

should have created so many bulls to serve no purpose, or that natural life can be interfered with to so large an extent without injuring the reproductive powers of the herd."

Nature undoubtedly has many inscrutable mysteries, but this does not seem to be among the number of them. Does not nature do the same thing in the case of horses and cows and bovine cattle, and many others animals? In all these instances the same number of males and females are born, and yet one male suffices for a much larger number of females than even in the case of the seals. The purpose seems to be plain enough. At all events, we know what the consequence is, and it is fair to presume that such was the intended purpose of nature. It easily enables a husbandry to be carried on by taking the superfluous male life which would otherwise be expended in internecine conflicts, and devoting it to the purpose of man. Whenever in the case of these domestic animals the numbers are increased, as they easily may be, to such an extent as to become unprofitable, economic laws furnish a remedy, and the owners proceed by the killing of females to diminish the herds which have become too abundant for profit. These are the conditions and the only conditions under which it is ever permissible to slaughter the females of useful animals. Such conditions can never arise in the case of the seals. The annual demand for them far exceeds the supply, and even if this demand should cease, the feeding of the herd is no burden upon the resources of man.

6. The rather fanciful suggestion has been made that drafts upon male life, caused by these internecine conflicts, involve the survival of the "fittest", and that by making large drafts from the males these conflicts are prevented. We have better means of knowing whether the contests are still carried on among the males than *a priori* reasoning affords. The *fact* is open to observation. It is overwhelmingly proved, and without any dissent, except that of Elliott, that such contests are still earnestly waged. But aside from this, is it reasonable to suppose that males engaged in frequent contests, lasting for hours and sometimes all day, and frequently resulting in death, are better fitted for the office of reproduction than other males in a herd in which their proportion to that of females, and consequently the occasion for such contests, was much less?

7. Finally, the question whether the annual draft of 100,000 which has been practiced upon the island is excessive or not, is also susceptible of a conclusive answer, not affected by the incertainties of *a priori* reasoning. The experience of this herd for half a century leaves no room for doubt upon this point. We know that the Russians, whose drafts were governed, not by the capacities of the herd, but by the demand in the market, took during the later period of their occupation from fifty to seventy thousand young male annually; and that, under this draft, the