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RATS AND RABBITS IN THE AZORES

SIR,—I resided in Fayal for over twenty months a very few years ago, and was out shooting certainly three days every week. The sport in quail was excellent, but the rabbits were very few and far apart, and required a lot of beaters and dogs to find. I only shot some two or three, and saw but about six slain. I cannot, therefore, understand that they should be so numerous now as to destroy tea plants. May the damage not have been done either by rats or something else? There is but little game on these islands, and it would be a pity to introduce the mongoose. Woodcock have, or rather had, dwindled considerably through hogs having been allowed to become almost feral. The French partridges introduced were almost all killed out. The rats are the real nuisance; those in the island climb trees like squirrels. I cannot suggest how to exterminate them, but do not introduce the mongoose; that increases so rapidly, and would take to preying on the quail as well as on the rabbits and rats. There are thousands of the common rock pigeons, and the fishing is also very good.

F. T. POLLOK.

[The introduction of the mongoose would doubtless be as fatal to all animal life in the **Azores** as it has been in the West Indies, where it has resulted in immense damage.—ED.]