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THE HIMALAYAN TAHR ON TABLE MOUNTAIN

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It is seldom possible to state with any degree of accuracy when species of exotic animals were liberated or found their way as escapees into foreign environments. But in the case of the Himalayan tahrs on Table Mountain, the elimination of which is now being seriously tackled, it is possible to state where the animals came from. On 2 September 1935 a pair of Himalayan tahrs (*Hemitragus jemlaicus*)

was sent to the Groote Schuur Zoo by me from the National Zoological Gardens in Pretoria. Either these animals, or some of their progeny, escaped from that zoo resulting in their rapid increase in Table Mountain at the cost of its flora. Although considerable damage has already been done to the montane vegetation, it is to be hoped that the steps now being taken to eradicate the tahrs will not be relaxed until the object has been attained.

Like the klipspringer, in earlier times a common little antelope on Table Mountain, the tahr is an agile climber and jumper in rocky terrain. At Groote Schuur the animals were obviously not so securely housed that they could not escape. Their rapid increase in numbers shows that they found Table Mountain at least as favourable an environment as their normal home in the Himalayan mountains.