

industrious work, would not nearly equal the destruction caused in one year by millinery plumage hunters. When we consider the constant, widespread persecution and the number of widely distributed sportsmen it has taken to reduce our game birds, it is obvious that a few scattered collectors can have little, if any, influence upon the bird population. The ideal conditions suggested before, call for a collector in every county. If we had but one dozen sportsmen shooters in every county would game be scarce to-day?

There is also a sentiment against the scientist collecting "rare birds" on the supposition that if these were allowed to breed they would become common. There are practically no birds, but game, raptorial and plumage forms, that suffer systematic persecution. The number of small or rare birds that are killed by human agencies, except for profit or food, is on the average negligible. Are there a dozen people in Canada, seeking or hunting for Cory's Least Bittern? How many would know one if they saw it? The species has had hundreds of generations in which to become common, if they are rare now it is due to the action of still operating natural causes. The rarity of a creature not especially or generally hunted for profit is an indication that it is not adapted to conditions and is nearing extinction through natural causes. Rarity obviously just precedes extinction.

Of course with species that are much hunted, or that are rare, owing to the geographical limitations of the habitable or breeding ranges, the question is different. Scientific collectors have occasionally gone into small, isolated colonies and practically wiped out a species that, but for them, might have survived for a while longer. But even in these cases the fact of such limited range itself indicates that the species is declining and its end has been only hastened. A dominant, virile race will tend continually to spread; that it has not done so, it is an indication of inherent weakness in the species.

The Passenger Pigeon is often pointed out as an example of man's ruthlessness, and a great deal of sentimentality has been exercised over it. In the first place, great flocks of birds of this species would to-day be incompatible with agricultural pursuits. If man destroyed the Passenger Pigeon it was by extensive netting operations against them and not by the desultory shooting of scattered farmers and sportsmen. Yet the last year of netting at the Petosky rookeries left countless pigeons alive. The fact that few of these returned the next spring was no fault of the trappers. For years thereafter occasional flocks and bunches of Passenger Pigeons were seen;

Several years ago might all have seemed
the extinction of the species, and the argument of
Tanner, logically extended could be made to
allow the extermination of any species whatever.