

runner came back and was pulling at the sparrow through the $\frac{3}{4}$ inch mesh of the trap; then, suddenly, its keen eye was looking squarely into mine, and away it went. This time it did not return although I watched for some time.

Later the sparrow was placed opposite the funnel entrance in the hope of enticing the Road-runner into the trap, but there was no evidence that it ever returned again.

On plucking the victim, a Golden-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia coronata*), wearing my band no. 24801 (see its record on page 119), no bruises were found except on its skull, which, without having been pierced or broken, had the entire brain area dark with blood infusion. Nor had the skin of the crown been broken.

While I did not see the Road-runner do the killing, I suspect that it would have a hard time clearing itself, but might plead excessive hunger owing to the apparent difficulty in finding its natural food on such a morning.—J. EUGENE LAW, *Altadena, California, April 12, 1923.*

Another Musical Brown Towhee.—In my article, "Evidence of Musical 'Taste' in the Brown Towhee," which appeared in the November-December, 1922, issue of *The Condor*, I put on record two instances that had come under my personal observation of the Brown Towhee's addition of some musical syllables at the end of its regular song. I suggested the idea that this song elaboration indicated a racial rather than an individual tendency on the part of *Pipilo crissalis*.

Early this afternoon as I was passing a clump of shrubbery just west of the Stanford University Museum I was abruptly halted at hearing a Brown Towhee song which sounded like *tip—tip—tip—ip-prrrrr, treh-treh-treh*. The added syllables were not unmistakable imitations of any bird sounds that I know, but they at any rate suggested to my mind the chirp of *Carpodacus mexicanus frontalis* (one of which birds was vocalizing in the same tree with the Brown Towhee), and in a less degree the throaty-musical chirp of *Iridoprocne bicolor*. The syllables were uttered from two to four times; on the average, three. They were low in pitch; and were sung softly, almost as if whispered. Still, they were audible at twenty feet, as my wife, who was with me, can testify. They were uttered about as fast as one can possibly say them as above spelled,—i. e., *treh-treh-treh*. The most significant thing about them was the fact that they contained the same essential phonetic elements that appeared in the added syllables of my previous two Brown Towhee songs, namely, a vowel sound lower in frequency (pitch) than the 'i' in *tip*, and a musical *r*-sound. It is not at all impossible that the ear of the Brown Towhee would hear the *chreh*-sound of the House Wren, the *chrip*- (or *chrep*-) sound of the Linnet (see p. 193 of my article), and this *treh*-sound of origin unrecognized by me, as the same sound. The bird ear might respond negatively to the minor sound factors that cause these notes to sound different to the critical human ear. Certain it is that the three sounds are essentially identical in spite of the fact that I could tell them apart in the field and have indicated the slight differences that I heard by slight differences of spelling.

It strikes me as a rational assumption that, since I, a single observer, have on three separate occasions met with a Brown Towhee elaborating its song according to the same essentials of phonetics and form, none of the three songs heard could have been an individual freak. If this type of Brown Towhee song originated as a mutation, it obviously has passed safely beyond the individual stage and is being transmitted for probable survival as a specific character. It stands to reason that a good many Brown Towhees are now singing this new type of song. I hope that other observers will be on the alert for further examples, and I shall certainly be glad to hear from any who are able to substantiate my hypothesis.

In closing I wish to modify one statement that I made in my article. I said (p. 193) that I considered the regular song of the Brown Towhee stereotyped and subject to but little individual variation. Since writing that I have heard about half a dozen Brown Towhees sing songs that are mechanically unstable and irregular! It seems that among these birds there are more poor and inexperienced performers than I had assumed.—RICHARD M. HUNT, 735 Bryant Street, Palo Alto, California, May 12, 1923.