

The War and Game

BY

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THE total death casualties of the war have been estimated by U.S. Secretary of War Baker as 9,000,000 men. The total population of the world is, I believe, something over a billion and a quarter souls, so that the world lost something like seven per cent of its population. But reproduction was going on all the time, and the world has more people to-day than when the war began.

Audubon once estimated that a single flock of passenger pigeons which he saw contained more birds than the total population of the world, yet, only a few decades later, there were no passenger pigeons. The race had been annihilated.

The comparison is interesting, for it illustrates the fact that the human being is the most hardy game animal of all. The greatest war of history not only failed to annihilate, but also failed to stop man's increase. Also it must be observed that, while humanity is increasing, game is decreasing. The ratio between man and the game he hunts is constantly assuming a more unfavourable percentage as regards the game. And the war itself, paradoxical though it may be, has, in many places and over large areas, accentuated the disparity.

Effect of War
on Game

Almost everywhere except in North America the food shortage has caused appalling inroads on the game supply. In England, the honorary secretary of the English Game Guild tells me it will take at least twenty years to get game back to anything like normal abundance. The great increase in vermin, with the gamekeepers off to the war, is partly responsible for this. In Russia many of the finest preserves have been ruined and game nowhere exists in its former supply. In France, the poison gases have completed the work of destruction. The Mexican bandits, in their mountain retreats, have converted magnificent game sections into unproductive wastes.

Carl A. Preley says that the war has taken a toll of from one-half to two-thirds of African game in the sections where there has been