

## Three New Sub-Species of Birds.

BY GREGORY M. MATHEWS, F.R.S. (Ed.)

WHILE looking through the collection of skins in the possession of Mr. H. L. White, I noted the following new forms. The page number refers to my new "List of the Birds of Australia."

P. 182.—*Eopsaltria australis austina*.

Differs from *E. a. australis* in having the head and back grey, the latter altogether lacking the greenish tinge; the under surface is very much paler.

*Type*.—Cobbora (Talbaagah River), New South Wales.

P. 215.—*Acanthiza nana dorotheæ*.

Differs from *A. n. nana* in being much yellower on the under surface and lighter above. It is also longer in the wing.

*Type*.—Lithgow, New South Wales.

P. 219.—*Geopelia reguloides tarana*.

Differs from *G. r. reguloides* in having a light, not dark, buff rump. It is also lighter above.

*Type*.—Tarana, New South Wales.

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## Need for Bird Protection.

BY THOMAS N. STEPHENS (ADELAIDE).

ALLOW me to direct attention to two articles in the *Nineteenth Century* for February, 1914, on which these remarks are based, but every sentence of both articles is well worth reading. This subject, in the words of an American senator, is one "that ought to command the co-operation and support of every man in public life," and so strong has been that support in the United States that last year two measures of vast importance were swept through Congress on an irresistible tidal wave of insistent public sentiment. The first produced the Federal law protecting all migratory birds; the second freed the United States for ever from the shame and the horrors of the millinery trade in wild birds' plumage.

Among the world's 2,442 species of game birds the slaughter is enormous. Some idea of the extent may be obtained from the one fact alone that in October last 1,174 lots were offered at auction in London in one day. The "trade" said—"Let America refuse them; it will not save the birds or interfere with sales; we will still sell." But what was the result of that one day's sale? About one-third—368 lots—were withdrawn, owing to the action of the States, the lack of buyers, and the tremendous decline in prices. These withdrawn lots, the chief products of millinery slaughter, comprised nearly 90,000 skins, and, in addition, 2,494 ounces of Egret plumes, representing 14,964 birds. Among others there were 34,000 wing and tail feathers of the Hawk, 22,000 skins of Kingfishers, 17,000 wing and tail feathers

of the Condor, 3,000 skins of Golden and other Pheasants, 3,000 skins of Terns (White Sea-Swallows), 1,300 skins of Birds-of-Paradise, 2,000 skins of Cockatoos and Parrots, about 2,000 wing and tail feathers of the Eagle, and, among many others, including skins of Pelican, Marabou Stork, Scarlet Ibis, Gulls, Owls, and Macaws, were 761 skins of the Emu. Multiply these 90,000 odd by three, and it is said the result would be a fair approximation of the product of the world-wide slaughter offered for sale in London on one day. During one month, before the American market was closed, 4,500 skins of those lovely Greater and Lesser Birds-of-Paradise were imported into New York. Nothing more striking can show the necessity for immediate Federal action, following the bold and humane precedent established by our American cousins, for not only is the slaughter world-wide, but Australia will probably be among the countries deluged with this plumage obtained for the adornment of Nature's already "fair sex." But let us hope, as Lord Lilford said, that the day will soon dawn when no women in civilized and law-abiding countries will be allowed to disfigure their heads with the plumage of wild birds, and when that day does come this horrible traffic will cease.

Give women the right to vote, by all means. The world would be no worse—probably better—if they had it everywhere; but it is not too much to ask that they, in turn, will help to give God's beautiful winged creatures the right simply to live and continue to charm us by their form and plumage and delight us with their grace and freedom. It is largely a woman's question, and could be quickly decided if only women would decline to wear pieces of dead birds in their hats. The comparatively few men who get their living by the vile massacre are not worth considering. It would be an insult to women even to suggest that their remarkable ingenuity in personal adornment cannot devise something to take the place of wild birds, which, alive, appeal to us all, if only by their mere helplessness. But, as in America, where reform was possible only by the growth of public opinion voiced by no fewer than 130 newspapers and magazines, so in Australia the subject, I am sure, has only to be ceaselessly ventilated and similarly supported to bring the matter to a successful issue. I know that these remarks appeal to willing ears, for the press has already used its strong influence in support of the movement, and, I hope, will continue to do so on every possible occasion.

Various State Governments have done something towards preserving bird-life in Australia. South Australia, for instance, under the *Birds Protection Act* 1900, protects wholly all the year round, on public or private property, 41 species, and some others during the breeding season. But the wider question of importation is a Federal matter. The *Customs Act* provides that no prohibited goods may be imported, and that goods specified in a Governor-General's proclamation are prohibited imports. Acting under this, a revised proclamation was issued in May,

1913, prohibiting the importation into the Commonwealth of the plumage and skins of certain birds, viz. :—

Birds-of-Paradise.

Humming-Birds.

Monal, or any one of the species of Asiatic Pheasants, such as the Impeyan Pheasant.

Argus, or any one of the species of Asiatic Pheasant, such as the Argus Pheasant.

Crowned Pigeon, or any of the species of large-crested Pigeons of New Guinea and adjacent islands.

Owls.

Kingfishers.

Macaws; any Parrot of the genus *Ara*, *Sittace*, or *Macrocerus*.

Stork tribe.

Heron tribe (including the Egret, from which is obtained plumes commonly known as "Ospreys").

Ibises and Spoonbills.

Todies.

Cock-of-the-Rock, and the

Quezal, or Resplendent Trogon.

Traders who import and travellers or other persons who bring any of these into Australia will find trouble, for the Customs will rigorously enforce the law, which is certainly good as far as it goes. What is needed, however, is the more drastic action of the United States. A large and increasing quantity of feathers, other than those prohibited, is received into South Australia—£4,000, £7,000, and £10,000 worth of dressed feathers during the past three years respectively—and this does not include either feathers used in imported millinery or undressed feathers, of which latter, however, there are few. The imports into the whole Commonwealth are also heavy, and show a remarkable increase. The value of dressed feathers rose from £45,619 in 1911 to £85,983 in 1912, and those undressed from £5,096 to £6,281—that is, £92,000 worth in one year, more than half from the United Kingdom and £37,000 worth from France and Germany. Think for a moment what merciless destruction of beautiful, free, wild birds this alone represents, and then say whether you, as an individual, intend to do your little best to continue it or to prevent it.

### Stray Feathers.

**Birds at Lighthouse.**—The following record of birds that struck the Goose Island Lighthouse was forwarded by the Secretary of the Marine Board of Hobart, Tasmania :—" 25th July, 11.35 p.m., Sandpiper; 7th August, 12.15 a.m., bird not seen; 27th August, 2.35 a.m., Starling; 5th September, 1.5 a.m., bird not seen; 12th September, 3.55 a.m. Dusky Robin, 4.40 a.m. Fantail; 28th October, 10.30 p.m., Storm-Petrel; 29th October, 10.50 p.m., Storm-Petrel."