

# SCIENCE

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## CONSERVATION AND SCIENTIFIC FORECAST<sup>1</sup>

By ROBERT CUSHMAN MURPHY

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

### I

THERE is no denying that it is pleasant to escape now and then from the intimate company of day-by-day colleagues who know one altogether too well, and to fall among such charitable Samaritans as comprise the council, the staff and the membership of your society. On this memorable occasion, I attribute my good fortune entirely to the fact that geographers are the most hospitable of learned men. Some branches of science are, by comparison, highly exclusive and esoteric. To be admitted to the fold a candidate must go through a traditional initiation, and must thereafter hew closely to the line. Not so with geography. If an anthropologist turns his attention to population

problems; if a botanist considers the broader aspects of landscape; if an ornithologist endeavors to evaluate factors controlling distribution of life in the sea—it seems that he may have the unexpected reward of being clapped on the back and greeted with the hearty cry, “Man, you’re a geographer!” And, to emphasize the welcome, they sometimes give him a gold medal.

I wish that you might all see and feel this beautiful Cullum Medal. It is clear that the designer intended it eventually to go to a student of sea birds, because the obverse shows the figure of a starry-eyed sailor youth, half-clad in ethereal vestments, that would never be approved by any skipper of my acquaintance, standing in the bow of what might be a whaleboat and attempting to put salt on the tail of a gull that is flitting just out of reach. It goes without saying that the medal becomes one of my first treasures. It takes

<sup>1</sup> Address in response to the award of the Cullum Geographical Medal at a meeting of the American Geographical Society, New York, December 20, 1940.

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