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mixed. This will go on for a few days, or until the owls leave, and each morning the number of dead birds lying about will have increased. After the owls have gone the destruction ceases, only to begin again when the next lot of owls arrive. The small birds thus destroyed are of the greatest value to an agricultural community, and their loss is much to be deplored; but on the other hand the owls destroy an immense number of mice, so that the good they do probably balances the evil, and in such a case the best way is to let nature take its course without our intervention.

The Barred Owl is so rare with us that its influence on agriculture, either for good or ill, is practically nothing. The few I have found in this Province have always contained mice, but to the south of us, where the poultry are allowed to roost in trees, it is charged with occasionally killing half-grown chickens.

The noisy little *Screech Owl*, that may in some winters be found in half the barns in the country, is well known to every one, and should be protected by every farmer. It watches the granary, the barnyard and the garden, and is the most indefatigable mouser we have. It seems not only to kill mice for its immediate wants but also for the pleasure of hunting them. If the roosting place of one of these birds is examined after the bird has used it for a short time, numbers of dead mice will be found, most of them untouched after being killed and deposited there; probably they lay up this store in order to provide against nights of scarcity, but in nearly all cases it will be found that they are well ahead of any danger of famine. Not only does this little owl rid the country of numberless mice but in towns and cities it does useful work in keeping the common House Sparrow within proper limits. During the winter particularly, it may often be seen hunting about verandahs, under eaves and among the Virginia creeper growing around dwelling houses, for the sparrows that roost there, and it will go regularly over the same beat night after night, until the accessible sparrows are thinned down, so that it finds it more profitable to change its hunting ground. Besides its great value as a destroyer of mice and House Sparrows, the Screech Owl eats large numbers of large beetles, particularly the wood-borers and May beetles, both of which classes of insects are capable of doing great injury if suffered to become too numerous. Grasshoppers also form a considerable article of this bird's diet. The good qualities of this little owl cannot be overestimated. Its food consists entirely of such creatures as are most injurious to the crops, and it has not a single evil habit. It should, therefore, be carefully protected and encouraged to take up its abode in and about the farm buildings. This I believe it would readily do if it was left unmolested. All it asks in return for its valuable services, is peace and quiet, and a dark corner to roost in during the day.

The Great Gray Owl, the Snowy Owl, the Hawk Owl, Richardson's Owl and the Saw-whet Owl are only irregular visitors, usually occurring in the winter. The two first named are large birds whose food consists chiefly of game birds when in their northern home: here they feed upon the small rodents.

The island and sandbar to the south of Toronto is usually visited by a few Snowy Owls every winter. Here the birds feed upon the common house rats which are altogether too abundant at this spot. As every owl of any kind that visits the place is at once shot the rats, having it all their own way, are increasing rapidly.

The Hawk Owl hunts by day on the prairies of the Northwest, and where it occurs in sufficient numbers it must do much good by the destruction of meadow mice. Its visits to us are so rare, however, that it need not be considered here.

Richardson's Owl and the Saw-whet Owl are two little owls that destroy many mice and noxious insects, but are too rare to need further mention.