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From *The Popular Science Review*:

MR. HARTING opens the introduction to his treatise on recently extinguished British Mammals in the following words:—' The interest which attaches to the history of extinct British animals can only be equaled by the regret which must be felt by all true naturalists at their disappearance beyond recall from our fauna. It is a curious reflection at the present day, as we pass over some of the wilder parts of the country, that at one time these same moors, and woods, and glens, which we now traverse so securely, were infested to such an extent with ferocious animals, that a journey of any length was, on this account, attended with considerable danger.' It needs the spirit of the true naturalist to regret the change that has taken place.

Either as naturalist or sportsman, however, Mr. Harting revels in the ideas thus conjured up. His imagination brings before him scenes which, to ordinary mortals, may seem unattractive enough, but upon which he dwells with sentimental yearnings. 'Packs of wolves,' he says, 'which usually issued forth at night to ravage the herdsman's flocks, were ever ready to attack the solitary herdsman, or unwary traveler on foot, who might venture to pass within reach of their hiding-places. In the oak woods and amongst the reed-beds which fringed the meres, wild boars lurked .... Many a traveller then had cause to rue the sudden and unexpected rush of some grand old patriarch of the "sownder," who, with gnashing tusks, charged out upon the invader of his domain, occasionally unhorsing him, and not unfrequently inflicting severe injuries upon his steed.'

Degenerate Britons of the present day may, perhaps, be glad to compound for the absence of such wild beasts as the wolf, the bear, and the wild boar, by their freedom from the chance of finding any such excitements as the above when journeying from town to town on foot or on horseback; but the enthusiasm that prompts the author of this book to express his regret that the wild beasts, with all their inconvenient habits, have passed away from our country, may serve to give the reader an assurance that no pains have been spared by him in its preparation. It is difficult, as he justly says, to realize the state of things above indicated, 'unless we consider at the same time the aspect and condition of the country in which these animals lived, and the remarkable physical changes which have since taken place.' Half the country, at least, was forest, or wild, uncultivated ground, and in the disappearance of this state of things the naturalist can hardly avoid finding some cause of regret, hundreds of organisms, both animal and vegetable, must have succumbed to the progress of cultivation and the spread of population, which have now attained such a pitch that one has to travel a considerable distance from London, at any rate, in order to find a bit of undisturbed land. How different from the condition of things some six or seven centuries ago, when the forests came up almost to the gates of London, and the churches in certain cities lighted beacons on their towers to guide belated travelers through the waste outside.

Five mammals, which have become extinct in Britain within the historical period, are here recorded by Mr. Harting, namely, the Bear, the Beaver, the Reindeer, the Wild Boar, and the Wolf. On the last-named animal Mr. Harting contributed a long article to this Review some years ago. It is treated here very much in the same manner, but with considerable additional information. The Bear, as a British animal, does not seem to have been abundant in the southern parts of the country within historic times; but there is no doubt that it existed in England and Wales at least as late as the middle of the eighth century. In Scotland it seems to have survived till the tenth century....

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