

HUMANITARIANS AND MR. ROOSEVELT.

A HOLIDAY SPENT IN KILLING.

"THE TWENTIETH CENTURY MIND."

(From our Special Correspondent.)

London, April 1, 1910.

Mr. Roosevelt, who has spent his long holiday in living up to the French idea of an Anglo-Saxon sportsman, "It is a fine day, let us go and kill something," has returned to civilisation laden with his many trophies of slaughter. The long list of animals slain by the Roosevelt expedition has not gone uncriticised in England, popular though the personality of the ex-President appears to be. A letter from a naturalist in one of the London papers this week voices the feelings of many:—"To the lover of wild life it is," he says, "a matter of regret that one who is for ever teaching obvious morality to a weary world should have nothing better to do with his spare time than to put elephants and lions out of the way. Why people who profess to be fond of animals want to kill them I have never succeeded in discovering."

Social Conscience Awakened.

A protest like this is interesting in its general aspect, because it raises a big question. There has undoubtedly been a considerable growth of the spirit of humanitarianism in England in recent years. It is shown in the awakening of a social conscience among well-to-do people, in legislation, such as old-age pensions, in the feeding of starving school children at the expense of the rates, in the agitation against the workhouse system, in crusades against the traffic in worn-out horses and the slaughter of birds for their feathers, and in periodical protests against the cruelties of so-called "sport," such as fox-hunting, pigeon shooting, coursing, and the torture of caged stags. These are the more obvious signs of humanitarian spirit, though, of course, it shows itself in many other directions in public life and private life. Is it a healthy spirit or is it not—this wave of protest on behalf of all that is weak, poor, defenceless? Does it mean that the twentieth century man is growing tame, soft, sensitive and degenerate? Or is it a growing recognition of the great unity or oneness underlying all forms of life throughout the world?

Men and women will answer that question according to their philosophy of life, if they have one. The Christian will find it difficult to reconcile cruelty or callousness with his ideals of love and brotherhood. The Nietzschean, on the other hand, will tell you that all these latter-day protests are so much "sloppy sentiment," a sign of degeneracy, and pernicious in their effect on the race. Nietzsche had no patience with the idealists, who aimed at the

effect on the race. Nietzsche had no patience with the idealists, who aimed at the eradication of pain. "To be brave is good," he declared. "Let the little girls say, 'To be sweet is good.'" He insists always on the value and necessity of pain as a beneficial influence in the development of human character.

Individualism on the Wane.

But the world, rightly or wrongly, is moving in the opposite direction — towards humanitarianism. Nietzsche himself, I should imagine, while approving of the hunting of big game because of the element of danger in it, would have despised such forms of so-called sport as coursing and pigeon shooting, where there is no danger to the sportsman—nothing but cruel slaughter of the hunted prey. Whether the modern humanitarian sentiment is only a wave, destined to recede in the course of time, no one can say, but it has, meanwhile, advanced far enough to make slaying trips in Africa appear to many people in England an old-fashioned, primitive form of amusement for a cultivated man.

So, too, in politics. The old individualistic spirit is on the wane. Mr. Harold Cox spoke truly this week when he said that anti-Socialists could not trust either the Liberals or the Tories of to-day. Both the great parties have surrendered the principle of individualism, and embraced collective principles which, a generation ago, would have been laughed to scorn. In the last Parliament both parties voted for old-age pensions and free meals for school children, and both appealed to the country with collectivist programmes. But Mr. Harold Cox, who professes individualistic principles, is being left behind in the advance of modern sentiment. The old age pensions, which he deprecates, are approved by the solid mass of the people, and he is but a voice crying in the wilderness against them. Already individualists pure and simple, are becoming sufficiently scarce to be looked upon as "characters" of more or less eccentric views. Time was, not so very long ago in England's history, when it was the other way round, and collectivist ideas were laughed at by the multitude, and solemnly denounced by the wiseacres.

There may come a reaction, of course, towards individualistic ideals. But the point is that the present generation, at any rate, is awakening to the glorious possibilities of collective action in clearing up the waste and refuse, straightening out the muddle, and remedying the injustice of the ages of individualism. The social conscience, once awakened, does not easily die down, and the orderliness, economy, and efficiency of collective administration appeal strongly to the well-trained twentieth century mind. And the slaughter of wild animals in African jungles appears a childish ambition to men who are out to fight the abuses of our social system, and put an end to destitution and all its miseries and shames.

Pearl—"Jack is the biggest goose I ever saw in my life." Ruby—"What now, dear?" Pearl—"Why, my chaperone lost

saw in my life." Ruby—"What now, dear?" Pearl—"Why, my chaperone lost her glasses last night when we were making love and he actually helped to find them for her."

Bob Footlite (actor)—"Failure? I should think it was. The whole play was ruined." She—"Gracious! How was that?" Bob Footlite—"Why, at the end of the last act a steampipe burst and hissed me off the stage."