

VIEWS FROM THE WATCH TOWER. IS NATURE CRUEL?

THIS QUESTION has already been answered by some eminent authorities in the affirmative, and the belief that such an answer is the correct one is widespread. Sir Samuel Baker declares that nature "is a system of terrorism from the beginning to the end," and John Stuart Mill asserts that if there are marks of design in creation, "one of the things most evidently designed is that a large proportion of all animals should pass their existence in tormenting and devouring other animals." If we assume nature to be the work of a Being of infinite power, he concludes that "the most atrocious enormities of the worst men will be more than justified by the apparent intention of Providence that throughout all animated nature the strong should prey on the weak." These radical assertions are controverted by J. C. Hirst, of Liverpool, England, in a book whose title is the same as the head of this article (London, 1900). After examining the experiences of hunters of big game, he concludes in the first place that Sir Samuel Baker's dictum is untrue. We quote from a review in *Our Animal Friends* (October) the following abstract of his argument: –

"Where there is *terrorism* there must be *terror*, and terror is one of the most horrible of sufferings. Is it true, then, that the animals most exposed to the attacks of the carnivora suffer greatly from terror? We believe that it is almost entirely untrue. Terror in human beings is largely due to the imagination.... Have we any reason to believe that the lower animals have a similar terror of imagination? We have good reason to believe the contrary. Mr. J. D. Inverarity tells the following incident: A poor donkey was 'tied-out'; that is, as a bait for a lion. The lion approached, but the hunter, looking through his peephole, saw the donkey standing unharmed, while the lion went on growling. It was afterward discovered that the lion had actually tried to throw the donkey over with his paw and had failed, altho it had scratched the

donkey on the inner side of the leg. But 'within a few minutes of the donkey being attacked, it was calmly eating which showed its nerves were not affected.'

"Mr. Wallace maintains that 'the constant effort to escape enemies, the ever-recurring struggle against the forces of nature,' are 'the very means by which much of the beauty and harmony *and enjoyment* of nature are produced.' To what else is it that the fleetness of the horse and of the many species of deer and antelopes is due? To what else, indeed, but the perpetual stimulus to exert their utmost speed, which is caused by the fear of enemies? But is not this *fear* the very *terror* which Sir Samuel Baker affirms? By no means. Mr. Francis Galton not only agrees with Mr. Wallace, but maintains that the peril in which they live is a source of pleasure....

"Prince Kropotkin points out the enormous exaggeration of the 'tooth and claw' view of nature. The Prince refers to the families of elephants, rhinoceroses, and the numberless societies of monkeys to be found in the lower latitudes of Asia and Africa; the numberless herds of reindeer in the far North, the herds of musk-oxen and the innumerable bands of polar foxes still farther north; the flocks of seals and morses and sociable cetaceans which inhabit the ocean; the herds of wild horses, donkeys, camels and sheep which range the steppes of Central Asia. He says:

"How trifling, in comparison with them, are the numbers of carnivora! And how false, therefore, is the view of those who speak of the animal world as if nothing were to be seen in it but lions and hyenas plunging their bleeding teeth into the flesh of the victims! One might as well imagine that the whole of human life is nothing but a succession of Tel-el-Kebir and Geoktepe massacres.'

"Unless, then, death is an inexcusable incident in animal life, it would seem that the *terror* of death to be inflicted by the carnivora is really a figment of the imagination; and one might reasonably adopt the language of Mr. Wallace, that 'the supposed torments [R2726 :

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Mr. Hirst does not, of course, deny that there is a good deal of eating and being eaten in the animal kingdom. This, however, he says, is not cruelty, and he devotes much space to showing that in their attacks wild creatures cause their victims little pain, altho he does not go so far as to say that the mangled ones enjoy it, as Wallace maintained of the fleeing antelope. The familiar case of Dr. Livingstone, on whom a lion's jaw crunching through his shoulder acted as an anesthetic, is of course cited, and supported by much evidence along the same line. The reviewer regards the case as having been made out, and concludes as follows:

"So then, as the result of this most interesting investigation, we may reasonably come to the conclusion that nature is by no means the system of terrorism that Sir Samuel Baker makes it out to be; that it does not justify the pessimistic and almost atheistic conclusions of Mr. J. S. Mill, and that it is not the horrible commingling of devourers and devoured that a superexcited imagination is predisposed to paint it. On the contrary, we may believe that the various carnivorous enemies of the gentler races of animals are much more serviceable in training them to the finest exercise of skill and fleetness than they are destructive of their numbers or oppressively noxious to their happiness of animal life, and that in a world in which death is necessary, death by the assault of carnivorous enemies is no more dreadful, but is, in fact, much less painful, than many other methods by which life may be extinguished."

– *Literary Digest.*

The above is in full accord with our presentations on the subject in our issue of June 1, page 165; which please note again. [R2727 : page 340]

ROMAN CATHOLICISM IN POLITICS.

"At the annual meeting of the Catholic Young Men's National Union in Brooklyn, September 26, a resolution was adopted to form a great federation of all the societies of the Roman Catholic Church in the United States for political purposes. Last spring Bishop McFaul of Trenton, N.J., told the Ancient Order of Hibernians that the Roman Catholics of America were fools not to organize into one solid mass and make their power felt in the politics of this country; there were 2,000,000 Roman Catholic voters, and if they were united for political action they could make this country a Roman Catholic nation.

"This federation has now been formed by the following societies: The Knights of Columbus, the Knights of St. John, the Catholic Benevolent Legion, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, the Irish Catholic Benevolent Union, the Irish-American Societies, the German-American Societies, the Catholic Knights of America, the Catholic Total Abstinence Union of America; and, as the Brooklyn *Eagle* of Sept. 26, 1900 (from which we quote), says: 'Besides these organizations there are scores of others of less prominence.'

"The federation is formed, says the *Eagle*, 'for the avowed purpose of influencing legislation and securing what the Catholics claim are their rights.'

"The convention, which met in the Park Theatre, Brooklyn, was the largest gathering in the history of the Young Men's National Union, and it was addressed by leading priests and laymen from all parts of the country. Father Lavelle, rector of St. Patrick's Cathedral in this city, Monsignor Doane of Newark, N.J., Sheriff Buttlng of Brooklyn, Congressman Fitzgerald, of Boston, and Father Wall of

Holy Rosary Church, this city, made stirring addresses. The latter was elected president of the union.

"'The convention,' continues the *Eagle*, which is one of the foremost metropolitan daily journals, 'unanimously approved the plan of federation and appointed committees to carry it into effect. By this means tens of thousands of men of the Catholic faith will be brought under one national head, and this stalwart body of men will have a strong influence on national legislation.' The *New York Herald* and other papers had similar reports. This is the most important step ever taken by the Roman Catholics in the United States. They now have New York City in their possession, and many of the other large cities of our republic are under their control; all, like Tammany Hall, 'worked for all their worth,' in the interests of the Roman Catholic Church, and incidentally for the benefit of the workers. 'In politics I work for my own pocket all the time,' said Richard Croker, the 'Boss' of Tammany. He might have added that a large share of the municipal plunder goes to Roman Catholic institutions.

"Having possession of the cities, the Romanists now reach out to gain control in national affairs. 'We must make America Catholic,' said Archbishop Ireland at the hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in the United States, which was held in Baltimore, Nov. 10, 1889. 'We must make America Catholic. As we love our church, it suffices to mention the work and our cry shall be, God wills it, and our hearts shall leap towards it with Crusader enthusiasm.' He was wildly applauded by the eighty bishops, one thousand priests and five thousand laymen present.

"'Why should we fear or hesitate?' he continued, with glowing fervor and proud boasting. 'We number ten millions – a powerful army if the forces be well marshaled and their latent strength be brought into action. Catholics in America are loyal to their church and devoted to her leaders. Their labors and their victories in the first century of their history show what they are capable of in the coming century, when

they are conscious of their power and are under complete hierarchical organization.'

"And so, even before the century has begun, they are preparing by a complete organization to conquer this country and turn it over to the pope! What have the Protestants of America to say to this? says *The Converted Catholic* of New York."

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SOCIALISM GROWING IN GERMANY.

The election of a member of the Reichstag for Brandenburg has caused considerable political excitement throughout Germany, as it has resulted in a signal victory for the Socialist candidate, Herr Peus, by a majority of 648 votes. This constituency has had a varied history, having returned within the past twenty years Conservatives, Radicals and National Liberals; but throughout all its fluctuations one fact was prominent; namely, the growth of Socialism there.

The number of Socialist members now in the Reichstag is fifty-eight; in 1885 there were only twenty-three; in 1890 the number rose to thirty-five. At the general election of 1893 there were forty-four Socialists returned. At the last general election in 1898 the number was fifty-six. Subsequent byelections have added two members.

If we turn to the number of recorded votes we find that in 1885 over half a million Socialist votes were given; in 1887 three-quarters of a million; in 1890 nearly one million and a half; in 1893 one million and three-quarters; and at the last general election two and a quarter millions. The calculation which places the strength of the Socialist party at the next election at three million votes, and 100 seats in the Reichstag out of a total of 397 seats, would not appear excessive.

– London *Daily Chronicle*, Oct. 29.

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