

male who prepared for his mate's coming, and a host of other habits, all of which must endear these little birds to any observant person. Wrens are among the most useful of a garden's inhabitants and do much to free the plants of the insect pests that infest them. Wrens will nest in nearly anything from a coat pocket to an old hat, but they prefer a box which has a small entrance. This need not be cleaned, as the birds will see to that themselves.

Since the central area of the garden is small it is not to be expected that many ground-loving birds would make their homes within. Nevertheless we have had two species do so. Of these none were more welcome than a pair of Prairie Horned Larks. These birds, as is well known are first to brave our winter and move up from the south to announce the coming spring. The Prairie Horned Lark is a very early arrival in Manitoba and can be looked for, on an average, about the 20th of February. By the end of March numbers are nesting and slightly more than a month later, nearly mature young can be found. There are certainly three broods in a season and, at times, probably a fourth. The horned larks should be a favourite with every country dweller. Boldly braving the snows and cheerful in the midst of them, he comes back when others would find it both cold and difficult to secure food.

The first nest we discovered in the garden was found by accident in which the whole structure was raked from its foundation before being noticed. Fortunately no damage had been done and the nest was soon in place again. As this nest was situated on the edge of a flower bed, the possessors were naturally obliged to put up with numerous visits from the gardener as a result of which they soon became very tame. We were able to observe the female sit herself over the eggs or young and later watch both birds feed and tend the nestlings. Thus it was discovered that fully 85 per cent of the food consisted of insects of which by far the greater proportion were cut-worms, insects which are known to be among the gardener's worst enemies. In due course the young left the nest but they remained in the vicinity for a considerable time afterwards, while the parents reared a fresh brood near by, but outside the boundaries of the garden.

The other ground nesting tenant, to which I refer, was the Vesper Sparrow. It had graced our garden twice with its presence. On the second occasion the pair selected the base of a pretty clump of Indian pinks to build their nest and had as a foreground pansies of many colours. The Vesper bird is inconspicuous in its dress of grey, but makes up for this by its sweet song which, in spring, is repeated by so many individuals that the whole country-side rings with their music. Two broods are the Vesper average. The birds come to us from the south about the middle of April and depart for their winter home in late September or early October.