

and my principal reason, as a lover of birds, has been, and is, that the English sparrows drive away our own more charming native birds. That opinion has just been emphasized by the following incident. I was passing down one of our streets the other morning when I observed four birds in a state of great commotion on the ground, kicking up, in fact, an awful dust; the birds, being, as I soon ascertained, three English sparrows and one Chipping sparrow, *Spizella socialis*. The poor little native bird was being unmercifully attacked by the three more robust immigrants, and I verily believe would have been killed, but that my companion, a lady, begged to be allowed to rescue it by driving its aggressors away. For myself, I confess I should have been cruel enough to await the issue of the conflict for the purpose of exemplifying my theory, whereas now, instead of a charge of "wilful murder," I can only prefer that of "assault with intent."

VINCENT CLEMENTI, B.A.

Peterboro' May 9, 1881.

NOTE.—The House Sparrow, (*Passer Domesticus*) has been of good service since its introduction into Canada. Previous to its arrival in Montreal, it was almost impossible to keep down the millions of house-frequenting spiders, which during summer, festooned the interior of our houses, and exterior of outhouses with their webs. This nuisance is now lessened, as the bird relishes the spider, and whenever one of the latter shows itself, it is doomed. The acclimatized sparrow has besides adopted the flycatcher's system in obtaining its prey; it also imitates the woodpecker by holding itself with its claws and tail against a wall, picking from the interstices any insects lurking therein. Before the house sparrow was liberated in Montreal, an entomologist could, on a June morning's walk along the garden fences in the western portion of the city, pick up probably from twenty to twenty-five beautiful rare insects for his collection. This cannot be done now, as the sparrow destroys all insects whether he eats them or not. This is the only fault we have against him—that he makes no discrimination in his selection—he kills as many beneficial as injurious insects. We have seen

this pugnacious little bird attack the large Northern *Cicada*, holding it in its beak while the insect made the curious noise with its drums, which we frequently hear in the early part of September. The bird heard it, but the insect's noise was of no avail; the sparrow placed its foot upon it and picked it to pieces.—ED.

TENACITY OF LIFE IN BIRDS.

DEAR SIR,—Last fall, I received from the Manitoulin Islands, a living Eagle—the Gray Sea—*Haliaeetus albicilla*, to stuff. Wishing to kill it as quickly as possible, I procured a strong acid poison from a druggist, and gave it a dose said to be sufficient to destroy its life in a few seconds. After waiting for half an hour, I went out expecting to find it dead, but there he sat as upright as usual. I gave the bird a second dose and patiently awaited the result. It had no more effect than an evident disagreement in the appearance of water from its mouth. Then I gave it a large piece of meat covered with arsenic and retired to rest, expecting to find him stiff and ready to stuff next morning, but to my surprise, when I went to his cage, it stood as upright as ever, and looking none the worse. I had laudanum in the house, and it occurred to me that I could put him in a deep sleep; therefore I gave the Eagle one half ounce, which had no apparent effect. I then procured strychnine, of which I gave him a large dose; in a short time it took effect, and the strong frame which withstood the other poisons had at last succumbed; it swayed with violent convulsions, and as I stood looking on its agony, I felt that I was the cause, and guilty of a crime. A few weeks ago I had occasion to kill a great Horned Owl, (*Bubo Virginianus*), and remembering my former experience with the Eagle, thought to try a more speedy method. I took a revolver carrying a No. 22 cartridge, which I fired close enough to penetrate the centre of its body, and the only apparent effect it had was merely to tip him off his perch, which he afterwards regained. Four hours afterwards I found him still sitting there, appearing all right. I fired the second ball forcing him from his perch, which he did not afterwards regain, yet he lived two days afterwards. On skinning this bird I found that both balls passed through his body. On the 27th May last, I had occasion to kill another Horned Owl, and remembering my former unsuccessful experience I thought to give him a blow which would pro-