the Pacific slope, where these birds are more abundant, and whence their skins are brought east in bales, like the peltries of the furrier, or the 'robes' of the bison. The number must range far into the tens, if not hundreds, of thousands annually.

Among the smaller birds it is naturally the brighter colored species that furnish most of the victims, especially the orioles, tanagers, grosbeaks, cedar wax-wings, bluebirds, meadow-larks, and golden-winged woodpeckers. No even approximate estimate can be given of the number sacrificed. Only their conspicuous abundance on hats and bonnets, and their greatly decreased numbers, attest the slaughter to which they are subjected. But scarcely a bird can be named — from the rarest to the commonest, from the plainest of the sparrows to the most gorgeously arrayed denizens of the orchard and forest, from the tiniest warblers and humming-birds to jays, kingfishers, cuckoos, and the larger woodpeckers, and even ptarmigans and grouse (in fragments or entire), and the largest of the shore-birds, with bills half a foot in length (an *outré* and grotesque effect seeming to be sometimes especially sought) — that is not to be met with as an appendage of the female head-dress.

The assemblage of diverse and incongruous forms sometimes met with on the same hat is often striking in the extreme; birds from the opposite ends of the earth, and of the ornithological scale of classification, being brought into most inharmonious combination, viewed even from the artistic stand-point. Bearing on this subject, and illustrating the range of taste in such matters, as well as the extent to which birds are used for hat embellishment, may be given the following inventory, furnished by an ornithological friend, of what recently met his eye in a Madison Avenue horse-car in this city. The car contained thirteen women, of whom eleven wore birds, as follows: (1) heads and wings of three European starlings; (2) an entire bird (species unknown), of foreign origin; (3) seven warblers, representing four species; (4) a large tern; (5) the heads and wings of three shore-larks; (6) the wings of seven shore-larks, and grass-finches; (7) one-half of a gallinule; (8) a small tern; (9) a turtle-dove; (10) a vireo and a yellow-breasted chat; (11) ostrich-plumes. That this exhibition was by no means exceptional as to number or variety is obvious to any one who has given close attention to the ornithological displays one daily meets with in street-cars and elsewhere, wherever he may travel.

Advertisements in newspapers, by milliners, of the stock in hand, also give some suggestions of the extent of the traffic in wings and bird-skins; it being not uncommon to see thousands of wings (plain or fancy, in natural colors or dyed), as well as thousands of bird-skins (mounted or made up) and thousands of plumes (dyed or plain), advertised by a single dealer, while the dealers themselves number hundreds, if not thousands, in each of our larger cities. Add to these the smaller shops, in country and city, throughout the land, and we get at least some comprehension of the extent of the traffic in birds by the milliners, and the support they receive from the feminine portion of our population.

Respecting the traffic abroad, we learn from an English authority, that there were sold in one auction-store in London, during the four months ending April, 1885, 404,464 West Indian and Brazilian bird-skins, and 356,389 East Indian, besides thousands of Impeyan pheasants and birds-of-paradise.

DESTRUCTION OF BIRD-LIFE IN THE VICINITY OF NEW YORK.

To such an extent has the recent fashion of using birds for hat ornaments been carried, that the waters and beaches in this vicinity have been entirely depopulated of their birds. On the coast-line of Long Island the slaughter has been carried to such a degree, that where, a few years since, thousands and thousands of terns were gracefully sailing over the surf-beaten shore and the wind-rippled bays, now one is rarely to be seen.

The demand for sea-birds of white or delicate shades of color was so great, that many of the professional gunners and market-shooters gave up their usual shooting to enter upon what has proved to be a war of extermination. So long as the taxidermists who work for milliners in the large cities would take all the birds that could be supplied, the gunners were shooting day after day, from daylight until dark.

In the spring of 1884 the writer met a taxidermist from New York city, who was then on a trip along the south side of Long Island, for the purpose of making contracts with the gunners to supply him with a certain number of birds in the flesh, per day. He had facilities for making up three hundred skins daily, and was trying to arrange to get that number of birds. In answer to an inquiry as to whether he could find a market for such a number of skins in New York, he replied that he had no local trade, but that his stock was entirely for export to France.

Between Coney Island and Fire Island inlet there are many marshes, meadows, and low-lying islands, which for years have been the breeding-places of thousands of common terns or sea-swallows; and on the sandy beaches the least

tern and piping plover laid their eggs, and hatched their young. Now this long stretch of country is as a waste place, for the hand of the destroyer has left but lone remnants of what was once a teeming colony.

The small hamlet of Seaford is near the centre of this district, and has contributed largely toward the extermination of the sea-swallows. One of the most active gunners of this place informed the writer that he and his associates had, during the early summer of 1883, sent to market over three thousand terns. The slaughter of these thousands for hat ornamentation is in itself a great evil; but when we consider that the fifteen hundred pairs killed would have each produced an average of two young, or an aggregate of three thousand additional birds during the season, it becomes evident that the wrong is far-reaching.

In the vicinity of Moriches, L. I., the same character of marsh prevails, and the same destruction of seabird-life has been carried on. One of the resident gunners states that the terns are now practically exterminated, while a few years since it would have been an easy matter to shoot fifty birds during a forenoon. An observer at the eastern end of Long Island informs me that the 'summer gulls' (common terns) have greatly decreased in numbers, and the few that are left have become very wild, and difficult of approach.

The sportsman-poet, Isaac McLellan of Greenport, L.I., in a recent communication, states as follows: "There are many gunners (not sportsmen) whose whole business seems to be to kill off the little vocalists, solely for the sake of disposing of their skins and feathers for the ornamentation of ladies' bonnets. If those good women only knew of the destruction of bird-life that their love for finery occasions, I think they would make it unfashionable to wear the feathers of murdered birds. These gunners point their weapons chiefly at the gulls that haunt our shores, and I hear that they sell them by thousands to the New York dealers, at good prices. Formerly I used to see these pretty flutterers in countless flocks along the bay and seashores, but now they seem to be almost extinct. The bluefish fishermen tell me that this is a serious evil to them, as formerly, when they saw these hovering flocks, they knew that the bluefish were there, and could be easily secured. These bird-exterminators also declare bloody war against most other fine-plumaged birds, and gather in the robin, the oriole, the blackbird, the meadow-lark, catbird, and nearly all other kinds of birds."

As already intimated, the slaughter is not confined to sea-birds alone, but is waged with the same destructive force against the more beautiful of the land-birds. One gunner informed me that during the winter of 1883 he shot for a middle-man over a thousand cedar-birds (Ampelis cedrorum). If they had been permitted to live until the next season of reproduction, it is fair to assume that each pair would have reared an average of five young, or an aggregate of twenty-five hundred birds. It is a well-known fact that cedar-birds are very voracious eaters, and feed almost exclusively, during some months of the year, on the span-worm, canker-worm, and small caterpillars. The damage done the agricultural interests of the country by the destruction of these birds is enormous; but, when we multiply it by the hundreds of thousands that have been shot for the same purpose, the damage is beyond calculation.

An observer in Long Island City states, that, in his vicinity, every bird of bright plumage, such as warblers, woodpeckers, thrushes, orioles, etc., is shot for millinery purposes. In New Jersey the same wholesale destruction of bird-life was carried on, until, as I am informed by the Hon. John W. Griggs, president of the New Jersey senate, "The complaint came up from all parts of the state, of the decrease in the number of song and shore birds. Representation was made to me that certain persons had contracts to furnish birds by the thousands to taxidermists in Philadelphia and New York, and that they proposed to gather their skins in New Jersey. The bill introduced into our legislature for the protection of the birds, passed with only one negative vote, and the effect in my own locality [Paterson] has been excellent."

Another informant states, that, during the summer of 1882, taxidermists were stationed at Barnegat and Beach Haven, N.J., purchasing from the natives every thing in the nature of a seabird. Terns of all kinds brought ten cents each, and shore-birds the same price. Many of the baymen gave up sailing pleasure-parties, and became gunners, because this business was more remunerative; as high as fifty dollars, representing five hundred lifeless birds, being made in a week by some. "One cannot help noticing now the scarcity of terns on the New Jersey coast, and it is all owing to the merciless destruction." Besides the birds already mentioned as being immolated on the altar of fashion, thousands of crows, purple grackles (commonly known as crow blackbirds), red-winged blackbirds, and snow-buntings, are used for this purpose.

A New York taxidermist informed me that he had in his shop thirty thousand bird-skins of the species just mentioned, made up expressly for millinery purposes. Should the gunners and taxidermists bear the whole blame? I think not, as they are only supplying the demand created by

the female love of ornament. Take up any daily or fashion paper, and one can see such items as the following, clipped from the New York *Sun* of Dec. 13 and 20, 1885: "Miss Brady looked extremely well in white, with a whole nest of sparkling, scintillating birds in her hair, which it would have puzzled an ornithologist to classify," and "Mrs. Stanton Whitney had her gown of unrelieved black looped up with blackbirds; and a winged creature, so dusky that it could have been intended for nothing but a crow, reposed among the curls and braids of her hair." It is said, 'Where ignorance is bliss,' 'tis folly to be wise.' Perhaps, if the lady in question could have seen the crow during its lifetime perched upon and feeding on the decaying carcass of a horse, she might have objected to the association.

On the other hand we quote from the London *Truth* an item showing the humanity of England's queen: "I am glad to hear that the queen contemplates issuing a ukase censuring the barbarous fashion which so many women have lately adopted, of wearing the bodies of birds, or parts of their bodies, in bonnets and hats and on dresses. Her majesty strongly disapproves of this practice, which of late has greatly increased, which is daily increasing, and which most assuredly ought to be abolished."

As long as the ladies continue to demand bird-skins for ornamental purposes, so long will the gunners and taxidermists undertake to supply the market, therefore the initiative in the movement for the protection of birds must be with the 'wives, sweethearts, and mothers,' and not alone with the laws and lawmakers.

WILLIAM DUTCHER.

DESTRUCTION OF THE EGGS OF BIRDS FOR FOOD.

FEW persons living at a distance from the seashore have any idea of the immense destruction of bird-life by residents of the coast, who make the systematic and wholesale robbery of water-birds of their eggs a yearly pastime. A thoughtless and relentless warfare has been waged, until extermination of all bird-life on our shores stares us in the face. This destruction has been carried to such an extent, that many of our water-birds, such as gulls, terns, herons, and shore-birds, have become scarce where formerly numberless thousands added life and beauty to our harbors and beaches. The shooting of these beautiful and graceful ornaments of our water-ways for millinery purposes is undeniably one cause of their decrease; but, great as is this cause, it is in no degree comparable to the destruction made by the so-called 'eggers,' in their annual forays in the name of food-hunting.

My scientific explorations during the last ten years have taken me to many of the breeding-places of various species of water-birds; and some facts which have come under my observation, illustrating how the few birds still to be found along our extensive coast-lines are gradually succumbing to the slaughter, may prove of interest. There is probably not a port, pass, or bay on the entire coast of Texas, whose inhabitants do not regularly devote several days each year to what they term 'egging.' As soon as the 'scouts' or fishermen report the birds established, and laying their eggs on the islands and secluded beaches, all work is suspended, every craft is pressed into service, and everybody is off to assist in the ghastly sport at the breeding-grounds. Arrived at the desired locality, the first day's work is that of thoroughly destroying every egg already laid; and this ruthless sacrifice of thousands of eggs is made before any are secured by the robbers, that they may avoid carrying away any partially incubated ones. Returning to their boats after this work of destruction, the perpetrators remain in hiding, or quietly sail about the lagoons, until the next day, by which time the distracted birds that had not laid their full complement of eggs when frightened away by the intruders, and who had meantime been hard pressed to deposit their treasures, will have laid many thousands of eggs in the very face of destruction. Two or three days are now devoted to gathering the freshly-laid eggs, and to stowing them away in barrels and tubs in the boats. All eggs, from an inch in diameter upwards, are taken, excepting, perhaps, those of the pelican, whose eggs are too fishy for any stomach. I have known of boats which came a distance of over a hundred miles to gather these eggs, cruising from reef to reef until they had secured a good load. For days after the return from these expeditions, the shops along the coast expose quantities of bird's eggs for sale, which are disposed of cheaply, according to size. As these eggs of wild birds are much more fragile than those of domestic fowls, a very large proportion of them are broken by the rough handling they receive before they reach the markets. No doubt more eggs are thus wasted than are eaten; and, unless one is familiar with the breeding-places of these birds, no idea can be formed of the appalling extent of this yearly destruction. I examined, before the eggers had reached it, one of a group of grassy islands or flats, about the size of a city block, on which were breeding not less than ten thousand birds, consisting chiefly of gulls, terns, and herons;