamekeeper wars upon the kingfisher for the same reason I do not know. But it seems quite possible that he does, for beauty and rarity are no defence.

PHEASANT OR PEASANT?

There is another aspect of the subject which must not be passed over. To-day the small-holding question is coming very much to the fore. The splendid results obtained by a combination of small farms and agricultural co-operation, already conspicuous in Denmark, and coming into sight in Ireland, are strongly urging us in England in the same direction. A large multiplication of small-holders, with facilities for their combined action and co-operation, is to-day the one promising outlook for British agriculture. Yet it is notorious that the County Councils are much more inclined to hinder than to help this movement. And why? There may be different reasons; but undoubtedly one of the most powerful is—sport. It is obvious that a population of small holders—particularly if associated and combined—would form a very serious obstacle to the latter. A squire with three or four farms under him, of 500 acres each, can easily make terms with his tenants, and persuade or compel them to favour the hunting and shooting; but what would he do with fifty small-holders? It would be a very different pair of shoes, and he would have to walk (like Agag) somewhat delicately. The compensations, and the obstructions, and the complications generally, would bring the old order to an end.

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Thus we come very clearly, I think, to a certain parting of the ways in the matter of our agricultural future in this country. It all comes to this: Are we going to continue for ever playing at the land question—that question whose vitality and importance we daily more and more perceive—or are we going to be serious about it? We cannot take both ways. On the one hand, we have the Scottish Highlands depopulated for the sake of deer; we have English farms more or less ravaged, and farmers terrorised for the sake of fox-hunting; we have grouse-moors and pheasant-covers, with their concomitant evils, let to rich Americans and titled grocers; and, on the other hand we *may* have a real live agriculture and a brisk independent rural population. We cannot have both. If we retain the present system—conducting, no doubt, to a healthy schoolboy type of squire—it means a downcast, stupefied, unenterprising peasantry. If we turn seriously to the re-establishment of agriculture, and of a real live, manly population on the land, that will undoubtedly mean the abandonment of a good deal that goes by the name of sport.^[8]

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The time grows short, for indeed anxious problems lie in the near future before this country, and a choice has to be made—a choice that may have a good deal to do with the position of England in the world. The country-sides have got to stop playing at rural life, and to take it up seriously. Nor, after all, would the abandonment of sport as the chief object of the country gentleman's existence mean the abandonment or discouragement of all wild life. Rather the contrary. We all in these over-civilised times appreciate the value and importance of wild nature; and however effective and widespread we may make our agriculture, we shall surely also demand the establishment of extensive natural reserves for all kinds of free plants and creatures. We have seen that "sport" is not really favourable to wild nature life, but only to some very artificial and limited forms. With the abandonment of sport in its present shape, it is possible that the

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landowners of the future—whether private individuals or public bodies—will turn their attention to the making of splendid nature-resorts in wood and mountain and moor, where every kind of creature may have free access and free play, unharmed by man, and open to his friendly companionship and sympathetic study.

FOOTNOTES:

- [7] The following is quoted from Mr. Lloyd George's speech at Bedford (October, 1913):
- "In 1851 you had in this country 9,000 gamekeepers; in 1911 there were 23,000. During that period the number of labourers on the soil went down by 600,000. The number of gamekeepers went up by 250 per cent., and the number of labourers down by 600,000. Pick up a copy of the *Field* and look at the advertisements there, and you will realise the extent of the evil. Here is one advertising shooting rights for estates where last year 5,000 pheasants were shot. Here is a sportsman who advertises 1,000 acres, with coverts to hold 7,000 rabbits on his estate. You try a small holding *there!* Agriculture has had a bad time. It has had to pass through a time of great crisis. What would have been done in any other trade if it had to face the difficulties which agriculture had? A great capitalist would have introduced new machinery, got the best labour, and would have put the whole of his energy, brain, and enterprise into restoring that industry. He would have gone, if necessary, for years without any return, and at last he would have pulled through. That is what has happened in many industries in this country. What has happened here? What has the great capitalist done in agriculture? He has trebled the number of his gamekeepers, he has put land out of cultivation, he has increased enormously the number of pheasants which have been turned on to the land."
- [8] See the "Report of the Land Enquiry Committee," vol. i., 1913, which in its chapter on "Game" contains a severe condemnation of the practice of excessive game preserving. "The damage done by game is too serious to be overlooked. Even when the tenant farmer is fully compensated the damage amounts to a national loss.... Not merely is land under-cultivated, but large areas are altogether out of cultivation owing to the preservation of game. This land, instead of providing food for the people, provides sport and delicacies for the few, and is the source of much damage and annoyance to neighbouring farmers."

THE COST OF SPORT

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By MAURICE ADAMS

"Now Dives daily feasted and was gorgeously arrayed,
Not at all because he liked it, but because 'twas good for trade;
That the people might have calico, he clothed himself in silk,
And surfeited himself on cream, that they might get the milk;
He fed five hundred servants, that the poor might not lack bread,
And had his vessels made of gold that they might get more lead:
And e'en to show his sympathy with the deserving poor,
He did no useful work himself that they might do the more."

ERNEST BILTON.

In a tract entitled "Sport, A National Benefactor," dedicated to the sportsmen of the nation, Mr. Henry R. Sargent gives elaborate statistics to prove that large sums of money are devoted to the maintenance of sport, while about £25,000,000 are annually spent upon it. Of this amount he estimates that wages absorb some £6,000,000. Rents of shootings and fishings, and the price of race-horses, come to £5,500,000, which sum, though "going principally to the upper classes, is recirculated in various ways," while, "except the few pounds paid for dead horses, we have from hunting, shooting, and racing, over £6,000,000 a year paid for oats, meal, hay, straw, beans, and bran; and let it be understood that it is all British produce. No infernal foreign stuff is given to our hounds or horses, though we may eat it ourselves, and thus encourage Free Trade—that curse of our country."

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After we have thus been shown "what a gigantic medium sport is for the circulation of money—the vertebræ (*sic*) of our common weal," we are not surprised that "to these facts and figures, which no sophistry can dispute and no method of statement darken," Mr. Sargent should "draw the attention alike of sportsmen, prigs, prudes, and the public," and should "invite the consideration of Radicals and Socialists" to the subject. For he continues gravely: "Let these political step-brethren ponder well before they strive to injure the classes who maintain our sports. Let them recognise the fact that as a universal benefactor in bringing to the poor the rich man's money, a substitute for sport can never be found. These revolutionists should also assure themselves of the fact that never can they devise a system which will carry out the principles of Communism as practically and universally as that which has always been adopted by our resident landlords. Be it £5,000, £20,000, or £100,000 a year, which may be focussed in the one individual, he spends it all among the community. Yet these are the men who are marked for destruction by the Radical, the Socialist, and the Anarchist; and not the landlords alone, but all moneyed men, no matter of what class."

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It is small wonder, then, that the heart within him is grieved when he thinks of those bold bad men, the agitators, for they, he informs us tearfully, "as a rule, dislike the upper classes," while those pre-eminently wicked men, the land agitators, to a man, "hate them with ferocity." It was to gratify that hatred, as our author is assured, "and not so much to benefit either the land tenants or crofters, that agitation has been got up in Ireland and Scotland."

"In Ireland hunting was attacked, as was openly avowed, to drive the landlords out of the country, but happily hunting is as strong there as ever, except in Waterford; and although they be not so well off as formerly, we still have the landlords. In Scotland the same game is being played by the agitators. Although they strive to hide the motive under the kilt of the crofter, they have no desire but to injure the landlords through means of attacking the shooting. Hunting was also assailed by other parties, in alleging that cruelty was practised by hunting carted deer! An outcry is also raised for the tourists, that in pursuit of their vocation they are, forsooth, to be allowed to disturb the Highland forests, and so scare away the wild red-deer, animals which the agitators know well cannot abide the sight of a human being, much less the slightest noise. What do agitators care for tourists, anyway? Then comes this raid upon racing. Of a truth, therefore, it is high time that all sportsmen, from the peer to the pantry-boy, should coalesce and defend themselves in organised phalanx against those who, with intolerance and impertinence, gratuitously assail us."

For just consider the money spent on racing, and the number of men employed. Some 8,000 young men, says Mr. Sargent, "are employed in the racing stables of the kingdom—a number equal to that of more than ten regiments of the line."

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"When we come to consider what has been spent upon the stables at Newmarket, and other places ... the amount becomes absolutely appalling! The sum has to be counted in thousands—and it runs into millions—all of which is spent in labour and material. As do the other branches of sport which I have dealt with, racing sends money flowing from the rich to the poor man's pocket, but at the same time nearly all classes derive monetary benefit through this special branch of sport."

One seems to have heard something of gambling at races, but our author tells us that "it is the misfortune of racing, and not its fault, that betting should be connected with it," but he holds that "to stop gambling on the Turf, which has existed from time immemorial, is an impossibility: so no one need attempt to do so." With the true democratic feeling engendered by the "principle of Communism" animating sport, he asserts that "no man abhors gambling more than I do, and I would, if I could, put a stop upon the shop-boys and humble classes indulging in the vice, but I would let the others do as they choose." For the author is sure that "to interfere with any old-established institution which is working well is a most dangerous thing." "God knows," he exclaims in despair, "what would be the result, if these latter-day saints, who are now on the prowl, were to succeed in their attempt to interfere with racing, even if only so far as betting is concerned."

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GIVING EMPLOYMENT.

The pamphlet from which the foregoing extracts have been taken is not, as one might imagine, a huge joke, nor is it a sly attempt to pour ridicule upon sport. It was published by the Sporting League—on the executive committee of which we find the names of many noble lords and distinguished commoners—apparently with the serious intention of furthering the fifth of the League's praiseworthy objects—"Generally to do whatever may from time to time seem advisable for counteracting the pernicious influence of 'faddists.'" It seems that we can hardly reckon a sense of humour among the many "inestimable benefits" that sport bestows on its devotees, however much food for laughter the publications of the League may give to "faddists" and the public.

Although this tract was published some years ago, its arguments have not deteriorated with age, since we find them essentially reproduced in an address delivered in November, 1908, at the Surveyors' Institute, by the President, Mr. Howard Martin, and commented on with approval by *The Field*. Mr. Martin, like the author of the tract, seriously insists on the great benefits which agriculture and business derive from fox-hunting. He estimates that on the upkeep of hunters £3,500,000 a year are spent. Shooting also involves a large outlay for the feeding and rearing of birds, and attracts much cash to the pockets of residents in the country. And, further, the prosperity due to sport radiates in all directions. Not merely farmers and farm-hands, but local innkeepers, country fly-drivers, and village shopkeepers share in the stream of wealth which sport pours forth over the country. There are even tips for the inn-servants and the porters at the railway-stations! Indeed, Mr. Martin declared that he had taken great pains to get at reliable facts and figures on which to ground his arguments, and his conclusion was that not only did hunting and the preservation of foxes generally benefit agricultural districts, but that hunting and the exercise of shooting rights indirectly benefited the country at large "by checking rural depopulation." *The Field* is not unmindful of the rich physical and moral gains which the gamekeepers, beaters, and others ministering to sport, derive from a shooting-party. "They are all of them fond of sport; they like to see birds well killed, they enjoy the pick-up, they enjoy (a matter of no little moment) a good beaters' lunch, they like a good glass of ale at the close of the day, and are better off in mind and pocket for a few hours which interrupt the routine of their ordinary life like a holiday."

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It is amusing to note how largely the anti-Budget protests of the distressed Dukes and other wealthy persons were based on the egregious fallacy that "giving employment" is conducive to the welfare of the community, without regard to the character of the employment given. Nothing,

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for instance, could be more absurd than the remarks made by Lord Londonderry on August 23, 1909, and solemnly reported in *The Times*:

“What was his position if he had to curtail his expenditure, as he was told by his Radical friends that he must do? The great interest in the property to him was the shooting and gardens, which gave employment to a large number of men. Could it be said that these two enjoyments were to him absolutely selfish? He was able to send out large consignments of game as presents, and was also able to benefit those out of employment in times of depression. Therefore that amusement was not a selfish one.”

The fact that Lord Londonderry’s shooting gives employment to a large number of persons is in truth its greatest condemnation; for though the individuals employed may be glad of the work, the community loses by the waste of time, labour, and money involved in such a perfectly futile occupation as that of game-preserving, in which every pheasant killed has cost far more than its own food-value.

Here, again, is a delightful extract from a sporting paper, October 6, 1909:

“Rearing of pheasants is a very costly matter, and one which I anticipate will be seriously curtailed in the near future if this so-called ‘Working Man’s Budget’ is passed. County gentlemen will be very hardly hit if this iniquitous Bill becomes law, and they will consequently have to effect economies in every direction. One of the very first will be in reducing their shootings, or in giving up rearing birds altogether. Pheasants which are hand-reared cost about 4s. each to feed, from start to finish. Thus it is easy to understand what sums of money find their way into farmers’ and tradesmen’s pockets for the purchase of food alone, for hundreds of thousands of pheasants all over the kingdom have to be fed for months every year. The money which is expended one way or another over shooting is quite enormous, for it must be remembered that, in addition to the purchase of eggs and food, there are wages, clothes, and fuel for keepers; there are also needless expenses in connection with rearing. When the shooting commences, there are beaters at 2s. 6d. and 3s. per day, with meat, bread, cheese, and beer. And there is the expense of hospitality to guests. Take it all in all, the old saying that each pheasant shot costs, one way and another, a guinea, is not far wrong.

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“Now, who benefits from all this? The poor owner certainly does not, for it is all pay, pay, pay with him, and if he does sell his surplus birds, he will only get back 2s. to 2s. 6d. a bird. But the public gets the benefit, for they can purchase these costly-reared birds for the price of chickens. One day those people, the farmers, tradesmen, working-classes, and labourers, will wake up to what they have lost, when they find the country house shut up, and shooting, as it used to be, a thing of the past.”

No doubt all these crumbs of blessing fall from the rich man’s pocket on the happy gamekeepers, beaters, and others who are employed by a shooting-party. No doubt the country lads, servants, and porters rejoice in the tips they receive. Much money is spent on sport, and a great deal of it finds its way as wages and gratuities into the pockets of dependents, but to contend seriously that sport checks depopulation is ludicrous. It is an insult to our intelligence to argue that the country is more prosperous and supports a larger population when the land is portioned out in great estates, many of which are only farmed to the degree necessary to keep the game on the land; when the people are driven from the country-side into the town; when in Scotland whole counties have been cleared of inhabitants in order to form vast deer forests for the sport of a few rich men.

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THE REALITY.

Of the 56,000,000 acres in Great Britain something less than 15,000,000 are actually cultivated, although there are 35,000,000 acres of cultivable land. Thirty years ago there were more than 2,000,000 agricultural labourers in Great Britain, but in 1907 they had decreased to 1,311,000. In the same year there were more than 17,000,000 acres of pasture. In “Fields, Factories, and Workshops,” Prince Kropotkin estimates that the soil of the United Kingdom would produce enough food for 24,000,000 people, instead of for only 17,000,000 as at present, if it were cultivated as thoroughly as it was only thirty-five years ago, while if it were cultivated as thoroughly as Belgium it would produce enough to feed 37,000,000.

Take, again, the question of Afforestation. The Report of the Royal Commission, issued on January 15, 1909, is a most important paper in many ways. Of special interest are the references made by the Commissioners to the responsibility of blood-sports for much of the bad condition of our woodlands.

“Considerations of sport have played an important part in determining the method of management of our woods. Clean boles, with high-pitched crowns, the exclusion of the sun’s rays, and ground destitute of grass, weeds, and bushes, are not conditions favourable to either ground or winged game. On the contrary, trees that are semi-isolated, and with low-reaching branches, and a wood that is full of bracken, brambles, and similar undergrowth, present conditions much more attractive to the sportsman, and it is these conditions that many landowners have arranged to secure. Ground game, too, has been the cause of immense destruction amongst the young trees, and thus it has, in a measure, directly brought about that condition of under-stocking which is so inimical to the growth of good timber and to the successful results of forestry. Nor is it possible in the presence of even a moderate head of ground game to secure natural regeneration of woodlands, the young seedling trees being nibbled over almost as soon as they appear above ground. So intimate is the association in the United Kingdom between sport and forestry that even on an estate that is considered to possess some of the best-managed woods in England, the sylvicultural details have to be accommodated to the hunting and shooting, and trees must be taken down in different places to make cover for foxes, and

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If, then, the land of our country, instead of lying almost idle or in permanent pasture interspersed with parks and copses as cover for game, or left desolate as moor and deer forest, were covered with the small farms of prosperous peasants, like Belgium or Denmark, and the more rugged and uncultivable districts turned into national forests giving regular and healthy employment to large numbers of men, would not far better results be obtained, even from the purely economic point of view? *Now* we have a few gamekeepers and beaters, a few grooms, jockeys, stablemen, and horse-dealers, and other dependents of the sportsmen, and a few farmers, breeding horses and growing fodder for them, while the labourers are turned out of their native village for want of work and house-room, and drift into the already overcrowded and hideous towns which daily absorb more and more of the country, or are even forced to leave their native land altogether and seek a livelihood in lands beyond the sea, free, as yet, from the blessings of sport; *then* we should have some millions of free men earning an honest living in healthful surroundings, and producing a thousandfold more wealth for themselves than is distributed by the aristocrats and plutocrats, who, according to the protagonist of the Sporting League, so fully "carry out the principles of Communism."

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But it is surely needless to labour the point. The arguments of the economic defenders of sport are so grotesque that it is difficult to believe that a sensible man of business like Mr. Martin can really be in earnest in his advocacy of sport as a means of finding employment for the people.

But sports, and especially blood-sports, are not only defended on the ground that they give employment, circulate money, and confer other economic advantages on an ungrateful nation. As *The Field* contends, there are "assets which cannot be calculated in shillings and pence," and the author of our entertaining tract challenges those "who, with the bigotry characteristic of all faddists," attack the chasing of hares and foxes, or the worship of the sacred bird, to "look at the matter straight and see what inestimable benefit sport is to the nation. Should we ever lose our love for sport," he continues, "or be prevented indulging it, we shall assuredly lose our manliness, and very likely our wealth, and then what will become of the nation?"

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The word "sport" is a very loose and indefinite word. It covers all kind of healthful and innocent exercises as well as hunting, shooting, and racing. No one doubts that an open-air life is a natural and healthy life; that running and riding, and swimming and sailing, and other outdoor exercises and games, are good both for mind and body; but the "moral and intellectual damages" of all blood-sports are a very serious set-off against any physical advantages they may have.

A staunch defender of sport was once dwelling—in debate—on the glories of a day with the hounds, and describing how a ride across country in the fresh frosty air swept the cobwebs from the brain of the jaded city man and sent the blood coursing healthily through his veins. He was met by the rejoinder that all these advantages could be got by a gallop over the downs, or, at any rate, by a "drag" hunt. "Ah, but that's not all," he cried, "one must have the zest of running down and killing an animal, and thus satisfying a natural instinct." The reply that such an instinct was an echo of primeval savagery, and just one of those which hinder the upward progress of the race—one, also, more completely gratified by the butcher or the slaughter-man—only provoked the anger of the sportsman, and failed to shake his rooted belief in the blessings of sport.

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"Ah, Sport is the pride of the nation!
It made Britons the men that they be;
It does good to the whole population,
And knows neither class nor degree."

This doggerel, with which Mr. Sargent concludes his tract on sport, encourages the notion that blood-sports develop manliness, and that if Englishmen ceased to ride to hounds, to hunt the hare or otter, or shoot the pheasant and partridge, they would become effeminate. This superstition ought surely to have received its death-blow by the events of the Russo-Japanese war. When we hear of the rice-eating, gentle Japanese, who prefer taming wild creatures by kindness to shooting or mangling them, performing prodigies of valour apparently quite beyond the capacity of the fiercer nations of the West, it is surely time to revise our conceptions of what true courage is, and how it is nurtured.

And any manliness which might be nurtured by sport is steadily being reduced to a minimum. The author of our ingenuous tract descants, indeed, on the hardships endured by fox-hunters, grouse-shooters, and deer-stalkers, but says nothing of the noble sportsmen who merely wait till the pheasants are driven past them, to slaughter them at their ease as fast as loaded guns can be handed them, or of those who find a manly pastime in shooting pigeons let loose from cages. Shall we form a high opinion of the manly virtues of the well-to-do cowards who chase tame stags, or of the low-class ruffians who let frightened and dazed rabbits out of bags for a hopeless run for life before savage dogs? The insensibility which delights in seeing a fox torn to pieces by hounds, or which feels no pain when that excessively sensitive and timorous creature, the hare, is seen dropping from exhaustion with a pack of harriers in full cry on its track, is not an element of true manliness, but a survival from a pre-human state. In the savage state the mighty hunter was a hero because he bravely risked his life for the defence of wife and child against strong and fierce beasts that might else have devoured them, or endured toil and hardship, and encountered danger in the search for food and clothing. But in England to-day hunting is an anachronism, which survives only because land-monopoly, and an unjust distribution of the national inheritance, have led our "splendid barbarians," in the absence of the need for work, through the pressure of social distinctions, and the want of higher mental development, to seek release from boredom and fill up an aimless life by the indulgence and artificial stimulation of subhuman

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instincts.

Even those sports which, like cricket and football, take the form of health-giving games in the open air, and may really help to develop manliness, are to a large extent spoiled by the rise of professionalism and gambling. The great crowds which assemble to see other men engage in the hazardous game of football, and to exercise themselves merely in betting on the players, are being trained neither in manliness nor morals. We should indeed do all in our power to cultivate manliness, but it must be the quality which truly answers to the name; a fortitude capable of enduring hardships without whining, and a deliberate human courage which realises the danger, and consciously and resolutely faces it, not the mere brute fearlessness of animal excitement, insensibility, and stupidity.

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It behoves all, therefore, who have the interest of humanity at heart, and are striving to help it on its upward way, to set themselves resolutely against blood-sports in any form, as a relic of savagery and an enemy to true manliness, and to endeavour to dissociate manly and health-giving sports from gambling, and to abolish the professional. To do all this effectively we must work for the abolition of the parasitic classes; we must strive to give all a share in the national inheritance, and such an education, mental, moral, and physical, as may fit them for the work of life, and for a wise and healthy use of the increased leisure in which all should share.

THE ECONOMICS OF HUNTING

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By W. H. S. MONCK

It is often maintained that hunting, whatever objections may be raised to it on grounds of humanity, is beneficial to the public. The reasoning by which it is sought to establish this thesis reminds one of that by which Dr. Mandeville endeavoured to prove that private vices were public benefits; but it is proposed in this article to examine the subject more fully. Cruel sports, generally speaking, are not, I believe, public benefits, even from the pecuniary point of view; but as the grounds for this assertion are not the same in all instances, they cannot all be dealt with in a single article. Nor do I propose in the present instance to deal with all sports that come under the head of hunting. I shall confine myself to hunting animals with hounds, the men and women who participate in the sport being usually mounted.

Labour generally may be referred economically to the two heads of productive and unproductive. It is productive if it produces more than the cost of the labourer's maintenance (taking his past maintenance preparatory to his work into consideration), and unproductive if it produces less. And in general there is an objection to employing labour in a less productive manner than it might otherwise be employed. A great author or a great statesman might be able to earn more than his bread by breaking stones on a road, but everyone would regard forcibly employing him in this manner as a waste of labour. Horse-labour and even dog-labour may be similarly regarded; or, to put it otherwise, the labour of every horse and every dog represents a certain amount of human labour which must be regarded as usefully employed or as wasted, according to the work which the horse or dog does. If I set a horse to draw a big stone to the top of a hill and then down again, everyone would regard this amount of horse-labour as wasted; but it would be different if the same horse were employed in drawing stones to the site of a building where they were required. And in estimating the productiveness or unproductiveness of labour in any given case, we must have regard to the value of what it produces to society in general, and not merely to the amount which the labourer receives for producing it. One might earn £100 by walking a mile in the shortest period on record without producing anything of the slightest utility to mankind.

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Human labour, however, in a country like this, is capable of producing more than is required to feed and clothe the population and to supply them with fire and shelter. There remains a surplus which may be devoted to mental improvement or to any innocent recreation. Recreation must be regarded as a good thing, and labour employed in producing recreation cannot be regarded as absolutely unproductive. It may, however, be unproductive in the wider sense in which I have used the term—viz., the value of the product does not suffice to pay for the maintenance of the labourers. I mean, of course, the value of the labour *to society*. Those who employ it, I presume, consider it worth what they expend on it—*to themselves*. But they might be of a different opinion if they had less money to expend.

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Turning then to our recreations, I think I may lay down in the first instance that the best recreations are those in which the largest number of persons can participate. And it is more especially desirable that the working-classes should participate in them, for the man who spends most of his available time at hard labour stands in much greater need of recreation than the man or woman who has little or nothing to do—whose ordinary life, perhaps, includes more recreation (or, at least, idleness) than labour. But working men cannot afford to keep or to hire horses, and seldom possess any skill in horsemanship; and if one of them did happen to obtain a mount and was able to ride successfully, his presence at a hunt would be resented as an intrusion. Hunts are recreations for the wealthy classes only, and this mainly results from their expensiveness. The poor could not join in a hunt without paying more than they could afford to pay. But money always represents labour, and an expensive recreation means a recreation on which a large amount of labour has been expended without any useful result except this recreation.

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In these last remarks I have anticipated the next condition of a good recreation—viz., that the

expenditure of labour on it should be small. The more labour we can spare from recreation for works of more abiding utility, the better. But hunting is very expensive, and the promoters are not philanthropic enough to expend the additional sum which might enable a greater number of persons to participate in it. The hounds consume a large amount of food which could be used to better purpose if they were out of the way. A number of persons are employed in looking after the hounds whose labour has no productive result except in contributing remotely to the pleasures of the chase. Kennels have to be erected for keeping them, and horses and machines are required for moving them. Great numbers of horses used in hunting do no other useful work whatever, and these are often high-class and high-priced horses. Then there are huntsmen, whippers-in, etc., to say nothing of the food supplied to the horses, and of the persons employed to look after the foxes or other animals intended for the chase. Fox-coverts often occupy land that would otherwise be valuable, and the preservation of deer and hares prevents land from being put to the best agricultural uses. That hunting always reduces, and very materially reduces, the proceeds of labour available for the use of the public cannot, I think, be seriously disputed; and in many cases labour is diverted from these productive uses to the production of recreation for others, in which the labourer himself does not participate. A similar remark is often applicable to grooms.

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Another condition of a good recreation is that it should do no harm to others. But can this be said of hunting? As regards fox-hunting in particular, the fox is a mischievous animal, and would have been exterminated like the wolf long ago if he had not been preserved for the pleasure of hunting him. He kills young lambs, fowl, and anything of the kind that comes in his way; and woe to the farmer who revenges himself by killing the depredator! Even the hare and the deer are far from innocuous. But the hunt does more mischief than the animals that are hunted. The hunters break down the farmer's fences and frighten his cattle and sheep, often causing the loss of his calves or lambs, and injure his crops, while he has no redress because the landlord has reserved the right of hunting over the land.

THE RECREATION OF THE FEW.

We are told that hunting necessitates a large expenditure of money in the district. Every expensive amusement must do that. But if the most expensive amusement was the most valuable to society, it would follow that the way to benefit society was to increase the amount of unproductive labour. But even with productive labour our great object is to obtain the desired product with as little labour—as little expense—as possible. The more cheaply we can produce the necessaries and conveniences of life, the better it will be for the people. This will hardly be disputed. Why, then, should we apply a contrary rule to recreations, and lay down that the more expensive they are, the more beneficial they will prove to society? Granted that a hunt produces a large expenditure of money in the district, that some deserving shopkeepers and tradesmen make a profit thereby, and some honest labourers are employed at better wages than they would receive if the money in question were not expended—what then? What would become of the money thus expended if there were no hunt? It is almost certain that it would be expended in a manner more advantageous to the community. Even if the owner of the money wished to invest it rather than to spend it, he would probably do so by employing it in the working of a railway, or a mine, or some other work of public utility. If he simply lodged it in a bank it would enable the bank to lend more money to its customers to be employed by them for useful purposes; and if he kept it in his house in bank-notes the results would be pretty much the same as if he had lodged it in the bank. It might not, of course, be expended in the district, but we should look to the interests of the kingdom rather than those of the district. But save in the few cases in which persons come from a distance to enjoy the pleasures of hunting in a particular district, I believe the money would usually be expended in the same district, and with greater advantage to the inhabitants, if there were no hunt. The comparison should not be made between the district with this expenditure and the same district without it, but between the district with this expenditure and the same district with the same sum expended in a different manner. Would the same sum, if otherwise expended, be likely to prove less beneficial to the district? I think not.

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Hunting is, therefore, objectionable as a recreation on many distinct grounds. It affords recreation to only a small number of persons, these being the very persons who are least in need of recreation. It involves the expenditure of a large amount of labour (direct or indirect) as compared with the amount of recreation produced; and, passing over the sufferings of the hunted animal altogether, it involves no small amount of injury and accidents both to men and animals. But, in the wider view of the modern economist, it is also objectionable as cultivating a callousness of feeling and disregard of suffering which is in the last degree undesirable—and especially as cultivating this feeling among the class from which our legislators are largely drawn. They become inured to regard with indifference not only the sufferings of the hunted animal, but those of other animals and even people which they witness. If there were less hunting and shooting among the class from which the majority of the legislature is drawn, the humanitarian cause would receive a fairer hearing in Parliament, as would also be the case if flogging were abolished at the public schools, where the members of this class are for the most part educated. But what are we to think of education at a school like Eton, where flogging is supplemented by a pack of beagles? I would rather "teach the young idea how to shoot" than how to hunt, or how to flog. How often do we hear the argument—stated in somewhat more circuitous terms—"I hunt, and therefore hunting must be right. I was flogged, and therefore flogging must be right!"

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We have only to break down the barriers between the different classes somewhat farther, in

order to put an end to all such class-amusements as hunting undoubtedly is. In cricket, for example, we see gentlemen and professionals playing side by side and vying with each other as to who will do the best service for his county, while thousands of spectators of all ranks assemble to watch the play. But in games conducted on horseback the public can rarely participate. When, like polo, they are conducted in a confined space, the public can look on, but they cannot keep the hunt in view for any considerable time.

In dealing with sports and their cost, there is a principle which we must never lose sight of: Sports do not produce money or wealth. Their function is merely to distribute money or wealth when otherwise produced. Is the mode of distribution which we are considering a good one? It is certain that those who decided on expending their money in this manner were not actuated solely or chiefly by considerations of public utility; and considering how difficult it often is to determine what mode of expending a given sum will on the whole prove most beneficial to the public, the chance of our hitting on an almost perfect distribution, when we are looking at the whole subject from a totally different standpoint, seems rather remote. This undesigned coincidence may have taken place, but it is one which, in the circumstances, requires to be strictly proved. I assume that the majority of sportsmen are not fools or bad people. How would such men and women as they are have spent this money if the hunting-field had been closed against them? And would this new mode of spending it be better or worse for the public than the present one?

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FACTS ABOUT THE GAME LAWS

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By J. CONNELL

“The Game Laws are the tribute paid by the over-worked and over-taxed people of England to the Lords of the Bread—to the predatory classes who have appropriated the land and depopulated the hills and valleys, to increase their own selfish pleasures. The destruction of the Game Laws is as inevitable in the long-run as was the destruction of Slavery, the repeal of the Corn Laws, the overthrow of an alien Church in the sister isle; but the fight will be a stiff one between the freemen of this country and our savage or only semi-civilised aristocracy and plutocracy.”—ROBERT BUCHANAN.

By the common law of England and Scotland, following that of Rome, wild animals in a state of nature are common to all mankind. A legal writer says: “By the very nature of the case wild animals cannot be made the subject of that absolute kind of ownership which is generally signified by the term *property*. The substantial basis of the law of property is physical possession, the actual power of dealing with things as we see fit, and we can have no such power over animals in a state of nature.”

It is, for instance, impossible to confine pheasants, partridges, grouse, etc., to a particular estate, and, taking fences as they are, the same may be said of the great majority of hares and deer in this country. Moreover, the individuals of each species are so much alike that it is impossible for anyone to identify them as his property. All legal writers without exception acknowledge that living wild creatures are not property. Nevertheless, the Game Laws were placed on the Statute Book to establish a proprietary right in those animals, and, as Mr. Barclay, Sheriff of Perthshire, once told a House of Commons Committee, they “put game, which was not property, in a higher scale than property.” They did this by means of a system of licences for killing and selling game, and by making trespass, which, in itself, is only a civil offence, a criminal offence of great magnitude.

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At an early stage it was discovered that a free right of hunting was incompatible with the preservation of game in sufficient numbers to afford enough sport to the monarch and the nobles, and accordingly a series of laws known as the Forest Laws were enacted, by means of which certain districts were reserved for purposes of sport to the sovereign. The increase of population soon rendered protection necessary for areas outside the Royal Forests if the supply of game was to be kept up, and the result was a series of enactments known as the Game Laws. It will thus be seen that the right of taking wild animals, which originally belonged to the whole people, was filched from them by a selfish and privileged class, who, we need hardly add, stole the common lands, by means of “Enclosure Acts,” in much the same manner. It is strange but true that, except in Ireland, and in the north of Scotland, the people have come to acquiesce more readily in the robbery of the land than in the robbery of the game.

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The Act which is considered the first or oldest of the Game Laws became law in the thirteenth year of Richard II., and it is interesting to observe the reasons for placing it on the Statute Book which the legislators of the time advanced. Said they:

“It is the practice of divers artificers, labourers, servants, and grooms to keep greyhounds and other dogs, and on the holidays when good Christian people be at church, hearing Divine service, they go hunting in parks, warrens, etc., of lords and others, to the very great destruction of the game.”

We know hundreds of districts, from Kent to Caithness, of which the same might be written to-day, thus showing that the Game Laws have utterly failed to obtain a moral sway over the people.

The term “game” includes hares, pheasants, partridges, grouse, black-game, ptarmigan, and bustards. In addition to these there are a number of animals to which one or other of the game statutes extends protection. These are rabbits, deer, roe, woodcock, snipe, quail, landrails, and wild duck. Although there is no property in wild animals, it has been settled by the Courts that

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the right to pursue or take game is a private privilege. In England this privilege belongs to the occupier of the soil, in the absence of any agreement to the contrary, and in Scotland to the owner. In the former country agreements reserving the game to the owner are almost universal. The occupier or the owner of the soil has the right to claim any game killed on his land; but such is the curious state of the law that the poacher who takes away what he kills is not guilty of theft.

The Game Laws are held in abhorrence by the majority of people, chiefly for two reasons: first, on account of their injurious economic effects, and, second, because of the harsh punishments which they inflict for trivial offences. By their action large tracts of land have been rendered almost totally unproductive, cultivation has been abandoned and immense numbers of labourers thrown out of employment; the crops of farmers near preserves, although often on a different estate, have been injured or even destroyed; ill-feeling has been engendered between the authors and the victims of game preserving, and not infrequently the landless, workless labourer has been driven to break the law in order to procure food, thus landing himself in violence, or even murder. In addition to all this, the irrepressible sporting appetite of the people, sustained by a consciousness of having moral right on its side, leads to a reckless love of breaking laws which are unjust, unfair, and injurious. No believer in democratic government, no lover of order, can uphold statutes which demoralise those who live under them.^[9]

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ADMINISTRATION OF THE GAME LAWS.

But bad as are the Game Laws in essence, the manner in which they are administered makes them far worse and more hateful. It is notorious that a large number of Justices of the Peace are game preservers. The people who break the Game Laws almost all belong to one class, the people who sit in judgment on them almost all belong to another and hostile class. The effect of this arrangement is made very clear by the following questions and answers:—

When Mr. J. S. Nowlson was asked by a Select Committee of the House of Commons, "Do game preservers ever act as magistrates in cases of offences against the Game Laws?" he replied, "Yes, but not in their own cases. For instance, if A has got a case B will take it, and if B has got a case A will take it." Again, "In case a man was brought up for an offence against the Game Laws, and there was a certain amount of evidence given, do you think he would stand a greater chance of conviction than if it were an offence against some other law?" Reply: "We do consider so."

Everybody acquainted with agricultural labourers is aware that a strong feeling prevails among them that justice is not to be expected in cases of offence against the Game Laws. A House of Commons Committee reported that "very few of the Game Law convictions are regular in point of form, and they would have to be set aside had they gone before the Judges." It was a common occurrence for justices to sentence poachers to longer terms of imprisonment than the law allowed. For this and other reasons the Home Office has liberated a vastly greater proportion of offenders against the Game Laws than of any other class of offenders. An impartial observer might be excused for thinking that the penalties for poaching are high enough to satisfy the most exacting. For instance, the penalty for trespass in pursuit of game in the daytime is a fine of two pounds with imprisonment in default, and if the offence be committed by a party of five or more the penalty is five pounds each with imprisonment in default. In the case of night poaching, the penalty for a first offence is three months' imprisonment with hard labour, and at the expiration of that period the offender is compelled to find sureties for his good behaviour for a year, or undergo a further imprisonment for six months with hard labour. For a second offence the penalty is six months' imprisonment with hard labour, and at the end of that time the offender must find sureties for his good behaviour for two years or undergo a further twelve months' imprisonment with hard labour. For a third offence the penalty is seven years' penal servitude. But this is not all. If a party of three or more enter land at night for the purpose of taking game or rabbits, and if any of the party be armed with gun, crossbow, firearms, bludgeons, *or any offensive weapon*, each and everyone of such persons shall be liable to penal servitude for fourteen years.

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Yet there are persons who think that those laws are not severe enough. A witness, for instance, before that Select Committee cheerfully proposed that poaching be made felony all round. It is needless to say that the harshness, or rather barbarity, of the punishment in store for them renders poachers but little inclined to yield themselves up when they find themselves confronted by gamekeepers. This accounts for much of the bloodshed of which we read in connection with poaching. It also accounts for much of the sympathy which is felt for poachers by all classes of the population except game preservers and their agents.

THE GAMEKEEPER.

Among the many unsatisfactory products of the Game Laws not the least objectionable is the gamekeeper. Mr. Joseph Arch once said: "Keepers are generally taken from the louting men one sees idling about." The knowledge that their masters sit on the Bench of Justice, and that their evidence will be believed in preference to that of trespassers, frequently emboldens them to acts of the worst brutality. Some years ago, in charging a Grand Jury at the Nottingham Assizes on certain indictments for malicious wounding and murder, arising out of poaching affrays, Mr. Justice Vaughan Williams commented on the way in which these private police of individuals go out armed to the teeth, accompanied by savage dogs, *and without any code of instructions to regulate their proceedings*. Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, referring to arrests, etc., said: "I believe myself that in three cases out of four, the gamekeepers act illegally." Whatever the men may

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have been originally, it is certain that their method of living demoralises the great majority of keepers. They are often selected at first because of their brutality. A humane man would be useless in such a post. Head-keepers, who are generally well paid, as a rule act honestly by their employers, but it is a fact known to the writer that the more poorly paid ones not only take game for their own use, but frequently sell it in order to provide themselves with drink. In almost every district in which game is preserved it is well known to the working people that the keepers will purchase, on behalf of their masters, eggs which they know to have been stolen.

In August, 1900, a show of gamekeepers' dogs was held at the Royal Aquarium, London. We quote from a London paper:

"I would rather have one of these dogs with me in a night row than three men," said Mr. W. Burton to a representative yesterday. He was gazing fondly at five ferocious-looking bull mastiffs in the Westminster Aquarium, where a show of gamekeepers' dogs is being held. "If they were unmuzzled," he added, "one alone could tear a strong man to pieces in five minutes. At Thorneywood Kennels, Nottingham, I have trained these dogs to help the gamekeeper in catching night poachers, and although they are kept muzzled a man has no chance with them. If he attempts to run away he is knocked down instantly and kept a prisoner until the keeper arrives. They are the same breed of dogs that were used for bull-baiting in the last century."

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With long imprisonment, or even penal servitude staring him in the face, and the prospect of immediate violence from man, or dog, or both, it is not to be wondered at that the poacher often turns out "a rough handful." All will remember Kingsley's lines:

"There's blood on your new foreign shrubs, squire,
There's blood on your pointer's feet;
There's blood on the game you sell, squire,
And there's blood on the game you eat."

It is probably not too much to say that hundreds of encounters between poachers and gamekeepers occur every winter in this country. Except in cases where life is lost, the London papers do not report them, and even then they do not always do so. Local papers, published in districts where game is preserved, are the sheets to search for such records.

It may be mentioned here that in the neighbourhood of London gamekeepers are much less aggressive and brutal than in remote districts. Near London they seldom attempt to arrest poachers. Acting under orders, presumably, they content themselves with following poachers and identifying them if possible, for the purpose of summoning them afterwards. Moreover, the punishment meted out to poachers in the neighbourhood of the Metropolis is much lighter, as a rule, than in the provinces. This is believed on all hands to be due to the criticism and denunciation of harsh sentences by *Reynolds's Newspaper* and other Radical organs. Such is the effect of this criticism that some years ago, after the occurrence of some bloody affrays, orders were given on some estates near Croydon, that in future poachers were to be simply ordered off the land, and were not even to be summoned unless they resorted to violence. These orders were afterwards withdrawn, but the fact that they were given shows that game-preservers are fearful of losing their privileges if public attention is directed to them.

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In reading reports of poaching affrays it is well to remember that it is almost invariably the gamekeeper's side of the case that is presented to the public. If the poacher escapes, he of course is never heard from. Even if he be caught he is seldom believed, and his description of the encounter seldom reported. There are exceptions to every rule, but it is the sincere belief of the present writer that, when they find themselves confronted by keepers, the vast majority of poachers would go away quietly if allowed. The abolition of the power of arrest would, therefore, be a long step in the direction of peace. The poacher, whether he poach for food or for sport, never believes that he is guilty of a moral crime. For this reason, the gamekeeper will never command the respect which is almost invariably accorded the policeman, even by the most hardened criminals. Policemen, as a rule, are humane in their treatment of prisoners, and chiefly because they do not suffer from any sense of personal wrong. With gamekeepers the case is widely different. From the depredations of the poacher they suffer, or think they may suffer, in repute or convenience, or even in pocket. In the circumstances it is little wonder that they frequently act brutally. As there are exceptions to all rules, there are, of course, exceptional magistrates who occasionally let light in on the dark ways of game-preserving. The following paragraph, culled from the *Airdrie Advertiser* of March 5, 1898, reveals a case in point:

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"CHARGE AGAINST GAMEKEEPERS.—On Thursday, before Sheriff Mair, at Airdrie, Robert Connor M'Guire, steelworker, 14, Watt Street, Mossend, pleaded guilty to a charge of daylight poaching. He was fined 31s., including expenses. Accused complained to the Sheriff that he had been assaulted by the two gamekeepers, and that he still bore marks of their violence upon his arms, which he was desirous of showing. The gamekeepers were called in and appeared to treat the accusation lightly, one of them remarking that 'it was immaterial to him.' The Sheriff sent for the Inspector of Police, whom he directed to take the gamekeepers into custody and M'Guire to make the charge of assault against them."

We may here mention that all appointments of gamekeepers are invalid unless registered with the Clerk of the Peace. Very many of them are not so registered, and, therefore, their arrests, and attempted arrests, of poachers are illegal. The truth is that on many preserves nearly all the young labourers are keepers' assistants. Many of them are desirous of getting appointed as keepers so as to escape from hard work, and these are often anxious to distinguish themselves by brutal conduct towards not only poachers, but the most harmless trespassers.

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And what sort of man is he against whom all this machinery of law and authority and brutality is directed? We refer to the poacher. There is probably no better-abused individual on earth; but abuse is not argument, and still less is it evidence. If the reader will turn to the report of the Select Committee of 1846, he will see that after carefully sifting the evidence the conclusions arrived at were: (1) That the poacher was generally far superior to the average agricultural labourer in intelligence and activity; (2) that the great majority of poachers would break no law other than the Game Laws; (3) that the poacher was not regarded as a criminal, either by himself or the people amongst whom he lived; and (4) that this opinion was shared even by the game-preserver, who not infrequently offered him employment as gamekeeper. The reader may not be aware that many poachers become keepers. The well-known writer, "Stonehenge," remarks on this:

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"Reformed poachers, if really reformed, make the best keepers, but it is only when worn out as poachers that they think of turning round and becoming keepers."

It is worthy of remark that every writer on sport of any ability (as far as we are aware) feels himself constrained to say a good word of the poacher. We have just now at our elbow a well-known and standard work, entitled "The Moor and the Loch," by John Colquhoun. Writing of poachers in bulk (so to speak) the author denounces them in unmeasured terms, but when he comes to speak of individual poachers whom he had known, his tone is altogether different. We quote from vol. ii., p. 146:

"When I first knew Gregor More, of Callander, his poaching days were over, for he had a mortal disease from having lain out in the fields one cold night. He still managed to saunter down the river and give those beautiful sweeps with his line and salmon fly which were the admiration of the whole clachan.... I looked at him with some curiosity; a nobler specimen of manhood I never beheld. Upwards of six feet high, of the finest herculean proportions, and straight as an arrow, he seemed equally formed for activity and strength. There was nothing mean or sneaking about his manner. His face was open and manly, and, despite the sad discipline to which he had exposed both mind and body, he had not effaced the natural and sure marks of force and truth from his countenance. Although wan and emaciated, there was a coolness, a will to dare in his eye, backed by his tremendous shoulders and still powerful frame, so that I could not look at him without thinking of the words, 'Majestic though in ruins.'

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"Very unlike Gregor More was —. Strange to say, he had once been a placed minister of the Kirk (answering to a beneficed clergyman), and although he often returned late on the Saturday night, after being all the week poaching the deer, his sermons were both clever and popular. I met him once when traversing a wild range of hills, and was impressed both with his general information and the courtesy of his address."

SOME RESULTS OF GAME-PRESERVING.

Among the evils incidental to game-preserving, not the least is the destruction of rare and beautiful birds and beasts. I remember how there was on exhibition in the window of a Liverpool taxidermist a splendid specimen of the golden eagle, measuring 7 feet 2 inches from tip to tip of the wings, and 3 feet 2 inches from beak to tail. It had built its eyrie in a small cave in the face of a high cliff at Benula Forest, Glencannich, Beauly, N.B. It was watched by a keeper, who descended the face of the cliff after dark, killed the mother bird, and carried away the only eaglet from the nest.

In most preserves steel traps are set for the purpose of catching birds or beasts of prey. When they are caught they are often allowed to linger in agony for hours, or even days before being despatched. The writer has seen dozens of hares which had each lost a leg in these traps. When a fox is caught in this manner it will often gnaw the leg off.

The horrors of the battue have been described and denounced so often that little need be said about it here. It is simple butchery, often very clumsily performed. For days after a battue hares may be seen with broken backs, dragging their hind-quarters after them among the bushes, and pheasants may be seen running about with broken wings trailing the ground. Pigeon-shooting from traps is justly condemned, but the evils attending it are small compared with those inseparable from the battue. Mr. Frederick Gale, in "Modern English Sports," says: "At the Gun Club Grounds and similar places, which are frequented by noblemen and gentlemen, the cruelty is comparatively *nil* to that occasioned by the battue." It is within our knowledge that the battue is condemned even by gamekeepers. They cannot be expected to speak their minds freely before their employers, but if questioned privately many will be found to condemn it as affording no test of marksmanship, no opportunity for exercise or excitement, and as being wasteful of the game. The animals that escape wounded often become emaciated, or even die of hunger before being found.

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The game preservers are never tired of arguing that the preservation of game increases the food-supply of the people. To this there are two answers, either of which is crushing. In the first place, with the exception of rabbits, game is scarcely ever touched by the masses, for the very good reason that its price is far beyond their ability to pay. In the second place, that which they do buy occasionally, rabbit, in order to come within their reach has to be sold at a price far below its cost of production. This is equivalent to saying that the same amount of time, energy, capital, etc., employed in the production of any other sort of food, would increase the food-supply to a much greater extent.

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It seems impossible to obtain an accurate estimate of the loss and damage occasioned by game-preserving. We know, however, that the Scottish deer forests alone cover an area of over two million acres, and the best authorities assure us that all land which will rear deer will rear sheep. The latter are vastly more profitable to the community, although not always so to the landowner. But all must be sacrificed to game-preserving. For this purpose are footpaths closed, and labourers compelled to walk long distances to their work. For this are children debarred from playing or picking flowers in the woods or the glens. For this is the factory-worker or the slum-dweller forbidden to breathe the pure air of the hills. For this are vast areas kept barren, whilst millions hunger for the produce which they might have yielded, and willing hands, only too anxious to till them, are driven to seek employment in the already overcrowded docks.

And we think ourselves a practical people!

FOOTNOTES:

- [9] See the "Report of the Land Enquiry Committee," vol. i. (1913), Ch. "Game." Also, for some descriptions of Highland "Clearances," the Rev. Donald Sage's book, "Memorabilia Domestica," and "Gloomy Memories," by Donald McLeod.

THE DESTRUCTION OF WILD LIFE

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By E. B. LLOYD

There is one most regrettable result of killing for sport (and more especially of game-bird shooting) which, though important in itself, is yet frequently overlooked in discussing the question. This is the destruction of wild life involved, other than those forms directly slaughtered for pleasure. Sir Harry Johnston has written forcibly of the necessity of insisting on the æsthetic value of wild animals in our landscape, and the desirability of preserving the species that remain, because they are beautiful and intellectually stimulating;^[10] and the ordinary Nature lover, not to mention the naturalist, cannot but regard with detestation the ceaseless war of extermination waged by the devotees of "shooting" on so many of our finest and most interesting birds and mammals. Indeed, numbers of so-called bird-lovers not actively opposed to shooting might change their views if they would but reflect seriously on the damage to our native fauna, and the consequent dulling of the charm of our country-side, which game-preserving inevitably brings in its train. For—putting on one side the moral issue—our British "game birds" cannot compare, for interest and beauty, with many of the species which are sacrificed on their behalf, or rather on behalf of the thoughtless folk who slaughter them for amusement. Moreover, it must be remembered that we do not even possess any great tract of natural country as a National Park or reserve, such as Yellowstone Park in the United States of America, or its Canadian equivalent, or the grand Swedish Wild Park in Lapland.

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The gamekeeper, generally speaking, is the most ruthless of beasts of prey. If he is a good gamekeeper his great aim is to see that there is always a plentiful supply of partridges in his master's fields, pheasants in his master's coverts, or grouse on his master's moors, as the case may be. With this object in view he endeavours to extirpate all wild life which either is, or is supposed by him to be, in any way inimical to the birds in his charge; and, unfortunately, owing to the abysmal ignorance of the average keeper in all that relates to Nature's intricate interplay of what we choose to call useful, harmless, and harmful forms, the list of *supposed* enemies is a long one.^[11] Moreover, the special position occupied by the gamekeeper gives him the power (a power all too frequently exercised) of shooting, either for amusement or profit, any strange or rare bird that strikes his fancy, besides making it very difficult to restrain his murderous propensities even in the case of legally protected species. On the whole it may safely be said that gamekeepers as a class are just as unappreciative of the true beauty and interest of animal life as are their masters the sportsmen. To quote one who, among all living writers, is probably at once the most sympathetic and penetrating observer and the most delightful interpreter of wild bird life: "The gentleman, like the gamekeeper, cannot escape the reflex action of the gun in his hand. He, too, has grown incapable of pleasure in any rare or noble or beautiful form of life until he has it in his hand—until he has exercised his awful power and blotted out its existence."^[12]

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SOME "VERMIN."

To come now to the *species* which are thus warred upon on the plea of facilitating "sport." Taking the mammals first—and the list of our British mammals is at best a miserably scanty one—we find that, leaving out of consideration such exceedingly scarce ones as the wild cat, polecat, and pine-marten, and such admitted marauders as the stoat and rat, there still remain among those classed by gamekeepers as "vermin," the badger, the weasel, and the hedgehog: the first perhaps the most interesting of all our wild quadrupeds, the two latter certainly not the least interesting and charming. Yet although the best authorities are agreed that the harm done by the badger to "game" is almost infinitesimal, the keeper is usually his sworn foe.^[13] Badgers also suffer at the hands of the fox-hunting fraternity, being destroyed because they are said to be

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harmful to young foxes, and because they sometimes open up fox-earths which have been “stopped” in readiness for the hunt.^[14] This, it may be noted, affords another example of the falseness of the argument so often advanced that fox-hunting is “fair” because the fox has every chance left him to escape. Fortunately the badger is a very shy, nocturnal animal, exceedingly wary and clever, and in some few districts the landlords are enlightened enough to see to it that he is left in peace.

The fiery little weasel—ruthlessly persecuted—is one of the farmers’ most trusty allies, for its food consists chiefly of voles, mice, and rats. As for the hedgehog, deadly enemy of slugs and snails and insects though it be, the fact that it will suck eggs if it gets the chance suffices to make its corpse a welcome addition to the gamekeeper’s museum—that collection of the rotting bodies of birds and small mammals nailed or hung on to a tree or fence, with which all who have rambled much in the woods and fields of our country-side must be familiar. What a motley company may often be seen thus strung up on one of these gibbets in some upland hedgerow or woodland glade: a selection of stoats, weasels, moles, hedgehogs, crows, jackdaws, magpies, jays, owls, sparrow-hawks, kestrels, merlins, and so forth, according to the locality. The writer has actually seen—and it is not an isolated instance—that delightful bird, the green woodpecker, occupying a place among these trophies of the keeper’s prowess; and with regard to another victim, the harmless nightjar (Wordsworth’s “buzzing dor-hawk, twirling his watchman’s rattle about”), whose strange, churning note is so pleasant a feature of an evening ramble in woody or heathy districts, one keeper told Mr. Hudson: “I don’t believe a word about their swallowing pheasants’ eggs, though many keepers think they do. I shoot them, it’s true, but only for pleasure.”^[15] The kestrel again—the expressively named “windhover,” which hangs aloft poised so gracefully against the wind—

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“As if let down from heaven there
By a viewless silken thread”—

a little hawk which preys almost exclusively on voles, mice, insects, etc., is a valuable friend to the farmer, and certainly no enemy to the gamekeeper. Yet large numbers are destroyed by the latter; for as Charles St. John, himself an ardent sportsman, wrote in his well-known “Wild Sports of the Highlands”:^[16] “It is impossible to persuade a keeper that any bird called a hawk can be harmless; much less ... that a hawk can be useful.” And much the same still applies, it is shameful to relate, to other extremely useful species, such as the barn-owl—which farmers ought to encourage—and the tawny-owl, etc. Worse than this: incredible as it may sound, there are several well-authenticated cases of *nightingales* having been destroyed by keepers because their singing kept the pheasants awake at night! And Mr. Hudson, among other instances, records a case where a whole heronry was blotted out, the birds being shot on their nests after breeding had begun, because their cries disturbed the pheasants; and yet another, where a whole tract of woodland estate was denuded of doves, woodpeckers, nuthatches, blackbirds, missel and song thrushes, chaffinches, and many other smaller birds, all of which were shot, any nests found being also destroyed. The keeper said he was not going to have the place swarming with birds that were no good for anything, and were always eating the pheasants’ food.^[17] Though these, of course, are extreme cases, they are notable as showing to what lengths this folly may be carried—what monstrous sacrifices are made to the insatiable Moloch of game-preserving.

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Besides such striking birds as the brilliant, eager jay, the elvish magpie, the crows, the fierce sparrow-hawk, and the bold little merlin, which are still, relatively speaking, common, and the various beautiful birds of prey—the kite, the harriers, the peregrine falcon, and many others now almost exterminated—the British craze for game-preserving has led to the bitter persecution of two especially fine species, both of which have been almost extirpated in Southern England, at any rate—the raven and the absolutely innocent buzzard. The former, round which centres so much of myth, legend, and story, is now seldom met with, save in a few secluded mountainous districts, though less than forty years ago the head-keeper of Exmoor Forest was able to record the destruction of fifty-two of these grand birds in a single year;^[18] while the Common Buzzard, which in virtue of its voice, appearance, large size, and grandeur of flight, is about the nearest approach to the eagle still left to us, is now, alas! exceedingly uncommon. Not long ago, while wandering near Dartmoor, I was fortunate enough to watch six buzzards floating high in the air together, circling round above one another in great spirals, and uttering from time to time their wild plaintive cry: an extremely rare sight in England to-day, and one the beauty and impressiveness of which I shall not soon forget. Any true nature-lover who has watched these splendid soaring birds on the wing will readily understand what an irreparable loss the gamekeeper’s ban on them is inflicting on our landscape, more especially in these days when, in spite of the trammels of modern civilisation, an ever-increasing number of people are learning to appreciate the joy of a more direct communion with wild nature, and, incidentally, are discovering the truth of the poet’s words:

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“... that such beauty varying in the light
Of living Nature, cannot be portrayed
By words, nor by the pencil’s silent skill;
But is the property of him alone
Who hath beheld it, noted it with care,
And in his mind recorded it with love.”

THE KILLING MANIA.

Next to the gamekeeper, who, after all, is but the instrument of the game-shooter, and the "collector" (whose crimes in respect of our rarer avifauna would fill a volume), the worst sinners are those gun-sportsmen whose amusement is the wanton destruction of wild life, without even the flimsy pretext that their victims are eatable. Nothing comes amiss to them—from seals,^[19] and rare birds like the osprey and the great northern diver, to seagulls, shore-birds, and waders, and even poor little pipits and thrushes. These are the folk of whom Sir Harry Johnston has truly observed that "they are often not nearly so interesting, physically and mentally, as the creatures they destroy." They are dingy-souled Philistines, to whom a dead bird in the hand is worth more than many living birds in the bush. Some even profess themselves bird-lovers.^[20] A West Country farmer's wife once observed to me: "My husband is a great lover of birds; he's got several cases full of stuffed ones that he shot himself." This is as though one should prefer an ancient Egyptian mummy to the chance of watching and studying a living breathing being of that race. Little wonder if, when thinking of this senseless and careless and callous destruction of so much feathered loveliness, we should feel inclined to echo Robert Burns's angry words:

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"Inhuman man, curse on thy barb'rous art,
And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye."

Moreover, the "deep-rooted instinct," about which we hear so much, can easily be diverted to a far finer, more beautiful, and more useful pleasure than the absurd, antiquated, and useless one of *killing* for sport. I can speak from my own personal experience in saying that the actual thrill and joy of tracking and watching wild creatures for study and observation is far superior to that which is derived from tracking and watching them for slaughter. In other words, hunting animals to see how they *live* is finer sport than hunting them to see how they *die*.

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It seems, therefore, that the real issue is between Natural History as opposed to *Unnatural* History. On the one hand, grouse, pheasants ("semi-domesticated exotics"), and partridges (very likely imported), reared at immense cost for slaughter: on the other, all these infinitely more varied and natural and gracious creatures—the true sylphs and elves of our woodlands—whose glad, free beauty so thrilled Meredith, and drew from him that impassioned cry:

"For joy in the beating of wings on high,
...
My soul shoots into the breast of a bird,
As it will for sheer love till the last long sigh."

And all this wild, winged life possesses a twofold beauty: for it is beautiful both in itself, and—as poetry all down the ages has borne witness—in its influence on the mind of man.

FOOTNOTES:

[10] "British Mammals," 1903.

[11] I can speak from a fairly extensive acquaintance with keepers in various districts; and (to quote impartial opinion) a pheasant-shooting friend lately observed to me, while discussing the absurd destruction of kestrels: "The English gamekeeper is a fool: there's nothing to be said for him." And Mr. J. G. Millais, another sportsman, in his great work on "British Mammals," remarks that "gamekeepers are often among the most unobservant of men" (vol. ii., 1905). Cf. also, e.g., Seebohm's "British Birds" (Falconidæ, *passim*).

[12] W. H. Hudson, "The Land's End," 1908.

[13] See, e.g., Sir A. Pease, "The Badger," 1896.

[14] Similarly, one of the reasons often given for otter-hunting is that otters eat trout and salmon, and so lessen the angler's chance of killing more of them.

[15] "Adventures among Birds," 1912.

[16] Ninth edition, 1907.

[17] "Adventures among Birds," 1912.

[18] W. H. Hudson, "Birds and Man," 1901.

[19] Here is one instance selected from many. "During a yachting cruise in the summer of 1902, the suite accompanying 'very distinguished persons' gleefully took advantage of their proximity to little frequented Scotch islands, to shoot and leave, to kill uselessly without excuse, quite a large number of the seals which still remain in Scottish waters" (Sir H. H. Johnston, *op. cit.*).

[20] Perhaps from similar causes to those which lead Sir Alfred Pease, in defending his hunting habits, to inform us, "I hunt, paradoxical as it seems, because I love the animals" (see "The Badger," 1896).

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Undoubtedly we are a complacent and unimaginative nation, which defects probably explain and excuse certain indictments brought against us by foreigners.

Complacency and practicality may have raised us commercially and politically, but they do not breed the finer graces, and they are apt to misrepresent us. No one, for example, would say that the English or British race was callous or cruel in comparison with other races. On the contrary, its reputation for kind-heartedness stands higher than that of its compeers and rivals. Yet this same race is engaged to-day in the practice and pursuit of the most brutal sport conceivable.

Of bull-baiting, of cock-fighting, of various barbarous pastimes of our fathers we know nothing now save by hearsay; but it is safe to say that whereas bull-baiting and cock-mains have long been prohibited by law, the most cruel sport remains unpenalised and undiscouraged; nay, even protected by the law. I can only attribute the continued existence of fox-hunting to that lack of imagination to which I have referred. [96]

It is necessary for one making a desperate protest of this kind against an inhuman sport to dissociate himself at the outset from sentimentalism and the sentimentalist. Death is inevitable. We must look facts in the face. The law of life is Death, and Nature has ordained that the strong should prey on the weak throughout her serried ranks of organic life. The sentimentalist will shriek in vain against the destruction of animal life, simply because he is shrieking against an ultimate law of Nature. Nature destroys ruthlessly, and so does man, who is part of Nature. But what civilisation may and must demand, what humanitarianism should and does demand, is that this inevitable accomplishment of death should happen with the least possible pain.

Death, in short, is necessary, but torture is not. And fox-hunting is framed to produce the maximum of torture to the quarry. A fox is "vermin," they say; then in Heaven's name let it be classed as vermin, and destroyed as such. But what happens is precisely the reverse of this. Foxes are carefully preserved in order that they may be hounded to a hapless, miserable death, the conception of which transcends any ordinary imagination. Gamekeepers and farmers, to whom foxes are a grave nuisance, are paid *not* to destroy them painlessly by gun or otherwise. Gamekeepers, indeed, receive so much for each fox found on their preserves.

The object, then, of the hunt is to keep foxes from being destroyed in the natural course of that warfare between item and item of human and feral life, and to preserve them for a more cruel fate. Let us see how cruel that is. The gamekeeper on land which is announced to be hunted on a certain day has carefully during the night earthed up a fox's hole so that the beast cannot get back to it in the morning. At a certain hour pack and company arrive, and the master learns from the gamekeeper that he is likely to "find" in such and such a spinney. Thither all proceed, gay ladies and fresh-coloured men, and presently hounds give tongue and are in cry. They have "found." [97]

Immediately the field is in commotion. Gay ladies and fresh-faced men thunder off irregularly. The fun has begun; they are going to enjoy themselves. But what is the fun? To each of those amiable people it no doubt is involved in the music of the hounds, in the company, in the cross-country ride, in the excitements and hazards and humours of the run. To the master and his huntsmen it involves in addition the responsibility for keeping hounds in hand—a matter of considerable skill.

But what does it involve to the fox? This sleek, furry creature that steals chickens and ducks, and young pheasants and partridges, who is a nuisance to farmer and gamekeeper alike, but to preserve whom is made worth their while—this poor "vermin," having no "earth" to hide in, is flying for his life before a pack of strong dogs, any one of which would be capable of answering for him. [98]

THE DEATH.

He has (it may be) three or four hours' run before him, with that terrible bell-tongued chorus behind him. One can conceive him towards the close, his strength failing, even his vulpine cunning, his eyes starting from his head and glassy with terror, his jaws dropping foam, his heart like a hammer that must break, straining—straining, helplessly, hopelessly towards some covert that he knows now is not. And upon that at last the more merciful rush, the feeble turn at bay of an exhausted creature, the mellay of hounds, and—Death. Is it possible to conceive that to a creature any greater torture could be applied?

Is it really necessary to deal with that fatuous argument—the argument of minds that are either wholly dishonest or ignobly unintelligent—that the fox is "vermin," and that he enjoys the run? Surely it has only to be stated to glare at one in all its farcical absurdity. I know of a household in which it is considered cruel to allow the cat to play with the mouse she has caught, and yet this household—men and women—is engaged in hunting other "vermin"—the fox—three days a week during the season.

Is it credible? But it is true. Women, who I have no reason to suppose are not kind daughters and affectionate mothers, will gleefully boast how they were in at the death—to see, that is, one poor furry creature torn into pieces by a swarm of hounds while in the throes of exhaustion, of terror, and of despair. Is it lack of imagination, or is it worse? [99]

And that time-worn defence of all sport is no defence here—I mean the plea that men are improved in health and certain lofty animal qualities by the pursuit of this savage sport. For, to speak plainly, the fox is wholly unnecessary. The essentials of hunting are the hounds, who enjoy themselves, the horses, who as a rule must be admitted to do likewise, unless over-ridden, and

the hunters, to whom the gratification of the hunt is the ride through brisk air, the cross-country fences, the air of adventure surrounding the run.

All these essentials are found equally in a drag hunt. Those who have had experience of drag hunts (from which an animal quarry is eliminated) will admit that there is as much pleasure in them as in the fox-hunt. Nay, they are more advantageous, and for two reasons. In a "drag" you are sure of a run; you are not dependent on the accident of a "find." And, secondly, you have the benefit of knowing when you may order your change to meet you, and thus avoid inflicting pain on your horse. The drag obviates all cruelty in a sport which is otherwise invigorating and virile. Therefore, in Heaven's name, let the masters of hounds, who are also men of feeling, cease to preserve the fox, and cultivate the drag.

The abolition of the Royal Buckhounds did much to throw into disfavour the abominable sport of hunting a tame stag, and it is known that aristocratic circles do not look with favour on the atrocious sport of coursing. Is it impossible to enlist the sense of the upper classes in this country in the abolition of fox-hunting?

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FOOTNOTES:

[21] This article originally appeared in the *Daily Mail* of February 8, 1905.

BIG-GAME HUNTING

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By ERNEST BELL

"If asked why I had gone elephant-hunting at the age of nineteen, I would say that it is simply because I am the lineal descendant of a prehistoric man."

F. C. SELOUS.

Apparently there is a considerable public who like reading books about the slaughter of what is called "big game," or we should hardly have such a continuous supply of them issued from the press. As, however, vanity is apparently no small incentive to the deeds of the big-game hunters, it is perhaps a fair deduction that the same feeling may have something to do with the publication of their records, and that such books are in fact not always speculations on the part of publishers, but are sometimes printed by the authors themselves.

Certainly the unbiassed reader might be excused for agreeing with the sentiment expressed in the preface of one of the exponents of the art, when he writes: "I shall guard myself against the desire to make the reader be present at the death of my 500 victims, which would be very monotonous to him, for after all, though circumstances may vary, the result of a hunt after wild animals is always the same."

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A study of several books of the sort certainly confirms the impression that the subject is a very monotonous one. The illustrations also share the same want of variety, for almost all represent dead animals, varied only by the arrangement of guns and naked savages about them. They apparently illustrate nothing at all but the one fact—which one would think was neither surprising nor creditable—that the perpetrators, with the aid of Express double-barrelled rifles, Winchester six-shot repeaters, revolvers, explosive bullets, smokeless powder, rockets, the electric projector, Bengal lights, etc., and a band of natives to load and work the machinery, succeed in destroying the lives of some more beautiful animals. As it is expressed by one author: "At the very spot where a minute before there rose, in all its savage beauty, this majestic conception of Nature, the largest and the most powerful of the animals of the earth, nothing more than a mass of grey flesh appears in the blood-spattered grass." The climax is reached when we see the "hero," as sometimes happens, sitting with proud mien on the top of some huge animal, not apparently realizing that the same juxtaposition which brings out the size of the animal is apt to suggest also the *smallness* of the man whose greatest pride and delight can be wantonly to destroy so grand a creature. We must beg to differ with this writer's enthusiastic exclamation that elephant-hunting is certainly "the greatest and noblest sport in the world." Rather we should be inclined to call it the meanest and most contemptible abuse of man's superior powers.

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EXPLOSIVE BULLETS.

Of the means employed to accomplish the hunters' ends let us say a few words. Explosive bullets we know have been universally condemned in human warfare on account of their barbarity, but against defenceless animals they are still held to be legitimate by so-called sportsmen. Thus, we read: "The impact causes the bullet to expand. Often it breaks into pieces or else takes a mushroom shape, the head in its tremendous velocity dragging and catching with its edges the flesh and viscera; and it often happens in the case of delicate animals that upon leaving the body it makes a hole as big as the crown of a hat." That a sportsman writing for other sportsmen should feel no shame in making such a statement shows only how we take our morality from our surroundings, and how demoralising in this case the surroundings must be.

After this, we cannot expect to find much chivalry displayed in this “the greatest and noblest” of sports, and we cannot be surprised to find the author telling us with pleasure how in pure wantonness he hid behind a tree within 10 yards of a female elephant and lodged a bullet in her heart. This, however, is outdone by an incident in another volume we remember, where we were told that the finest stag was shot by a certain Grand Duke, “while it was asleep, at 20 yards.” In fact, most big-game hunters seem—perhaps not unnaturally—to suffer from a similar want of chivalry. We find Mr. Seton-Karr, an authority on the subject, relating how one of his party imitated the young fawn’s cry of distress, when, as he says: “The immediate result was to entice within range numbers of Virginian deer or blacktail, most of them does, and eight fell victims to this somewhat unsportsmanlike device.” Whether such treachery is to be considered “unsportsmanlike” must depend on what meaning we attach to the word, but if it means “unlike a sportsman,” we fear the word is misused here.

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Of the impartiality of the big-game hunter in his slaughter we have many instances. Any creature that can be shot is fitting game for him, and he delights in shooting it. One well-known writer gives the following list of creatures killed by him during six weeks:

“Five elephants, 2 lions (male), 8 leopards, 2 wart hogs, 11 great spotted hyænas, 7 striped hyænas, 4 oryx beisa antelope, 10 awal antelope, 2 common gazelle, 2 bottlenose antelope, 2 gerenuk antelope, 1 lesser koodoo, 18 dig-dig antelope, 4 bustard, 2 small bustard, 2 sand grouse, 3 genet, 14 guinea fowl, 22 partridge, 4 hares, 30 various.”

Thus 155 animals—mostly wholly unoffending creatures—were slaughtered by one man in six weeks. We are assured that on a second expedition much the same bag was made, but that he then got no elephants (which are rapidly being exterminated in that country). To further whet the appetite, the would-be young slaughterer is favoured with a view of a room in the mighty hunter’s house, which is decorated (or disfigured) apparently from floor to ceiling with the heads, skulls, and skins of these slaughtered animals—“trophies,” they are called—with a lavishness hardly inferior to that exhibited in a butcher’s or poulterer’s shop at the season when we commemorate the birth of Christ.

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TEMPORARY REMORSE.

Of the actual cruelty involved in this kind of amusement—for it professes to be nothing more—we may give a few specimens:

“My victim, which I see only through a curtain of raindrops, visibly suffers, her flank swelling out abnormally and then subsiding; she is shot in the lungs. We pass round her in such a way that she shall not see us approach, but she seems more taken up with her sufferings than with us, and at the moment I am going to fire she falls down on the grass, still breathing. I draw near and give her the *coup de grâce* behind the ear. Around her is a large pool of blood, which the rain carries in a red stream towards the bottom of the little valley.

“It is the male at which I fired first of all. As I afterwards found, his shoulder was broken. Maddened by pain and his feeble efforts, the animal roars with rage, and, blowing furiously with his trunk, tears at everything within reach.... His cries and groans become so terrible that they must be heard a mile away.

“Poor beast!... Never have I been able to contemplate so near the death of an elephant in all its details. She is lying eight yards from us in the full sunlight at the edge of the water, which is tinged with red, and we look on in silence while life leaves the enormous body; her flank heaves, blood flows from breast and shoulder, her mouth opens and shuts, her lip trembles, tears flow from her eyes, her limbs quiver; with her trunk hanging down, her head low, she sways to right and left, then falls heavily on one side, shaking the ground and splattering blood in every direction.... All is over!

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“Such a spectacle is enough to make the most hardened hunter feel remorse. It seemed to me that I had done a bad action. Several times have I said to myself, upon seeing those splendid animals suffer, that I ought to place my rifle in the gun-rack for ever.”

That a man who has spent several years in little else but the destruction of animals for his own pleasure should feel even a temporary remorse is evidence of the brutality of this particular scene, but we do not know how to characterise the combination of easy sentiment, costing nothing, with the cruel selfishness which immediately turns to the account of fresh slaughter.

THE HUNTER’S JOY.

Or take the following bloody tale, told with evident pride:

“As I came round a bush, I saw at the bottom of a kind of natural alley in the forest, framed in like a picture by the trees, a massive old female rhinoceros. She was facing me, and standing half in sunshine, half in shadow. From a bush protruded the hind-quarters of another. The distance was about seventy yards. I at once sat down and ‘drew a bead’ upon her chest. However, she swerved off, and the two broke away across the forest, crash after crash, dying away in the distance, marking their course as they receded. I followed, and once again caught sight of the animal standing motionless behind a bush; I fired, and the shot was followed by a couple of short, angry snorts, the stamp of heavy feet, and an appalling crashing which advanced and then swept round toward the left. A shot delivered standing, from the shoulder, was followed by two shrill squeaks, as the animal tottered a few paces and fell over on its side; I shall not easily forget that cry, a sound most disproportionate to the size and bulk of so large a creature, but which I instantly recognised, from Sir Samuel Baker’s description, as the death-cry of

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the rhinoceros; and the hearing of it filled me with a hunter's joy!"

The hunter's joy is in the death-cry of his victim, and he glories in the fact that he is the descendant of a line of prehistoric savages. What more evidence can we want of the barbarity of the whole proceeding?

Or, again, take and ponder the following extract from Ex-President Roosevelt's recent book, "African Game Trails":

"Right in front of me, thirty yards off, there appeared from behind the bushes, which had first screened him from my eyes, the tawny, galloping form of a big maneless lion. Crack! the Winchester spoke; and as the soft-nosed bullet ploughed forward through his flank the lion swerved so that I missed him with the second shot; but my third bullet went through the spine and forward into his chest. Down he came, sixty yards off, his hind-quarters dragging, his head up, his ears back, his jaws open, and lips drawn up in a prodigious snarl, as he endeavoured to turn to face us. His back was broken, but of this we could not at the moment be sure; and if it had merely been grazed he might have recovered, and then, even though dying, his charge might have done mischief. So Kermit, Sir Alfred, and I fired, almost together, into his chest. His head sank, and he died."

Is it right, seriously speaking, that people who, by their own admission, are still under the influence of very primitive impulses, should be allowed to take their pleasure in this barbarous fashion without some voice being raised on behalf of the innocent victims? [108]

"LIVE BAIT."

It appears that there are various ways of hunting the lion. One is to track him to some thick part of the jungle, and having set fire to it at one end to wait at the other with several guns until the terrified beast rushes out and meets his fate.

Another method, which seems to us a specially dastardly one, is the tying up of some domestic animal—donkey, bullock, or goat—as a "live bait" for the larger carnivora, while the sportsman lies in wait, safely concealed, to shoot the "game" or afterwards to track him out to his lair. We read in one instance as follows:

"I woke up to find myself being vigorously shaken by the watchman. A terrible struggle was going on between the donkey and the lion, but a cloud of dust completely obscured them, notwithstanding the brilliant light of a tropical moon. The lion succeeded in breaking the ropes and carrying off the struggling animal for some distance. The latter, however, gaining his legs, emerged from the cloud of dust and made slowly for the camp. Before he had gone many yards the lion had got him again, and this time he killed him without giving me a chance of aiming at all on account of the great cloud of dust."

This practice is also mentioned in the Hon. J. Fortescue's "Narrative of the Visit to India of Their Majesties King George V. and Queen Mary," where we read: [109]

"Overnight, or in the afternoon, bullocks are tied up in likely places for a tiger, generally at the edge of thick jungle; and in the morning the shikaris (or gamekeepers, as we should call them) go round to see if any of these have been killed."

Mr. Fortescue mentions that "the reports of the morning of December 26 set forth that, though sixty bullocks had been tethered in the jungle on the previous night, only one had been killed." The paucity of the kills on this occasion is explained by the fact that many tigers had already been shot and the "game" was becoming scarce. It is not stated how many oxen in all were thus sacrificed.

Now we submit that, whatever may be said in defence of big-game shooting in general, this usage of domestic animals—animals towards whom in all civilised countries it is recognised that mankind has moral, and often legal, obligations—is a very shocking malpractice.

That the actual suffering witnessed and chronicled is a small part only of the whole is everywhere obvious. These books teem with cases in which the animals escape wounded, to linger for days, or perhaps weeks. We read, for instance: "I kill a big male (elephant). As to the other male and a female, I wound but lose them both after a day's pursuit. However, as the male seemed to me to be doomed, I send four men in search of it. They return without result after passing the night out of doors. I found this elephant dead on the 26th"—that is, after seventeen days in a climate where bodies do not lie long on the ground. We can quite believe that this author does not overstate the case when he candidly admits: "A good hunter, however careful, adroit, or well seconded he may be, must count one out of every two animals which he pursues as lost, owing to the many difficulties of his profession. This is the minimum, for how many wound or miss three or four animals before killing one!" [110]

PRIMITIVE INSTINCTS.

It remains only to say a few words about the morality of this form of amusement. It is often said amongst humane people that hunting is only a relic of more barbarous times, but it seems to us to be something more than this. It may have taken its origin with primitive man, but it has certainly made important developments of its own in recent times. There is little in common between the act of the primitive savage, who, for the sake of his food, pitted his strength and skill against an animal, and the wholesale and reckless slaughter, aided by the appliances of modern science, and carried on merely for the pleasure of killing. Acts otherwise disagreeable and disgusting may sometimes be justified by the motive, but a search through several volumes devoted to this sport has failed to reveal any more exalted motive than the desire for trophies—as

they are called—to show to admiring friends, and the love of killing. “At daylight we start on the trail, on which there are spots of blood, followed by spurts and large clots. When we see that, ‘the heart laughs,’ as the natives say, and victory is almost certain.” We learn that “to bring down an animal as big as an omnibus horse with each barrel, to roll it over as though it were a rabbit, is a pleasure which one does not often experience”; and we are also told how the author had “the pleasure of looking at a magnificent maneless lion stretched in a pool of blood.”

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Of the real motive there can unfortunately be little doubt, and the excuses that are made by the perpetrators for their murderous work are hardly worthy of serious consideration.

The moral defences for this kind of sport are of the same nature as the famous snakes in Iceland—there are none; and the floundering of the big-game hunter, when he tries to defend himself, show that his ethics and theology are of the same primitive kind as are his other springs of action, handed down from barbarous ancestors.

One writer quoted above tells us, of course, that he gives place to no one in his “love of all dumb creatures collectively”—whatever that may mean—which he seems to think justifies his putting bullets into them *individually* whenever he has a chance, and letting them crash through the forests, as he describes, in pain and terror, very likely to die in agonies days afterwards.

Another excuse urged is that the hunting instinct in us has been given us by God, and therefore should be followed. It apparently never occurred to the writer that pity for the unoffending animals “butchered to make a sportsman’s holiday” may also be a God-planted instinct, no less than the love of slaughtering them, though apparently he vastly prefers the latter.

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That blood-sports develop and encourage a manly spirit, necessary for the progress of the race and especially of the British nation, is perhaps the most common. But here, surely, at the outset we need a definition of terms. If manliness is synonymous with indifference to the suffering of the weaker, and selfish gratification at the cost of others, if it is manly to blow a piece “as big as the crown of a hat” out of the side of a timid deer, just for amusement, then certainly this sport is eminently manly. If, on the other hand, the qualities which differentiate the civilised man from the barbarian are a greater regard for the rights of the weak and a deeper sympathy with the feelings of others, then without doubt these amateur butchers should be regarded as an anachronism in civilised communities.

The chocolate-coloured native, we read in one book, “would not and could not understand that we had not come to fight elephants and lions like gladiators in the arena, but to overcome them by superior tactics *without more risk than was necessary*, and by the judicious handling of arms of precision” (italics ours). Certainly we think the naked savage here shows a finer instinct for what may be noble and manly in warfare than his so-called civilised brother. For the gladiator who has the hardihood to meet his enemy in fair single combat, at mortal risk to himself, we can feel some admiration, even though the game is a barbarous one; but for the butcher who skulks behind a tree and slays his innocuous victim by mechanical contrivances with as little risk to himself as possible, we can feel nothing but contempt. “In a short time,” we are told by our hero, “four elephants were lying dead, shot through the head or heart, never having caught sight of us. The remainder of the herd decamped.” A glorious achievement in the estimation of the perpetrators apparently, but one to which we personally should be ashamed to see our name attached.

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THE BLOOD LUST.

In the preface to one of the books from which we have quoted, we are told the story of a certain French hunter who, having been made an officer, was asked by a friend if he intended now to give up killing lions, to which he replied: “It is impossible; it seizes me like a fever, and then I absolutely must go and lie in wait.” This does seem in some cases to be the most charitable explanation of a strange mental condition, and in view of the harm which these so-called sportsmen are doing, it is becoming a question for the community, whether they should not be temporarily confined, like others suffering from dangerous and destructive mania. With shooting-galleries and a continuous series of tin elephants and antelopes they could be allowed to indulge their mania quite harmlessly, and in the evenings they could write up their diaries and chronicle their wonderful adventures without fear of contradiction.

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Apart from the question of the cruelty involved, we have now the sad spectacle of the rapid extermination of many animals merely for the selfish gratification of a very small section of the public. The recent efforts of Governments to save them are not likely to have much effect. They are not based on any humane principles, of course, but are directed apparently to preventing the total extermination of certain animals, in order, at any rate partly, that a favoured few may still have the pleasure of killing them under game restrictions.

Thus *The Times* drew attention to the fact that in Nyasaland for a £10 licence you may kill 6 buffaloes, 4 hippopotamus, 6 eland, and so on up to a total of 94 animals. For £10 you may buy the privilege to deprive the world of 1 elephant, while you may kill 4 for £60. The writer of the article from which we quote tries to show that the ivory of the tusks will pay expenses.

We may quote here the following from an article by Sir H. H. Johnston, on “The Protection of Fauna, Flora, and Scenery,” in the *Nineteenth Century*, of September, 1913:

“An agitation is again arising for leave to destroy the big game of Africa—especially in Rhodesia, Nyasaland, and East Africa—wherever there are possibilities of European settlement. The plea advanced now is that the big game, more than man or the smaller mammals and birds, serve as reservoirs for trypanosomatous or bacillic disease-germs,

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which are then conveyed by tsetse-flies or ticks to the blood of domestic animals and man. This argument should be examined with scientific impartiality, because so great is the blood-lust on the part of young Englishmen or their Colonial-born cousins that they are for ever trying to find some excuse to destroy whatever is large or striking in the local fauna."

The only method which would have any likelihood of really protecting the animals would be to make it penal for anyone to kill any of them, or to have in his possession any skin, skull, or other "souvenir." Without their trophies and without the possibility of recounting their exploits to their admiring readers, the big-game hunters would lose their main stimulus, and might devote their time and energies to some more useful and less barbarous pursuit.

BLOOD-SPORTS AT SCHOOLS

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THE ETON HARE-HUNT.

We are often told that the true way to teach kindness to animals is "to begin with the young." Let us see how they begin with the young at the chief of English public schools.

"I have told the Master of the Beagles that he must not do anything which is unlawful. I am sure that he would not do anything cruel willingly. But until the common sense of the nation expresses itself in the shape of a law forbidding the hunting of wild animals, I cannot interfere with the Beagles, which are here an old institution."

Such were the terms in which Dr. Warre, when Headmaster of Eton, expressed his refusal—his first of many refusals—to substitute a drag-hunt for the hare-hunt now in favour at Eton College; and his argument has since been the subject of much humanitarian protest, and of not a few memorials to the Governing Body. But there is one point concerning Dr. Warre's remarks which seems to have almost escaped attention—that the Eton Beagles are not, after all, so old an "institution" as his words would imply, in the sense of being recognised and encouraged by the school authorities, for, as a matter of fact, they have only been openly permitted since about sixty years ago, and they were not actually legalised until 1871. In the old Eton Statutes of Henry VI. it was ordained under the head of "Discipline" that "no one shall keep in the college any hounds, nets, ferrets, hawks, or falcons for sport," and for this reason the authorities long refused to give official recognition to the Beagles. In the reign of Dr. Keate the hunt, according to Mr. Wasey Sterry's book on Eton, was "unlawful, though winked at," and this state of affairs continued until about the middle of the past century, when the Beagles began to be regarded as on a par with cricket and football. At last, under the revised Statutes framed by the new Governing Body, which was called into being by the Public Schools Act of 1868, all earlier regulations were repealed, and the Beagles became legalised, having thus passed through the three successive stages of being prohibited, winked at, and recognised as "an old Eton institution."

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It may seem strange that the sporting propensity of schoolboys should have thus defied and survived the ban placed upon it by the pious Founder; but the history of Eton shows it to have been always the home of cruel sports. We are told by Sir H. Maxwell Lyte, the historian of the school, that "sports which would now be considered reprehensible were tolerated and even encouraged at Eton in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries." "No work," he says, "was done on Shrove Tuesday after 8 a.m., and at Eton, as elsewhere on this day, the practice prevailed of torturing some live bird. The college cook carried off a crow from its nest, and, fastening it to a pancake, hung it up on the school door, doubtless to serve as a target." Then, again, there was the once famous and popular ram-hunt. "The college butcher had to provide a ram annually at election-tide, to be hunted and killed by the scholars," the unfortunate animal being hamstrung and beaten to death in Weston's Yard. Even in the nineteenth century such sports as bull-baiting, badger-baits, dog-fights, and cat and duck hunts, were "organised for the special edification of the Eton boys."

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It is from these good old times that the present hare-hunt is a survival, and though it may now be conducted, as Dr. Warre has stated, in a legal and "sportsmanlike" manner, this certainly was not the case at a period no more remote than the headmastership of Dr. Balston (1857-1864), as we learn from Mr. Brinsley Richards' well-known book, "Seven Years at Eton," from which the following passage is quoted:

"It is not pleasant to have to write that the Beagles were often made to hunt a miserable trapped fox which had lost one of its pads. Those who bought maimed foxes, as more convenient for beagles to hunt than strong, sound foxes, should have reflected that they might thereby tempt their purveyors to mutilate these animals. How could it be ascertained whether the fox supplied by a Brocas 'cad' had been maimed by accident or design? It was an exciting thing for jumping parties of Lower Boys, when out in the fields they saw the beagle-hunt pass them in full cry—first the fox, lolloping along as best he could, but contriving somehow to keep ahead of his pursuers; then the pack of about ten couples of short, long-eared, piebald, or liver-streaked hounds, all yelping; then the Master of the Hunt, with his short copper horn; the Whips, who cracked their hunting-crops and bawled admonition to the dogs with perhaps unnecessary vehemence; and lastly the Field of about fifty."

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It is specially worthy of note, as bearing upon a later controversy, that Mr. Brinsley Richards states that "runs were far better when a man was sent out with a drag." The drag is thus proved to have been in successful use at Eton almost as long ago as when the Beagles were first openly

tolerated.

The prohibition once being cancelled, the popularity of the hare-hunt grew apace until it reached its zenith in the reign of Dr. Warre, when the doings of the hunt were regularly reported—in choice sporting jargon—in the *Eton College Chronicle*, so that the whole school, even to the youngest boys, was made aware of them. A reference to old numbers of the *Chronicle* will show plenty of instances. Here are one or two extracts taken almost at random from these records of the chase:

“*March 20, 1897.*—A hare was soon put up in the first wheat-field, and, running back through two small spinneys in the field she was found in, went away towards Ditton Park. Hounds ran very fast over the Bath Road and straight away into Turner’s gardens. After being hustled about for fifteen minutes in the gardens, our hare went away at the far end. Turning left-handed, our hare was viewed running parallel with the road and into some brickfields.... After we had been casting round for some time without success among the rows of bricks, hounds were taken back into a small hut. Hardly had they got inside before old Varlet pulled her out from under a rafter, absolutely stiff.”

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“*February 23, 1899.*—Time, one hour, fifty minutes. A very good hunt, since scent was only fair, and we were especially unlucky to lose this hare, which was beat when she got back to Salt Hill. On the next day we heard that our hare had crawled up the High Street to Burnham, and entered a public-house so done that it could not stand, and was caught by some boys, who came to tell us half an hour afterwards, but we had just gone home. Too bad luck for words!”

And so on, with repeated references to “breaking her up,” and hounds “thoroughly deserving blood.”[22]

Here, again, is the published testimony of a spectator of one of these successful runs:

“On February 4, 1899, being in the vicinity of Eton, I had an opportunity of seeing one of these hare-hunts, and I will give a short and exact description of what took place.

“At three o’clock some 180 boys, many of them quite young, sallied forth for an afternoon’s sport with eight couples of the College Beagles. A hare was found at 3.15 near the main road leading to Slough. It was chased through the churchyard and workhouse grounds at this town into a domain dotted with villas, called Upton Park. Escaping from this spot, it ran towards Eton, but soon doubled back to Upton Park, the numerous onlookers in the Slough Road lustily shouting at the dazed creature all the time. These circular chases were thrice repeated, the hare always getting back to Upton Park.

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“Twice did the animal come within a few paces of where I was standing, and its condition of terror and exhaustion was painful to behold. The boys, running after the hounds, were thoroughly enjoying the thing, and two masters of the College, I was told, were amongst them. Now for the final scene, at which a friend of mine was present.

“The hare, which had been hunted for two hours, having got into a corner at Upton Park which was bounded with wire-netting, was seized by the hounds and torn. The master of the pack then ran up, got hold of her, and broke her neck. The carcass was handed to one of the dog-keepers, who cut off the head and feet, which trophies were divided among the followers. The keeper with his knife then opened the body, and the master, taking it in his hands and holding it high above the hounds, rallied them with cries, and finally threw it into their midst, as they had, in the language of the *Eton College Chronicle*, ‘thoroughly deserved blood.’

“I make no comments upon these doings; I only say that I think the British public ought to know how boys are being trained at our foremost school in respect to the cultivation of compassionate instincts towards the beings beneath us.”

It is not surprising that the Humanitarian League should have addressed remonstrances to Dr. Warre on the subject of the Beagles; one wonders rather that this “old Eton institution” should have so long remained unchallenged by societies which profess to protect animals from injury, and to teach humanity to the young, especially as Dr. Warre was himself a member of the committee of the Windsor and Eton Branch of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and as Etonian subscriptions go yearly to provide a fund for prosecuting carters and drovers who ill-use the animals under their charge!

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THE LIBERTY OF THE BOYS.

To all these protests Dr. Warre had practically but one answer—that hare-hunting not being *illegal*, he could not interfere with the liberty of the boys in the matter, many of whom, he stated, are in the habit of hunting “when at home in the holidays, and with the approval of their parents.” But this plea is at once invalidated by the fact that many things are prohibited to schoolboys which may (or may not) be permitted to them at home, and which are not in themselves illegal. Some of the elder boys, for example, smoke when at home in the holidays, and with the approval of their parents; yet if these young gentlemen, relying on Dr. Warre’s argument, had started a smoking-club at Eton, he would not have hesitated to interfere very promptly with their freedom. Why, then, should an excuse which is not nearly good enough to justify a smoking-club be seriously put forward by the headmaster of a great public school when a cruelty-club is in question?

On one point only would Dr. Warre make any concession—viz., with regard to the reports that appeared in the *Eton College Chronicle* of the “breaking up” of hares and the “bleeding” of hounds. “The phrases in question,” he said, “are among those current in sporting papers, and I

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regret that they should have found their way into the pages of the *Eton College Chronicle*, being objectionable in sound, and liable to misinterpretation. I understand, however, that these phrases do not imply anything more than that the dead hare is devoured by the hounds." This led to a pertinent inquiry in the press, whether the Eton boys were in the habit of hunting "a dead hare." The cruelty of the sport obviously consists less in the actual killing of the hunted animal than in the prolonged torture of the hunt that precedes the death—the "bustling" which, as we have seen in the extracts from the *Eton College Chronicle*, often renders the panic-stricken little animal "dead beat," "absolutely stiff," "so done that it cannot stand." And, really, if the boys are encouraged to *do* this thing, it is a somewhat dubious morality which is content with forbidding them to *speak* of it! "Objectionable in sound" such practices are, beyond question; but are they not also somewhat objectionable in fact?

Thus, while on the one side Dr. Warre hardened his heart and would not lay a sacrilegious finger on the time-honoured institution which had been forbidden in the Statutes of the Founder, humanitarian feeling, on the other side, became more and more aroused, and memorial after memorial was presented to the Eton authorities, suggesting that, "as there is now an increasing tendency among teachers to inculcate a more sympathetic regard for animals, it is desirable that Eton College should no longer stand aloof from this humane spirit." It is significant of the growth of public opinion on this subject that, whereas, some twenty years ago, the very existence of the Eton Hunt was unknown to many except Etonians, we now find among the signatures appended from time to time to these memorials such diverse names as those of Mr. Herbert Spencer, Archbishop Temple, the Bishops of Durham, Ely, and Newcastle, Dr. Clifford, Mr. Thomas Hardy, Mr. William Watson, Mr. Frederic Harrison, Sir A. Conan Doyle, Sir John Gorst, Sir Frederick Treves, and Lord Wolseley, also a number of heads of colleges at Oxford and Cambridge, the headmasters of numerous grammar schools and training colleges, officials of the branches of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and many distinguished clergy and laymen, representative of almost every shade of opinion.^[23]

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When it was known that Mr. Lyttelton was to be Dr. Warre's successor in the headmastership of Eton, it was thought probable that his notorious humanitarian sympathies would lead him to the desired reform; but these expectations proved to be too sanguine. The immense stability of an "old institution," in so conservative a stronghold as Eton, is a fact that must be reckoned with; for Eton is not like Rugby, where a reforming headmaster might venture, as Dr. Arnold did, to sweep away at a stroke an ancient sporting custom which had nothing but its age to recommend it. We all know the passage in "Tom Brown's Schooldays"—the speech of "old Brooke"—where Arnold's abolition of the Rugby Beagles is incidentally referred to:

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"A lot of you think and say, for I've heard you, 'There's this new doctor hasn't been here so long as some of us, and he's changing all the old customs....' But come, now, any of you, name a custom that he has put down.

"'The hounds,' calls out a fifth-form boy, clad in a green cutaway, with brass buttons, and cord trousers, the leader of the sporting interest.

"Well, we had six or seven mangy harriers and beagles, I'll allow, and had had them for years, and the doctor put them down. But what good ever came of them? Only rows with all the keepers for ten miles round; and big-side Hare and Hounds is better fun ten times over."

If we compare this passage with the report of Mr. Lyttelton's address to the Eton boys at the commencement of his headmastership, in which he frankly avowed his own "strong opinions" on the subject of the hare-hunt, but added that he did not hold these views in his boyhood, and did not see why he should force them on the boys, we see the difference, not so much between an Arnold and a Lyttelton, as between a Rugby and an Eton. It is doubtful if even an Arnold could have safely flouted Etonian susceptibilities in this matter of worrying hares with hounds. The reason given by Mr. Lyttelton for allowing the hare-hunt to continue is that all legislation which outstrips "public opinion" is injurious and unwise, by which he presumably means the "public opinion" of Eton itself—for it is certain enough that public opinion outside Eton would bear the disappearance of the hare-hunt with equanimity—and undoubtedly Eton opinion, to those who dwell under the shadow of the "antique towers," is a matter of serious consideration, however medieval it may be. It is a curious fact that the large majority of Etonians, though nowadays a bit ashamed of the ram-hunt and other sporting pleasantries of a bygone period, do not in the least suspect that their beloved hare-hunt belongs in effect to the same category of amusement. Thus, Sir H. Maxwell Lyte, in his history of the school, referring to the earlier barbarities, remarks that "it is evident that in the time of Elizabeth cruelty to animals was not counted among the sins for which penitents require to be shriven." But what, it may be asked, of the time of George V.? It is entertaining to find the *Eton College Chronicle* itself referring to the ram-hunt of the eighteenth century as a "brutal custom," and remarking that Etonians were "once so barbarous." Once!

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MORAL INSTRUCTION OF THE YOUNG.

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The value of the moral instruction given at Eton, as far as the duties of mankind towards the lower races are concerned, may be estimated from the following sentiment of an Eton boy, quoted from a letter of dignified remonstrance addressed to the interfering humanitarians: "A hare is a useless animal, you must own, and the only use to be made of it is for the exercise of human beings." It will be seen that Etonian philosophy is still decidedly in the anthropocentric stage. It is not easy, even for the most progressively minded headmaster, to make any immediate impression on such dense and colossal prejudice.

But let us at least take courage from the fact that the ram-hunt is no more, that the college cook no longer hangs up a live crow to be pelted to death on Shrove Tuesday, and that the Eton boys are not now invited to indulge in the manly sports of bull-baiting, dog-fighting, and cat-hunts. These recreations have gone, never to return, and it is equally certain that, sooner or later, the hare-hunt will also have to go. It is not to be supposed that Mr. Lyttelton, who is keenly alive to the best and most humane tendencies of the age, is insensible to the discredit which Eton incurs by thus prolonging into the twentieth century a piece of savagery which Rugby, Harrow, and the other great public schools have long outgrown and abandoned; or that he does not feel the sting of Mr. W. J. Stillman's remark that "the permission given to the boys of Eton to begin their education in brutality, when they ought to be learning to say their prayers, is the crowning disgrace of all the educational abuses of a nation which instituted the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals."

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To those, of course, who regard blood-sports as not only a proper pastime for men, but a desirable recreation for schoolboys, and a fit form of training for military service, the whole protest against the Eton hare-hunts must needs seem ridiculous; but even these thoroughgoing sportsmen will have to admit that the trend of public opinion is against them, else why does Eton now stand alone among public schools in this matter? If the reasoning of the Etonian apologists be sound, the *absence* of Beagles at Rugby, Harrow, and the other great schools, is a glaring defect in their system which ought speedily to be remedied; yet we have not heard that any enthusiast has gone so far as to suggest that the schools which have long since abandoned hare-hunting should now make a return to it, and short of this complete approval of the sport the excuses put forward on its behalf are about as feeble as could be imagined.

It cannot, for instance, be seriously argued that boys whose studies are notoriously endangered by the very numerous athletic exercises—cricket, rowing, football, fives, racquets, running, etc.—in which they are able to indulge, are in need of yet another pastime in the form of hunting hares. Granted that it would be inadvisable for the school authorities to preach advanced humanitarian doctrines to boys whose family traditions and prejudices they are bound to consider, still, it is not necessary to go to the other extreme of encouraging them in familiarity with sights and scenes which must tend to deaden the sense of compassion. From the moral standpoint, blood-sports cannot be regarded in quite the same light as athletic exercises; and there are many persons nowadays who, without raising the question of the morality of field sports for adults, think that the license given to young boys to spend their half-holidays in the "breaking up" of hares is as great a stain on the English public-school system as any of the admitted "immoralities" by which that system is undermined.

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There is, in the opinion of humanitarians, a grave inconsistency between the insistence of preachers and teachers on the duty of kindness and consideration, and the sanction accorded by the school authorities to practices the very reverse of these. Unconsciously, perhaps, but none the less surely, the youthful minds which are trained under such influences are affected in their turn, and learn to conform superficially to maxims of piety and honour, while practically in their own lives they are setting those virtues at defiance.

FOOTNOTES:

[22] It should not be forgotten that hare-hunting is also carried on by our naval cadets. Here is an extract from the *Naval and Military Record* of March 1, 1906, describing a run with the Dartmouth ("Britannia") Beagles: "Just outside the covert a hare was moved in the ploughing by hounds, and gave a most exciting chase around two fields, and when killed was found to have only three legs." A fine sport for our future naval officers!

[23] It is also worthy of note that a memorial against the Dartmouth Beagles, presented to the First Lord of the Admiralty by the Humanitarian League in 1907, was signed by no fewer than twenty-five headmasters of public schools. As a result of the League's protests, the grant of public money for the maintenance of this sport was withdrawn.

SPORTSMEN'S FALLACIES

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By HENRY S. SALT

Everyone knows the old story of the Wildgrave, that spectral huntsman who, for the wrongs done by him in the past to his suffering fellow-creatures, was doomed to provide nightly sport for a troop of ghostly pursuers.

"The Wildgrave flies o'er bush and thorn,
With many a shriek of helpless woe;
Behind him hound, and horse, and horn,
And 'Hark away!' and 'Holla ho!'"

If we may judge by the signs of the times, a similar fate has now overtaken the modern sportsman, who finds to his dismay that his proud vocation no longer goes unchallenged, but that he is compelled to stand on his defence before the force of ethical opinion, and to play the part less of the pursuer than of the pursued. Nowadays it is the humanitarians who, in the intellectual

discussion of sport, derive keen enjoyment from the "pleasures of the chase," and having "broken up" the Royal Buckhounds after a ten years' run, are hunting the sportsman from cover to cover, from argument to argument.

The sportsman, in fact, is now himself standing "at bay"; and it may be worth while to consider what value, if any, attaches to the excuses commonly put forward by him in justification of his favourite pastime. On what moral grounds are we asked to approve, in this twentieth century, such seemingly barbarous practices as the hunting to death of stags, foxes, and hares; the worrying of otters and rabbits; or the shooting of vast numbers of game birds in the battue? The hunted fox, as we know, has many wily resources for throwing his pursuers off the scent. What are the corresponding shifts and wiles of the hunted sportsman?^[24]

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THE APPEAL TO "NATURE."

The first, perhaps, that demands notice is the frequent appeal to "Nature," and even (when the hunter happens to be a man of marked piety) to the savage instincts which "the Creator," it is assumed, has implanted. "Were not otter hounds created to hunt and kill otters?" asked a devout correspondent of the *Newcastle Daily Journal*. "Therefore," he continued, "let me ask these persons (the opponents of sport) what right they have to place their own peculiar faddism against the wisdom of the Creator?" In like manner a distinguished hunter of big game, Mr. H. W. Seton-Karr, has defended himself as follows in the *Daily Chronicle*:

"If a person experiences pleasure in the chase, such as in fox-hunting or deer-stalking, or even in lion-hunting, the rights and wrongs of that natural instinct are a personal matter between that man and his God. That, in common with all carnivorous creatures, we do possess God-planted instincts of the chase is a fact. Why did Almighty God create lions to prey nightly on harmless animals? And should we not, even at the expense of a donkey as a bait, be justified in reducing their number, sacrificing one for the good of many?"

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The answer to all this pious verbiage is, of course, very simple. In view of the fact that the sportsman of the present day professes to be *civilised*, and is at any rate nominally a member of a civilised State, it is quite irrelevant to plead that the propensity to hunt is natural to the *savage* man. We are continually striving in other departments of life to get rid of ferocious instincts, an inheritance from a savage past, which may or may not be "God-planted," but are certainly very much out of place in a society which regards itself as humane. Why, then, should it be assumed that an exception is to be made in favour of the hunting instinct? The charge against modern blood-sports is that they are an anachronism, a survival of a barbarous habit into a civilised age; nor can it possibly be any justification of them to show that Nature herself is cruel, for as we do not make savage Nature our exemplar in other respects, there is no reason why we should do so in this. And as for the statement that a man's treatment of the lower animals is a "personal" affair "between that man and his God," it can only provoke a smile. For man is a social being, and not even the sportsman, belated barbarian though he may be, can be allowed the privilege of thus evading the responsibility which he owes to his fellow-citizens in a matter affecting the common conscience of the race.

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But the wild animals, it is argued, put themselves outside the pale of consideration because they prey on one another. One searches in vain for justice and mercy among the lower animals—such is the strange reason advanced as an excuse for showing no justice or mercy to *them*.^[25] But, in the first place, it is not a fact that these qualities are non-existent in the lower races, where co-operation is as much a law of life as competition; and, secondly, if it were a fact, it would have no bearing whatever on the morality of sport. For why should we base human ethics on animal conduct? Still more, why should we imitate the predatory animals rather than the sociable? And finally, why, because some animals kill for food, should we kill for pleasure? The cruelty of Nature can afford no possible justification for the cruelty of Man, for, as Leigh Hunt wrote in that trenchant couplet which may be commended to the notice of the sportsman—

"That there is pain and evil is no rule
That I should make it greater, like a fool."

Next we come to the kindred sophism drawn from "the necessity of taking life." To kill, we are reminded, is unavoidable; for wild animals must be "kept down," or the balance of Nature would be deranged. That, of course, is undeniable; but, unfortunately for the sportsman's argument, it is a fact that the breed of foxes, rabbits, pheasants, and other victims of sport, is artificially kept up, not down, in order that there may be plenty of hunting and shooting for the idle classes to amuse themselves with. So far from securing the effective destruction of noxious animals, sport indirectly prevents it; more than that, it causes the killing to be done not only ineffectively, but in the most demoralising way, by making a pastime out of what, if done at all, should be done as a disagreeable duty. But here we must in justice mention a new and ingenious excuse for blood-sports which (to add to its zest) was put forward by a clergyman. It is necessary to take life, he argued, and what is necessary is a duty, and it is right, as far as possible, to make a pleasure of one's duties, and therefore—but the conclusion is plain! Presumably the reverend gentleman, had he lived a century back, would have found the same pious justification for the practice of making up pleasure parties to see felons hanged.

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SPORT A BLESSING TO MEN.

Speaking generally, we may class the remaining arguments under two heads: those which aim at showing that sport is of benefit to mankind, or at least not a symptom of cruelty in the sportsman; and those which actually discover it to be a blessing to the animals themselves.^[26] In the former and more prosaic category must be placed the queer assertion that sport “adds to the food-supply” of the nation. We have all read how, after some aristocratic “shoot,” a number of pheasants or other palatable game were presented to the local hospital. Sport, it is seen, goes hand in hand with the charitable and the philanthropic—truly a touching picture! But the fact remains that the cost of the animals thus reared primarily for sport, and secondarily for the table, is far in excess of their market value as food, and this at once knocks the bottom out of the sportsman’s patriotic contention. Every stag that is stalked, every pheasant that is mown down in the battue, and every hare or rabbit that is knocked over in covert-shooting, has cost the country much more to produce than it is worth when butchered; and the game-preserved, far from being helpful to the community in this respect, is a positive encumbrance to it, as wasting labour in the production of what is not a food, but a luxury. Game is reared not for the benefit of the many, but at the cost of the many, to gratify the idle and cruel instincts of the few.

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Not less illusory is the plea so frequently made in sporting journals as a justification of sport, that hunting and shooting “give employment” to a large number of people. “Do these hyper-humane faddists,” asks the *Irish Field*, “ever consider how, by doing away with many of what they are pleased to call spurious sports, they would be taking the actual bread-and-butter out of the mouths of thousands of men and their families? Hunting, shooting, and other sports give employment to such a vast number of people, directly and indirectly, that it would be nothing short of a national calamity if they were discontinued for any cause.” What is really proved by such apologists is that blood-sports are a terrible drain on the resources of the nation, and that millions are annually diverted from productive labour to be employed on the silliest form of luxury—the killing of animals for the mere amusement of rich people. It is the old fallacy of supposing that *all* expenditure of money, without regard to the nature of the commodities produced, is beneficial to the community at large.

Then there is the much-vaunted “manliness” of sport, so important a quality, we are told, in an imperial and military nation. Yet what could be more flagrantly and miserably *un*manly than for a crowd of men to sally forth, in perfect security themselves, armed or mounted, with every advantage of power and skill on their side, to do to death with dogs or guns some poor skulking, terrified little habitant of woodside or hedgerow? This is what Sir Henry Seton-Karr has to say on this point:

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“Only those who have experienced it can realise the strength of the hunter’s lust to kill the hunted, though they may find it difficult to explain. It is certain that no race of men possess this desire more strongly than the Anglo-Saxons.... Let us take it that in our case this passion is an inherited instinct—which civilisation cannot eradicate—of a virile and dominant race, and that it forms a healthy natural antidote to the enervating refinements of modern life.”^[27]

The obvious answer to this claim is that civilisation *is* eradicating the destructive instincts of sport—with extreme slowness, no doubt, as in the case of all barbarous inherited tendencies, but surely and certainly nevertheless; and the fact that blood-sports are already condemned by many thoughtful people is a clear indication of what verdict the future will pass on the profession of killing for “fun.” That good physical exercise is provided by field sports none will deny, but it is just as undeniable that such exercise can be as well or better provided in other ways—by the equally healthy and far more manly sports of the gymnasium and the playing-field, which, be it noted, are capable of being utilised by a much larger number of people than the privileged pastimes of the crack huntsman and “shot.” There is no reason why the mass of the population should not, under a juster social system, have leisure to derive benefit from cricket, football, boating, hockey, and the other rational sports; but it is very evident that only a very few can ever find recreation in those blood-sports which are absurdly called “national.” The rational and humane sports may be for the many; the “national” and cruel sports must be for the few: that is not the least of the striking differences that distinguish them.^[28]

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To contend that blood-sports have no injurious influence on the minds of those who practise them seems about as reasonable as to assert that effect does not follow cause. Yet it is frequently urged, in defence of sport, that the pleasure is found not in the “kill,” but in the chase. That may be true in a sense. What humanitarians hold is not that sportsmen derive pleasure from the *mere* infliction of pain, but that they seek excitement without sufficient regard to the pain inflicted, and that this is apt, in some cases, to breed a positive love of killing, a real “blood-lust.” Take, for example, the following remark quoted from the *Eton College Chronicle*: “At the time we are writing, the Beagles have killed but twice, though by the time the *Chronicle* appears they may have increased this number by one.” Here it will be seen that what the boys’ journal dwells on is precisely the killing—surely a significant side-light on the influence of the sport. There is no escaping this question, whether at Eton or elsewhere: Why, if the painful pursuit of a sentient animal be not an essential part of the amusement, is the drag-hunt refused as a substitute? And if the drag be disdained as not sufficiently exciting, how can the inference be avoided that the zest of the pastime is enhanced by the peril of the quarry?

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SPORT A BLESSING TO THE ANIMALS.

But it is when he is demonstrating that sport comes as a boon and a blessing to the non-human races which are the victims of it that the sportsman is most entertaining. “They like it,” he

asserts, when any pity is expressed for the hunted fox.

“Happy the hounds, loud-baying on his track!
Happy the huntsmen with their murderous call!
But the spent fox, dead-beat before the pack—
His are the sweetest, strangest joys of all!”

This love on the part of certain animals for being hunted to death is surely one of the most curious facts in natural history, and makes it seem almost an injustice to horses, cows, pigs, and other domestic creatures, that they are denied a privilege which is so freely accorded to their wilder brethren. Why should deer, for instance, be specially favoured in this respect? The stag, as a noble lord once remarked, is a most pampered animal. “When he was going to be hunted he was carried to the meet in a comfortable cart. When set down, the first thing he did was to crop the grass. When the hounds got too near, they were stopped. By-and-by he lay down, and was wheeled back to his comfortable home. It was a life that many would like to live.” It appears, therefore, that it is a loss, a deprivation, not to be hunted over a country full of barbed wire and broken bottles by a pack of stag-hounds. Life is mean and poor without it; for, to humans and non-humans alike, sport, as the same nobleman expressed it, is “the gift of God.”

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But the sportsman can be very “slim” when hard pressed in controversy by his implacable pursuers, and among his many devices for confusing the issue, the most subtle, perhaps, is the metaphysical argument which pleads that it is better for the animals to be bred and killed in sport than not to be bred at all, and that it is to the “preservation” which sport affords that certain species owe their escape from extinction. Mr. R. A. Sanders, late Master of the Devon and Somerset Stag-hounds, has thus written of the stag (*Nineteenth Century*, August, 1908):

“He has lived a life of luxury for years, and has a bad half-hour at the end. From his point of view surely the pleasure predominates over the pain. For if it were not for the hunting, he would not exist at all.”

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When a Bill was introduced in Parliament in 1883 for the prohibition of the cruel sport of pigeon-shooting, it was opposed by Sir Herbert Maxwell on the ground that a pigeon would rather accept life, “under the condition of his life being a short and happy one, violently terminated,” than not be brought into existence; and the same sportsman has since stated, as a “salient paradox,” that one who takes delight in pursuing and slaying wild animals may claim to rank among their best friends. It escaped his notice, as it escapes the notice of all who seek refuge in this amusing piece of sophistry, that it is beyond our power to ascertain the feelings or the preferences of a pigeon, or of any other being, *before* he is in existence; what we have to deal with is the sentience of animals that *already* exist.

And as for the contention that animals are “preserved” by sport, it is sufficient to point out that it rests on a mental confusion between the individual animal and the species. It would be little comfort to the individual fox who is torn to pieces by the hounds to know, if he could know, that his species is preserved by his tormentors, and that the same process of death-dealing will thus be perpetuated. When it is asserted that but for fox-hunting the fox would have been exterminated in England like the wolf, the answer of course is that of the two methods extermination is far the more merciful. Can it be pretended that it would have been kinder to wolves to keep a number of them alive in order that sportsmen might for ever pursue and break them up?

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And, really, if it is so kind to animals to preserve them that they may be worried with hounds, we ought to feel some compunction at having allowed the humane old sport of bear-baiting to be abolished; for, according to the same “salient paradox,” the bear-baiter was Bruin’s best friend. It is sad to think that there used to be bears in many an English village where now they are never seen!

It is for the fox, perhaps, that the sportsman’s solicitude is most touching and most characteristic. “If we stay fox-hunting,” it has been said, “foxes will die far more brutal deaths in cruel vermin traps, until there are none left to die.” How tender, how considerate, is this disinterested regard for the welfare of the hunted animal!^[29] The merciful sportsman steps in to save a noxious species from extinction, and in return for such “preservation” demands that the grateful fox shall be hunted and worried and dismembered for the amusement of his gentle benefactor. But are not our fox-hunting friends just a trifle too clever in making, at one and the same time, two quite incompatible and contradictory claims for their beloved profession—first, that it saves the fox from extermination; and, secondly, that it rids the country-side of a very mischievous animal? “For six good months,” says the *Sportsman*, “he is allowed to frolic at his ease, with all his poultry-bills paid for him.” The argument here is that there can be no cruelty in fox-hunting, because the fox is preserved; but, in that case, what about the following defence of fox-hunting by the editor of the “Badminton Library”? “The sentimentalist,” he says, “does not consider those other tragedies for which the fox is responsible—the rabbits, leverets, poultry, and game birds that he devours daily. The death of a fox is indeed the salvation of much life.”

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So the farmer is to be grateful to the fox-hunter because the fox is killed, and the fox himself is to be grateful to the same person because he is *not* killed! It is obvious that the sporting folk cannot have it both ways; they cannot take credit for the destruction of a pest and also for preventing that pest being exterminated by the injured farmer. Let them choose one of the alternative arguments and keep to it.

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"Hark ye, then, whose profession or pastime is killing!
To dispel your benignant illusions I'm loth;
But be one or the other, my double-faced brother—
Be saviour or slayer—you cannot be both!"

The more one considers it, one cannot but smile at the sportsman's "love" for the animals whom he so persecutes and worries. Tom Tulliver, we remember, was described by George Eliot as "fond of animals—fond, that is, of throwing stones at them"; and so it is with this affection of the sportsman's. "What name should we bestow," says an old writer, "on a superior being who, without provocation or advantage, should continue from day to day, void of all pity or remorse, to torment mankind for diversion, and at the same time endeavour with the utmost care to preserve their lives and to propagate their species in order to increase the number of victims devoted to his malevolence, and be delighted in proportion to the miseries which he occasioned? I say, what name detestable enough could we find for such a being? Yet if we impartially consider the case, we must acknowledge that, with regard to the inferior animals, just such a being is the sportsman."^[30]

TRUST THE SPECIALIST.

Such, then, are the arguments which are advanced in all seriousness, and without a suspicion or twinkle of humour, to prove that blood-sports are a benefit to mankind and to the lower races alike. But before concluding I must mention one other piece of reasoning which is as amusing as any specimen of sportsman's logic—the "trust the specialist" fallacy, which asserts that none but sportsmen can fairly pass judgment on sport. For example, when a memorial was presented to a former Prime Minister against the Royal Buckhounds, a certain paper gravely remarked that "what proportion of the protesting gentlemen had ever been on horseback, it was not easy to determine." The assumption, it will be seen, is that when any cruel practice is arraigned before public opinion, we are not merely to trust the specialist on technical matters that rightly lie within his ken, but we are to let him decide the wider *ethical* issues, on which, being no more than human, he is certain to have the strongest professional prejudice. It is an argument worthy of the Sublime Porte itself.

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In like manner Lord Ribblesdale, when defending stag-hunting in his book on "The Queen's Hounds," expressed the sportsman's case as follows: "Most people will agree that conclusions founded on practice must always have a slight pull when placed in the scales with conclusions based upon theory, hearsay, or conjecture—even granting the fullest credit for sincerity and *bona fides* to the opponents of stag-hunting."

Now, it is, of course, absurd to represent the ethical objections to sport as "based upon theory, hearsay, or conjecture," for the methods of sportsmen are well known and beyond dispute, and many of those who most strongly condemn such practices have been sportsmen themselves and are thoroughly conversant with the facts. But what I wish to point out is that Lord Ribblesdale's description of the sportsman's defence of sport as "a conclusion founded on practice" might be just as logically applied to the criminal's defence of crime. To invoke the judgment of an expert on the morality of a practice in which he is professionally interested is an error similar to that of setting the cat to watch the cream.

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On the whole, it is not surprising that the sportsman who can devise no cleverer modes of escape from his humanitarian pursuers than the sophisms above mentioned is already being brought to bay, and stands in imminent danger of being, controversially, "broken up." Indeed, considering the nature of the arguments adduced in its favour, one is inclined to think that sport must be not only cruel to the victims of the chase, but ruinous to the mental capacity of the gentlemen who indulge in it. It can hardly be doubted that the ludicrous aspect of modern sport will more and more present itself to those who possess the sense of humour; and we may even hope that the poverty-stricken caricaturists of our comic papers will some day relinquish their threadbare jokes over the blunders of the hunting-field and the shooting-box, to discover that the subject of sport is rich in another kind of comedy—the essential silliness of the habit itself, and the crass absurdity of the arguments put forward by its apologists.

FOOTNOTES:

[24] Some of these fallacies have been incidentally referred to in preceding chapters, but it is convenient, at the expense of a little overlapping, that they should here be treated together.

[25] *Blackwood's Magazine*, August, 1899.

[26] Both these lines of argument were followed by Dr. Lang, Archbishop of York, when on a recent occasion (November 16, 1913) he pronounced what may be called the Foxology at the dedication of a stained window to the memory of an aged blood-sportsman who was killed in the hunting-field. That a Christian minister should have been "launched into eternity," as the phrase is, while engaged in hunting a fox, might have been expected to cause a sense of very deep pain, and even of shame, to his co-religionists. What actually happened was that an Archbishop was found willing to eulogise, in a consecrated place of worship, not only the reverend gentleman whose life was thus thrown away, but the sport of fox-hunting itself!

[27] "My Sporting Holidays," by Sir H. Seton-Karr, 1904.

- [28] But let us not forget the delightful remark of the Archbishop of York, that “even the labourer, when he felt the stir of the Meet, got just one of those fresh events, excitements, and interests that he needed in what otherwise was often a very monotonous life.”
- [29] This humane aspect of sport may be aptly illustrated by a passage in De Quincey’s essay on “Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts”:
- “The subject chosen ought to be in good health, for it is absolutely barbarous to murder a sick person, who is usually quite unable to bear it. And here, in this benign attention to the comfort of sick people, you will observe the usual effect of a fine art to soften and refine the feelings. From our art, as from all the other liberal arts, when thoroughly mastered, the result is to humanise the heart.”
- [30] Soame Jenyns, 1782.

APPENDIX

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APPENDIX

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I

SPORT AS A TRAINING FOR WAR

It is often said, in attempted justification of “sport,” that it is the best training for war. This is true only in the sense that as far as concerns the creation and the perpetuation of a certain aggressive spirit, war and sport are certainly kindred pastimes with a good deal in common. They both date from a prehistoric period when man

“Butted his rough brother-brute
For lust or lusty blood or provender,”

and both, having been prolonged into an age which ought to have left them far behind with other antiquated barbarisms, are now defended by the same moral and economic fallacies, as being, in the first place, part of the great “struggle for existence,” “survival of the fittest,” and so forth, and, secondly, as “good for trade.” Good for trade they both are, in the sense that they help the few to snatch a temporary profit at the expense of the many; and as for the survival of the fittest, if you are determined to wrest that theory from its true meaning, it may be made to cover both war and sport at a stretch. As Robert Buchanan said:

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“Under the fostering wing of Imperialism, brute force is developing more and more into a political science. There is no excess of rapacity, no extreme of selfishness, no indifference to the rights of the weak and helpless, which Christian materialism is not ready to justify. The Englishman, both as soldier and colonist, is a typical sportsman; he seizes his prey wherever he finds it with the hunter’s privilege. He is lost in amazement when men speak of the rights of inferior races, just as the sportsman at home is lost in amazement when we talk of the rights of the lower orders. Here, as yonder, he is kindly, blatant, good-humoured, aggressive, selfish, and fundamentally *savage*.”

We may take it for granted that, in the long run, as we treat our fellow-beings, “the animals,” so shall we treat our fellow-men. In spite of all the barriers and divisions that prejudice and superstition have so industriously heaped up between the human and the non-human, the fact remains that the lower animals hold their lives by the same tenure as men do, and that there is no essential difference between the killing of one race and of the other. The tiger that lurks in all of us will not easily be tamed, so long as the deliberate murder of harmless creatures for “sport” is a recognised amusement in every “civilised” country. Once open your eyes to the kinship that links all sentient life, and you will see very clearly the relation that subsists between the sportsman and the soldier.

We recall an incident related some years ago at a Humanitarian League meeting, where the craze for “big-game” shooting was being discussed. Everyone knows how the possessors of such “trophies” as the heads and horns of “big game” love to decorate their houses with these treasured mementoes of the chase. It had been the fortune—good or bad—of the narrator of the

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story to visit a house which was not only beautified in this way, but also contained a *human* head that had been sent home by a member of a certain African expedition and “preserved” by the skill of the taxidermist. When the owner of the head—the *second* owner—invited the humanitarian visitor to see the trophy, it was with some trepidation that he acquiesced. But when, after passing up a staircase between walls literally plastered with portions of the carcasses of elephant, rhinoceros, antelope, etc., he came to a landing where, under a glass case, stood the head of a pleasant-looking young negro, he felt no special repugnance at the sight. It was simply a part—and, as it seemed, not especially dreadful or loathsome part—of the surrounding dead-house; and he understood how mankind itself is nothing more or less than “big game” to our soldier-sportsmen, when they find themselves in some conveniently remote region where the restrictions of morality are unknown. The absolute difference between human and non-human is a fiction which will not bear the test either of fearless thought in the study or of rough experience in the wilds.

The temper which makes war still possible in the twentieth century is that which is kept alive and fostered in so-called times of peace by the practice, among other practices (for we do not, of course, assert that sport is the *only* accessory to war), of doing to death thousands upon thousands of helpless animals for purposes of mere recreation. Peace advocates who declaim against the infamies of war, without taking note of the kindred infamies of sport, have, to say the least of it, not looked very deeply into the subject of their propaganda;^[31] and precisely the same holds good of those “lovers of animals” who are horrified at the idea of running a fox to death, but are ready to accept the flimsiest of flimsy sophisms as an excuse for going to war. Sport is, in truth, a form of war, and war is a form of sport; and those who defend such institutions as the Eton Beagles, on the ground that the schoolboys who indulge in them are thereby trained to be the future stalwarts of Imperialism, are fully justified in their contention—provided only that they look the facts of war and of Imperialism in the face. The Etonians who, in the eighteenth century, used to beat rams to death with clubs, and who now break up hares as a half-holiday pastime, have always furnished a large contingent of officers to the British Army. Need we wonder that wars flourish without regard to morality or justice?

But when we turn to the assertion that the practice of sport is, actually, the best *training* for war, we find it to be contradicted by facts. On this point we cannot do better than quote from a letter addressed to the *Humanitarian* by Mr. R. B. Cunninghame-Graham:

“The rise of Japan and the fighting qualities of the Japanese have shaken sportsmen from their ‘sport-the-image-of-war’ position. It is well known that not only are the majority of Japanese vegetarians, but that such a thing as a sportsman is unknown amongst them. Yet, without wishing to disparage the prowess of European soldiers, how many ‘sportsmen’ would wager much money on the chances of a thousand picked Europeans if opposed to a thousand Japanese soldiers in an open plain with no weapons but swords?”

“The Boer War, and the miserable figure cut by our officers in comparison with the Boer officers in both shooting and riding, disposed conclusively of the ‘sport-the-preparation-for-war’ argument, so dear to sportsmen. In fact, ‘sport’ as understood in England cannot prepare men for war, even if they ride to hounds three days a week, shoot the other three, and read the *Pink Un* on Sunday. English sport and war are different in their essence, and one has no analogy to the other.

“In the one case men rise from a comfortable bed, bathe, and breakfast, and even if they are exposed to weather during the day, return at night to a well-cooked dinner and comfortable bed. The horses they ride are valuable, highly-trained animals, who are expected to put out their full strength for at most two or three hours, and are perhaps not required again for two or three days, or even expected to be required. The shooting is done under the same conditions, and though requiring skill (as does the riding in fox-hunting), is not of a nature to be useful in war.

“In neither case does the ‘diversion’ conduce to the self-denying or abstemious habits so essential in war. Of course, I do not mean that sportsmen are of necessity of intemperate habits, but in war the conditions are different from those of sport. In the latter case the soldier rises, perhaps from a night of rain round a camp-fire, gets, without breakfast, on his half-starving horse, and jogs along all day at a footspace, to sleep, supposing there is no fighting and he has not been killed, once more by a camp-fire, perhaps again in rain, or in a driving wind.

“Every condition under which the sportsman plays is different from those under which the soldier works. As in the Roman times regiments of gladiators proved the most useless at the front, so I believe a regiment all composed of sportsmen would make a miserable show before a thousand quite unsporting Japanese.”

To the same effect is the opinion of Sir H. H. Johnston, as expressed in an article in the *Nineteenth Century* of September, 1913.

“One is told that fox-hunting is a splendid school for riders, the making of our cavalry, etc. Rubbish! Very few of our great cavalry officers have been fox-hunters, or willing fox-hunters, and practically none of the troopers. A large proportion of our mounted soldiers are recruited from townsmen who never learned to ride until they entered the riding-school. The Boers were admittedly the cunningest, most enduring riders recent warfare has known, but they, like their cousins of the Wild West, would probably show themselves duffers in the hunting-field; at any rate, they never practised in this school of steeplechasing. The last thing I desire to do is to undervalue riding as an exercise, an accomplishment, a necessary art in warfare, a school for teaching suppleness, coolness, and courage. But the fox is not a necessary ingredient in the curriculum.”

We conclude, then, that Sport, considered as a school for War, is doubly to be condemned,

inasmuch as, while it breeds the aggressive and cruel spirit of militarism, it does *not* furnish that practical military training which is essential to successful warfare. Sport may make a man a savage; it does not make him a soldier.

FOOTNOTES:

- [31] Here, for example, is a suggestive heading of an article in a London paper (October 27, 1913) in reference to a meeting of the German Emperor and the Emperor Francis Joseph for the purpose of promoting peace: "PEACE EMPERORS MEET. THE KAISER SHOOTS 1,100 PHEASANTS WITH THE AUSTRIAN ARCHDUKE." A strange way of inaugurating peace!

II "BLOODING"

THE BLOODING OF CHILDREN.

Of all practices connected with "sport" none are more loathsome than those known as "bleeding," whether it be the "bleeding" of children, which consists in a sort of gruesome parody of the rite of baptism, or the "bleeding" of hounds—viz., the turning out of some decrepit animal to be pulled down by the pack, by way of stimulating their blood-lust. Here are a few examples:

On January 4, 1910, the *Daily Mirror* published an account of the "bleeding" of the Marquis of Worcester, the ten-year-old son of the Duke of Beaufort. In a front-page illustration the child was shown with blood-bedaubed cheeks, holding up a dead hare for the hounds, while a number of ladies and gentlemen were smiling approval in the rear.

Here, again, is an extract from the *Cheltenham Examiner* of March 25, 1909, in reference to the "eviction" and butchery of a fox which had taken refuge in a drain.

"Captain Elwes's two children being present at the death of a fox on their father's preserves, the old hunting custom of 'bleeding' was duly performed by Charlie Beacham, who, after dipping the brush of the fox in his own [*sic*] blood, sprinkled the foreheads of both children, hoping they would be aspirants to the 'sport of kings.'"

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Presumably the blood in which the brush was dipped was that of the fox, not of Mr. Charles Beacham. But what a ceremony in a civilised age! One would have thought that twentieth-century sportsmen, even if they would not spare the fox, might spare their own children!

The following paragraph also appeared in a London paper in 1909:

"A pretty little girl on a chestnut cob, with masses of fair curls falling over her navy-blue habit, was the chief centre of attraction at a meet of the West Norfolk Fox-Hounds at Necton. The pretty little girl was Princess Mary of Wales, and the day will be a memorable one in her life. She motored back to Sandringham carrying her first brush.... Princess Mary was 'blooded' by the huntsmen, and was presented with the brush, which was hung on her saddle."

In connection with deer-stalking, the practice of "bleeding" has been described as "a hunting tradition which goes back to the Middle Ages, and recalls the days when the gentle craft of venery was the most cherished accomplishment of our monarchs."

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THE BLOODING OF HOUNDS.

In the prosecution of Mr. Alexander Ormrod, joint Master of the Ribblesdale Buckhounds, by the R.S.P.C.A. on November 11, 1912, for cruelty to a doe, there was evidence that the unfortunate deer, turned out in private to "blood" a new pack of hounds, was lame and wholly out of condition; and, as *Truth* remarked, "the mere fact that the animal, although given a good start, only managed to get two or three hundred yards away before being pulled down, 'screaming like a child,' was quite sufficient to show that she was incapable of escape." Take the following:

"Mr. Marmaduke Wright, of Bolton Hall, a member of the Hunt, said he saw Oddie (a hunt servant) the day before the hunt took place. Oddie said they were going to let a lame deer out of the pen to blood the young hounds, and witness said he would not go out, as he did not care about hunting tame calves, much less a lame one."

The statement of John James Macauley, an eye-witness, was that the deer "scarcely put her hind-leg on the ground."

"She was followed by the hounds for a distance of about two hundred yards.... When the doe could see she was overtaken, she stopped, and he heard the poor little thing screaming like a child."

Lord Ribblesdale, called to speak as to the practice of bleeding hounds, condemned the method adopted by his colleague.

"If bleeding had been the object, his opinion was that there should have been a sudden, sharp, and decisive transaction [*sic*], which would have made the hounds, whenever they saw a deer, go at it. If they intended to blood hounds, the method pursued

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by Mr. Ormrod was most foolish. It was not an uncommon thing to blood hounds, and with regard to the question of cruelty, if they argued from elemental principles, all sport was cruel. He had hunted carted deer, and there had been no cruelty."

Asked whether, if a lame, emaciated, and weakened deer were released from a pen, it would be an unreasonable thing to hunt it, Lord Ribblesdale replied—

"With the 'if,' yes. This was a weak deer; therefore I should have blooded hounds with it."

The magistrates decided that "there was not enough evidence to convict," but the prosecution did great service in showing what horrible practices are still carried on under the name of "sport."

III THE HUNTING OF GRAVID ANIMALS

Whatever differences of opinion may exist as to the morality of "blood-sports" in general, there is one recurring feature of such sports which, whether regarded from the humanitarian's or from the sportsman's point of view, is almost equally repulsive. We refer to the hunting, in some cases accidental, in others deliberate, of gravid animals. That such hunting—of the hare, of the otter, of the hind—takes place, there is no question whatever, as is proved by the following facts. [159]

It is quite a common practice to continue the hunting of hares with beagles until the middle, or even to the end of March, by which time many of the doe hares are heavy with young. Owing to the remonstrances addressed to the headmaster of Eton by the Humanitarian League, the Eton hunting season has now been curtailed, but it is still prolonged beyond the date which has been suggested by the better class of sportsmen. The experience recorded in the *County Gentleman* (1906) by the writer of the following letter, Mr. John A. Doyle, of Pendarren, Crickhowell, seems conclusive:

"The question you raise is one in which I feel a good deal of interest. I have not only been for some years master of a pack of harriers (foot), but I am also an Old Etonian, and have always felt much interested in the doings of the school beagles, and sympathy with them. Indeed, before I got your letter I had thought of writing to the headmaster, with whom I am—perhaps I should say was, a long time back—slightly acquainted.

"My own practice has always been to have one meet the first week in March, and then end the season. I was once or twice tempted to go on later, and once killed a doe in kindle. Since then I have kept to my rule. She gave us a sharp run of twenty minutes or half an hour. This, I think, disposes of the theory that a pregnant hare has no scent. Possibly she has less than she would have normally. But *per contra* she must be handicapped by her condition. Then there is the risk of a chop. And it cannot be good for an animal big with young to be hustled and frightened.

"There is yet a worse danger. In some forward seasons there may be leverets by the second week in March. The dam might be killed, and the leverets left to die. I would almost sooner never hunt again than run such a risk. Of course, one might hunt through March for several seasons and none of these things happen; but there must be a risk, and I do not myself think that one is justified in running it." [160]

What is true of the Eton beagles is true of every hare-hunt throughout the country. The sport ought to be brought to a close on the last day of February, as, indeed, used to be the custom. "Coursing still goes on among a few," wrote the author of the "Sporting Almanack" for March, 1843, "but in our opinion the fair sportsman will *hold hard* as soon as March sets in."^[32] Much, then, of the hare-hunting of the present time is *not* fair.

Still worse is the case of otter-hunting, which is carried on from springtime till autumn, with the result that females heavy with young must occasionally be worried, though sportsmen plead that this is never intentional. An instance that has often been quoted is recorded in the Hon. Grantley F. Berkeley's "Life and Recollections," where the story is told of a female otter disturbed by the hounds "in the act of making a couch for her young."

"At her we went for seven hours, with constant views, and during that time, on a stump overhanging the river, she miscarried and gave birth to two cubs, born only a few days before their time. A hound found them, and when I took one in my hand it was scarcely cold. She beat us for want of light, and well she deserved to escape." [161]

Similar instances are recorded from time to time, as by a correspondent of the *Morning Leader*, who told how in Devonshire, in 1891, a female otter, after being worried for nearly four hours, had given birth to two dead whelps.

But of all such malpractices the chasing of in-calf hinds is the most deliberate and the worst. If it be true, as we are informed, that tenant-farmers in the Devon and Somerset district complain bitterly of the damage done by deer, what possible reason can be given against the *shooting* (when necessary) of the hinds, in place of the disgusting and barbarous custom of hunting them? A few years ago the Rev. J. Stratton, after personally investigating the matter, described some of the inevitable results of hind-hunting till the end of March, instead of stopping the "sport," as ought to be done, at the beginning of March at the latest, and gave specific cases in which, when the dead hinds were "broken up" to feed the hounds, calves as large as hares were seen to be taken from the bodies. Since that time there is reason to believe that, owing in part to the

Humanitarian League's protests, there is a growing local feeling against this especially cruel feature of the sport, and it is hoped that those landowners and residents who have humane scruples in the matter will use their influence to bring about the discontinuance of this disgraceful practice. The whole system of hunting these West Country deer is cruel enough—involving, as it does, the death of many of them by leaping from the cliffs on to the rocks, or being drowned in the sea, or being hung up on wire-fences and mangled by the hounds. But the hunting of the hinds, at a time when even savages might compassionate them, is one of the very worst abominations for which even "sport" is responsible.

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FOOTNOTES:

- [32] Quoted in *Fry's Magazine*, June, 1911, in an admirable article entitled "Shabby Blood-Sports Worth Ending."

IV DRAG-HUNT *VERSUS* STAG-HUNT

The fact is too often overlooked that a ready substitute for the savage chase of animals may be found in the drag-hunt, a form of sport which preserves all that is valuable in the way of exercise, while getting rid of one thing only—the cruelty to the tortured stag or fox or hare. As has been pointed out in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, a paper favourable to sport:

"There is little doubt that in time the drag-hunt will become the popular hunting pastime. For years it has been supported by the officers of the Guards, and, besides having the merit of disarming criticism on the part of the Humanitarian League, it can be enjoyed by thousands of sightseers, as it defines the tract of country over which the drag leads the hounds."

The attempts of some sporting writers to belittle the value of the drag have been very infelicitous. If they personally prefer a blood-sport to a bloodless pastime, let them say so—it is a matter on which we will take their word—but when they assert that a drag-hunt is not suitable for pedestrians, or for schoolboys, they only convict themselves of knowing as little about the practical as about the moral side of the controversy. The following statement was made by the late Lady Florence Dixie, who spoke with unquestionable authority:—

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"Drags can be fast run or slow run, according to the way they are laid. My husband owned a pack of harriers and a pack of beagles, and I was able to get him often to hunt them on drags, and have often ridden with the harriers and run with the beagles. When a very fast, non-hunting run was wanted with the harriers, the drag was laid straight and continuously, and hounds ran fast, and riding was like a steeplechase, without a pause, except when any of us came a cropper! When a hunting run was required, we laid a catchy drag, twisting here and there, lifting the scent, and copying as near as possible the wily ways of Reynard. With the beagles we imitated the hare, who is a ringing, not straight-running animal, lifting the scent, doubling back, and so on, and, in fact, we brought thus two competitors into the sport—*i.e.*, the drag-layer *versus* the huntsman, and pitted their wiles and their cunning against each other. I may be accepted as an authority, as few have perhaps ridden in harder-fought hunting runs of all kinds than I—fox, stag, harrier, guanaco, ostrich, and suchlike—and I have had considerable experience with beagles as well, on foot."^[33]

In face of this testimony, and of the fact recorded by Brinsley Richards, in his "Seven Years at Eton," that a drag was successfully used at Eton half a century ago, it is absurd to pretend that it could not be used there again; but if further proof be needed, it is, fortunately, available in the following letter from Mr. A. G. Grenfell, Headmaster of Mostyn House School, Parkgate, Cheshire. It will be seen that the idea, very commonly held, that the drag-hunt is suitable only for those following on horseback, and that it would too severely tax the energies of boys running on foot, is absolutely erroneous.

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"December 16, 1903.

"On the subject of Beagle Drag-Hunting at Schools, I think you will be pleased to know that we have owned and run a pack of beagles at this school for the last ten years on the lines that you suggest, and with the greatest success. The drag affords any amount of healthy and interesting exercise without cruelty. Ours is just an ordinary preparatory school, with ten masters and ninety boys. Our hounds are twenty-three or twenty-four in number. The sport of following them is very popular with all of us, and it would be hard to devise an easier or better form of school variant to the everlasting football. Not only does drag-hunting keep boys from tiring of the regulation game, but it is to the wind and endurance these runs give us that we owe the fact that we seldom, if ever, lose a match against boys of our own size and weight. The beauty of the drag-hunt is that you can pick your course, you can choose your jumps, you can regulate your checks and keep your field all together, and you can insure the maximum of sport and exercise."

Here, too, is the testimony of another headmaster of a preparatory school, Mr. F. H. Gresson, of The Grange, Crowborough.

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"March 23, 1909.

"I can fully endorse all that Mr. Grenfell says with regard to the pleasure and amusement to be derived from a drag-hunt. I have kept a small pack of beagles and hunted a drag with them for the last five years with very successful results. In my opinion, it is a very suitable form of amusement for boys of the preparatory school age, as you can regulate the distance and the checks, and there is no fear of their getting overdone.

"As one who is very keen upon both fox-hunting and hare-hunting, I cannot pretend to say that a drag compares in any way with either. At the same time, however, I get a great amount of enjoyment out of it myself, in addition to the exercise, and I do not find it at all a dull sport."

We do not, of course, *compare* the drag-hunt with the stag-hunt, the hare-hunt, or any other blood-sport, in the sense of saying that it yields equal excitement; it lacks, no doubt, the thrill of the life-and-death struggle that is going on in front of the hounds. But for those who are aware that such excitement is cruel and morbid, the drag-hunt may be made to provide an excellent *substitute* for blood-sport, with plenty of skill as well as plenty of exercise; and sportsmen who refuse such substitute merely give proof that their addiction to a barbarous practice is very strong.

FOOTNOTES:

- [33] In like manner, Mr. W. H. Crofton, president of the Beagle Club, has admitted in *The Times* that the drag-hunt, "run with skill by one who understands the art," can be made to yield "excellent exercise" for schoolboys.

V

CLAY-PIGEON *VERSUS* LIVE PIGEON

BY THE REV. J. STRATTON

Pigeon-shooting is one of those practices which generous minds must regard with aversion. There is not a single element in it which cultivates any good quality in mankind.

The late Lord Randolph Churchill, in the House of Commons, 1883, alluding to Monte Carlo doings, gave an effective description of a pigeon-shooting scene:

"He had had the opportunity, he said, of watching the sight at Monte Carlo, though he had never had the satisfaction of killing a pigeon himself. The pigeon-shooting at Monte Carlo was conducted on the same principles as that at Hurlingham, and under similar rules. He saw the birds taken out of the basket, and before being put into the trap a man cut their tails with a large pair of scissors. That probably was not very cruel, because he only cut the quill, though at times he seemed to cut very close. But worse followed. After cutting the tail, he saw the man take the bird in one hand, and with the other tear a great bunch of feathers from the breast and stomach of every pigeon. On asking the man what he did that for, he replied that it was to stimulate the birds, in order that, maddened by excitement and pain, they might take a more eccentric leap in the air, and increase the chance of the pigeon gamblers.

"He saw another very curious thing, too. One of the pigeons was struck and fell to the ground; but when the dog went to pick it up, the wretched bird fluttered again in the air, and for an appreciable time it remained so fluttering, just a little higher than the dog could jump. While the bird's fate was thus trembling in the balance, the betting was fast and furious, and when at last the pigeon tumbled into the dog's jaws, he would never forget the shout of triumph and yell of execration that rose from the ring-men and gentlemen."

Now, what honest-minded man can approve of such a performance as this? Yet the so-called sport is in much favour still, from aristocratic gatherings down to those promoted by low public-houses.

It is surely of the nature of anything claiming to be legitimate sport, that the quarry should be in its natural, wild condition, and should have a chance of saving its life from its would-be destroyer. What chance of this kind has a dazed pigeon, fluttering from a box in the presence of guns ready to fire the moment it appears? The whole thing is cowardly and contemptible, and should be suppressed by law. This fate it would have met in 1883 had the House of Lords done its duty as well as the House of Commons; for a Bill which aimed at its abolition was rejected in the former House after it had passed in the latter.

More lately, however, there has occurred an event which proves that the views we hold respecting pigeon-shooting are beginning to find acceptance with the public. As everybody is aware, the Hurlingham Club used to lend its patronage to this sport, but recently a change in its policy took place. A meeting of members was held, and the question was put to the vote, whether the shooting of pigeons from traps should be any longer permitted in the grounds. A two-thirds majority decided that it should be abolished. The minority endeavoured to get this settlement reversed by law, but they were unsuccessful.

It was instructive, as well as cheering, to observe the favour with which the Press as a whole

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received the judgment delivered by Mr. Justice Joyce on the case submitted to him.

As an example of newspaper utterances I may quote the comments of the *Daily News* of February 26, 1906:

"All those who believe that 1906 is better as regards blood-sports than 1868 will rejoice that Hurlingham is not to be bound fast to the older date, and its defective morality. Pigeon-shooting is emphatically not now—as Mr. Justice Joyce said it was considered in 1868—a manly sport, fit for gentlemen. It may seem a hard saying to those who, having acquired proficiency in the practice, have lost their sense of moral truth. The fashion at Hurlingham has slowly changed in deference to surrounding opinion. Pigeon-shooting has not only its negative side of unmanliness, but the positive side of cruelty, and we are glad that the Club is not so indissolubly built on this base sport but that a two-thirds majority may decide when the time has come to abolish it."

CLAY-PIGEON.

Supposing all shooting of birds from traps were prohibited by law, is there any kindred diversion which might take its place? Yes; there is the clay-pigeon shoot, which affords good practice in gunnery and amuses its patrons by enabling them to meet and settle contests for prizes and so forth. It ought to satisfy all who have not got into the vicious habit of thinking that sport is poor work unless it inflicts agony or death on animals. [169]

The clay-pigeon, so-called, does not bear any resemblance to a living bird. It is like a small saucer, brown in colour, and brittle.

One of the ways in which the artificial shoot is carried on is this. A pit is formed, deep enough to allow a man to stand in it and remain unseen. In the pit is placed machinery which a person can employ for projecting a "pigeon" to a considerable distance, at a quick speed, and at any angle. The pigeon may be shot up in the air, or sent skimming along the ground, and fly to right or left. The shooter stands some yards behind the pit, gun in hand, waiting for the appearance of the object. And, not knowing what course the pigeon will take, he is kept on the *qui vive*. From the sporting point of view, this is so much to the good, as uncertainty is an element of enjoyment in the matter.

At shooting grounds such as those of Messrs. Holland and Holland, of New Bond Street, situated at Kensal Rise, there are many diversities attached to the recreation. Birds are thrown, in many cases, from high structures, or go flying over trees, and move in a mode similar to that of pheasants or driven grouse or partridges. Then, further, at this establishment, the figures of birds with outstretched wings appear for a few seconds on a whitened screen, and form interesting objects to fire at. Across this screen, again, metal representations of rabbits are made to run on an iron rod. From this it will be understood what a deal of variety may be introduced into this form of amusement. [170]

What humanitarians desire to see is the substitution everywhere of this kind of shooting for that of firing at pigeons and starlings and other living birds liberated from traps.

I ought to say that at Messrs. Holland and Holland's establishment live pigeons are kept for those who wish to fire at them, but I was pleased to learn that, for every living bird killed, a hundred clay birds are shot at.

VI COURSING

Coursing, the practice of chasing a hare with two greyhounds, slipped simultaneously from the leash, is one of the most ancient of blood-sports; but the spirit of those who take part in it does not seem to have improved with time. It may be doubted whether modern patrons of the sport are as chivalrous as those referred to by the old writer Arrian, whose work on Coursing dates from the second century:

"For coursers, such at least as are true sportsmen, do not take out their dogs for the sake of catching a hare, but for the contest and sport of coursing, and are glad if the hare escape; if she fly to any thin brake for concealment, though they may see her trembling and in the utmost distress, they will call off their dogs."

What is the attraction of coursing? The author of "The Encyclopædia of Rural Sports" (1852) is forced to admit that coursing has been found dull: [171]

"We may be asked," he says, "what pleasure there can be for people marshalled in a line, at certain distances from each other, monotonously to walk or ride at a foot pace over a ploughed field or across a wide heath on a bleak November day, the eye anxiously directed hither and thither to catch the clod or the sidelong furrow that half conceals poor puss, or to espy the tuft she has parted to make her form in."

But even so stupid a pastime as this has its charms for many people, when to the zest of seeing a timid animal's life at stake there is added the more modern excitement of betting on the prowess of the dogs.

Of the cruelty of coursing, as practised in the chief contests, from the Waterloo Cup down, there can be no question. "What more aggravated form of torture is to be found," says Lady

Florence Dixie, "than coursing with greyhounds—the awful terror of the hare depicting itself in the laid-back ears, convulsive doubles, and wild starting eyes which seem almost to burst from their sockets in the agony of tension which that piteous struggle for life entails?"

Open coursing is bad enough, on the score of inhumanity; but when the coursing is enclosed, or the hares are bagged ones turned out for the occasion, the case is still worse. The use of enclosed grounds dates from about 1876, and we learn from the volume on "Coursing" in the Badminton Library of Sports and Pastimes (1892), that "many of the old school opposed it strongly, and with the best reason, for it utterly lacked the elements of real sport." At the present time it is by a strict system of "preserving" hares rather than by keeping them in enclosures, that a sufficient supply is maintained for the great coursing matches. What an object-lesson in cruelty these meetings afford may be judged from the fact that at some of them, such as the competition for the Waterloo Cup, there is an attendance of several thousand spectators.

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Here is an "Impression of the Waterloo Meeting," by Mr. John Gulland, which appeared in the *Morning Leader* in 1911:

"Stretching away into the far country (if you use your eyes) may be seen two long, thin black lines, representing quite a little army of beaters. In a short while dozens of hares may be seen gaily sporting between these lines, in delightful ignorance of the terrible enemy which is lying in wait for them in front. It is the business of the beater to divert a good hare from his playful companions; and if you keep your eye well directed on the black lines, you will soon detect the white flutter of a handkerchief passing along the lines, and a brown shape leaping swiftly along the ground, nervously anxious to turn to one side or the other, but kept to an inexorable straight course by the living wall of beaters. A shout from the crowd, growing every moment more excited as the short drama is about to begin, proclaims the fact that the hare is in the battle-ground, and is about to meet his Waterloo. And, higher still, and louder than all, the raucous cry of the bookmaker, 'Take 7 to 2,' 'Take 2 to 1,' rises shrill in the air.

"All this time a couple of greyhounds are held tight by a slipper in a box, open on two sides, in the middle of the field. As soon as the hare is beaten past the slipper's box the greyhounds tug and strain at the leash, almost dragging the slipper with them. When the hare has had about fifty yards' start the hounds are released, and off they dash together, looking at first like one. This is the most thrilling part of the game, and is watched in a few seconds of almost breathless silence. Pussy hasn't, however, much chance against a greyhound, and is soon overtaken; but he still has a few arts at his command. For, just as the dog is about to hurl himself on pussy's unoffending body, the little creature makes a deft turn aside, his pursuer flying harmlessly past. Then follow a series of turns, feints, dodges, and bounds. Puss may, indeed, lead his enemies a sorry dance for a little while, but it is an unequal contest. These greyhounds at Altcar are the best and fastest of their kind, and it is seldom that a hare escapes their teeth on Waterloo Cup day. In half a minute—at the outside two minutes—all is over."

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The writer states that he thinks he has never seen "so many bookmakers and bookmakers' clerks per head of the population" as at the Waterloo coursing. "It was the merriest gambling I have seen for many a long day," for coursing lends itself particularly well to betting."

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VII THE GENTLE CRAFT

"It has been gravely said that a good angler must also be a good Christian. Without literalising the assertion, it may well be admitted that there is much in the contemplative character of his pursuit, and in the quiet scenes of beauty with which it brings him face to face, to soften and elevate as well as to humanise."

Thus writes Mr. H. Cholmondeley-Pennell, a distinguished authority on angling. We fear, however, that an examination of the "gentle craft" will scarcely justify the assertion; for the fact cannot be gainsaid that to kill fish for mere *amusement* is to gratify one's own pleasure at the cost of another being's pain, and that, regarded from a moral standpoint, it will not materially affect the case to plead that the fisherman is "contemplative," or that in the pursuit of his pastime he is brought into touch with the softening influences of nature. Unfortunately, as far as his sport (which is the only point in question) is concerned, there is no sign of this softening tendency on *him*. Contemplative he may be (in the intervals between "rises" or "bites"), but his contemplation has apparently not taken that introspective turn which would seem to be most needed. He may be gentle—in *some* relations of life; but in the matter of impaling live-bait and hooking fishes his gentleness is of a worse than dubious quality. One would have thought that a sense of humour would withhold fishermen from making these ludicrous claims to virtues in which, *qua* fishermen, they are very signally deficient. "There are unquestionably," says Leigh Hunt, "many amiable men among sportsmen, who, as the phrase is, would not hurt a fly, that is to say, on a window; at the end of a string the case is altered."

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The stories told by anglers of the alleged "insensibility" of fish—how a hooked salmon that has just broken away will sometimes return to the bait—do not prove very much; for that fish are less intelligent and less sensitive than warm-blooded animals is no excuse for torturing them to the extent of their feeling. And it is evident, on the showing of the fishermen themselves, that the process of "playing" a large fish is a very cruel one, since it means gradually and mercilessly wearing down the strength of the victim during a desperate struggle prolonged sometimes for hours. Reading, for example, such a passage as the following, taken from Dr. Hamilton's book on

“Fly-Fishing,” one marvels at the mood which can find enjoyment in so barbarous a sport:

“I know of no greater excitement when, after casting the fly, a sudden swirl of the water tells you that a salmon has risen, and the tightening of your line that he is hooked. Then the mighty rush of a fresh-run fish; the rapid whirl (sweet music!) of the reel, as the line is carried out; the tremendous leaps and tugs and efforts as the fish tries to free himself. Good fisherman as you may be, the chances are against you. You at one end of the line doing all you can, and putting all your experience to the test, to keep and bring to bank the prize you covet. The fish at the other end, with all his knowledge of the rocks and bad places at the bottom of the river, doing all he can to circumvent you.... And then, after a slight pause, with skilful management the strain is put on. An anxious moment; he gives, but oh! how slowly, how reluctantly. The question is, who is to conquer. You feel your power as you wind up; you see his silver side; you know there will be yet one or two terrific struggles for life as he gets a glimpse of you and the gaff; then comes the final rush, the line paying out inch by inch. It is over! Another roll or two, and he is on the bank—and then the soothing pipe while you study his fine proportions.”

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Under some conditions the sport consists in practically *drowning* the fish in its own element. “The most killing place,” says Dr. Hamilton, “when the hook is well fast, is in the lower jaw. The strain of the line prevents in a great measure the free current of water through the gills, and the fish becomes suffocated.”

To what extravagance the angling mania can run may be seen from certain forms of sea-fishing. The tarpon, an inhabitant of the Gulf of Mexico, is a great fish of the herring kind, weighing from 50 to 180 pounds, and measuring from 5 to 7 feet in length. It is not used as food by any but the negroes and “lower classes,” and its chief value, we are told, is for “sporting” purposes. In *The Queen* of December 7, 1895, an account was given of “an angling feat” performed by a lady who caught a monster of this kind. “The lady’s grip,” we were told, “was firm,” and defeated the endeavours of the fish “to shake the cruel hook from its throat.” In this, and in all angling records, it will be observed that the cruelty is purely wanton—the killing being done not because it is necessary or useful, but because the sportsman *enjoys* it.

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Again, one of the most nauseous features of the “gentle craft” is the use of “live bait”—that is, of worms, maggots, flies, grasshoppers, frogs, and small fish. Here is one of the directions given by Mr. Cholmondeley-Pennell:

“In using the lob-worm-tail only, the worm must be broken about the middle, longer or shorter according to circumstances, and the hook inserted at the point of the breakage, the worm being then run up the hook until the shank is somewhat more than covered and only the end of the tail remains at liberty.”

It is pointed out by Mr. Alexander Mackie in “The Art of Worm Fishing,” that a “particularly beautiful” blue-nosed lob will account for as many as four trout, if cut in two parts and used successively, and that no worm of this class should be thrown away when only “slightly shattered.”

The impaling of a worm or maggot is disgusting enough; but when live fish are used as bait the cruelty is still worse. It will be observed that it is the angler’s object to *prolong* the misery of the living bait to the utmost extent. Thus Mr. Cholmondeley-Pennell, with reference to pike fishing:

“With regard to live-baits, a good deal must of course depend upon the state of the water. Should it be very bright and clear, a gudgeon, which is also a very tough fish, will generally be found the best, and in extreme cases even a minnow used with a small float and a single gimp hook passed through its upper lip or back.... Probably the best live-bait of all for thick or clouded water is a medium-sized dace, as its scales are peculiarly brilliant, and the fish itself by no means easily killed. In case of waters in which the pike are over-fed, I should recommend my readers to try them with live gold-fish.... If gold-fish are not forthcoming, small carp form a very killing and *long-lived* bait. The bait should not be left too long in one place, but be kept gently moving. It should also be held as little as possible out of water, on to which, when cast, its fall should be as light as possible, to avoid injury and premature decease.”

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A very cruel way of taking freshwater fish is by night-lines. The victims are often left for hours with large hooks in their mouths; and when at last taken from the water are exhausted or dead. This perhaps is a poacher’s method rather than a sportsman’s; but it is to be observed that as a rule the despised poaching methods—such as the netting, wiring, or “tickling” of fish—are far less barbarous than those which are honoured as “sportsmanlike.”

It is clear, then, that the title of “the gentle craft” is an absurd misnomer when applied to angling, and that, if humaneness had been reckoned among the virtues, we should not have seen the canonisation of Izaak Walton, the patron saint of fishermen. For as Byron says of him:

“The quaint old cruel coxcomb in his gullet
Should have a hook, and a small trout to pull it.”

“It would have taught him humanity at least,” adds the poet in a footnote. “They may talk about the beauties of nature, but the angler merely thinks of his dish of fish; he has no leisure to take his eyes from off the streams, and a single ‘bite’ is worth to him more than all the scenery around. The whale, the shark, and the tunny fishery have somewhat of noble and perilous in them; even net-fishing, trawling, etc., are more humane and useful. But angling!”

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VIII SPOILING OTHER PEOPLE'S PLEASURE

It is a grave charge that is brought against us humanitarians, of "spoiling other people's pleasure." We are reproachfully bidden to look at "sport," for instance, and to ponder all the manifold enjoyment which it provides for its votaries—the pleasure of the riders, the pleasure of the horses, the pleasure of the hounds, the pleasure (some assert) even of the fox himself—or, if not exactly pleasure, at least a praiseworthy acquiescence in the rôle assigned him as the purveyor of amusement for others; for has he not, like Faust, purchased the happiness of a lifetime at the cost of this brief hour of pain? And all this sum of pleasure the humanitarian would deliberately destroy! No wonder that speculation is rife among sportsmen as to any intelligible reason for such malice. Are humanitarians insane? Or is it a dog-in-the-manger instinct that prompts them to wreck a pleasure in which they themselves—poor joyless creatures that they are—can have no part?

We shall be expected, perhaps, in answer to these accusations, to plead some austere and weighty reasons, such as the danger of an excess of pleasure, the need of self-sacrifice, the duty of altruism, and the like. We shall do nothing of the kind. On the contrary, we shall point out that humanitarians seek not to diminish but to *increase* the pleasures of which life is capable; for it is precisely because we, too, love pleasure, and regard it, when rightly understood, as the sum and purport of existence, that we deplore the absurd travesty of it which at present passes muster among the thoughtless. Our complaint against the sportsman and his like is not that they enjoy themselves, but that they prevent other persons from doing so, through their very rudimentary and barbarous notions of what enjoyment means.

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Consider, for instance, the exquisite pleasure, surely one of the greatest joys in life, of seeing perfect confidence and fearlessness in the beings around one—the intrepidity which is the special charm of children, when well-treated, and which is characteristic of animals also, in the rare cases when they have nothing to fear from man. We know with what child-like trust and guilelessness the primitive inhabitants of the West Indies greeted their Spanish discoverers, and how the wild animals in newly-found lands have often shown the same unguarded friendliness to man, until they knew better—or worse. The pleasure of the humanitarian consists in preserving and cherishing to the uttermost this friendly relationship; the pleasure of the sportsman consists in rending and shattering it, in making a hell out of a heaven, and is sowing distrust and terror where there might be confidence and love. *Chacun à son goût*. It is useless to dispute about tastes. But that the sportsman should proceed to denounce the humanitarian as being "a spoiler of pleasure" is a stroke of unintended humour from a very humourless source.

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The part which the sportsman plays in the animal world—that world which might be a source of much genuine pleasure to us—may be easily pictured if we look at one of the London parks where the bird-life is protected. There we see a truce reigning between human and non-human, with a vast amount of obvious human enjoyment as the result. Imagine what would happen if a man were to run with a gun or some other weapon among the unsuspecting animals, and pride himself on the dexterity with which he reduced them from beautiful living creatures to limp and ugly carcasses. He would be arrested as a lunatic, you say, by the park-keepers. True; yet that is exactly the way in which the sportsman is continually running amuck in this larger park of ours, the world, where unfortunately there are as yet no park-keepers to restrain him.

Nor is it only the sportsman, but everyone addicted to cruel practices of any sort, who makes the world a poorer and less happy place to live in. Centuries of persecution have, in fact, left so little *real* happiness in life that men have been fain to content themselves with these wretched beggarly amusements, which, from bull- and bear-baiting to stag-hunting, have disgraced our national "sports" from time immemorial, yet have always been defended on the ludicrous ground that their abolition would diminish the "pleasures" of the people.

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Who, then, is the mar-joy? Surely not the humanitarian, whose desire it is that there should be far greater and wider means of enjoyment than at present, and who, far from discouraging the sports of the people, would establish in every part of the land facilities for manly and wholesome sports, such as cricket, football, rowing, swimming, running, and all kinds of athletic and gymnastic exercises. To humanitarians, pleasure—real pleasure—is the one precious thing; and it is just because there is so little real pleasure in the present conditions of life that we desire to see those conditions changed and ameliorated. Why else should we "agitate," sit in committees, write letters to newspapers, and organise public meetings to expound our principles? Certainly, not because we enjoy such occupation in itself, for a more thankless task could scarcely be imagined; but because life is at present so narrowed and saddened by brutalitarian stupidity that to try to alter it, even in the smallest measure, is to us a necessary condition of any enjoyment at all.

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