

monest summer residents are similarly variable, and that, as a general rule, where one species varies in this respect, the deviation extends to all in the same degree. A small increase or decrease in the multitude of universally common species is, of course, less noticeable than a proportionate variation in the numbers of those which are less abundantly distributed; but that the former are as regularly subject to such variation as the latter is beyond all doubt. So absolute and unchanging is this law, that its effects may be detected from the appearance of the earliest spring arrivals to the coming of the last of the vernal migrants. Should the army of thrushes and finches that arrive from the south about the last of March be unusually large and continuous, you may prophecy with almost entire confidence a good year for birds: In the vicinity of Portland, the seasons of 1875 and 1876 have been remarkable in examples of extreme numerical variation; the one for the paucity of rare species, the other for their abundance. During the past season (1876) white-crowned sparrows occurred in almost unprecedented numbers, often appearing in flocks of six or eight; the previous season, but one was taken to my knowledge. In 1876 specimens of the mourning and bay-breasted warblers were taken; the one new to the locality, the other not having occurred for six years. The great-crested fly-catcher was common in 1876, rare in 1875. With a few exceptions, the same difference has been perceptible in the case of every species.

But what is it that exerts so potent an influence over our birds? Not the weather, it would seem—for heat or cold, storm or calm, causes but a slight difference in the time of the arrival of a species, much less in its numbers. An apparent auxiliary cause is the weather of the winter preceding the spring. If the winter be mild, and rather free from snow, there is an evident increase in the numbers of the earliest arrivals in March; but it can hardly be supposed that a bird which does not make its appearance till the last of May feels the effects of mild weather several months before. The great body of migrants are said to pursue different routes to their northern homes, at different seasons. Very true—but how about our summer residents?

I confess myself puzzled for a satisfactory solution to the question. The abundance or scarcity of birds in winter or autumn has been better explained (N. C. BROWN, in Bull. Nutt Ornithological Club).

#### THE LARGEST OWL IN CANADA.

The Cinereous Owl, the largest of the whole owl family, not only in Canada, but all North America, is rather a rare bird throughout the greater portion of our Dominion, but more are seen every winter in the Province of Quebec than in Ontario. Reeks does not mention it in his list of Newfoundland birds, although there can be little doubt but that it occurs there. At Quebec and Montreal more specimens have been obtained, perhaps, than at any other points. During the winter of 1876, mild and open as the weather was, an unusual number of these birds were exposed for sale in the Montreal markets, all of which were obtained either on the island or in close-proximity to it; this un-

usual nu  
pair of  
largest I  
taken at  
points.  
the fur co  
between  
son's Bay  
Lake; an  
its prey,  
wanders i  
found as  
states tha  
were shot  
viously re  
Arctic Re  
have follo  
nor's Bird

Great e  
intervals o  
convulsion  
dred year  
century w  
Europe, a  
of the sev  
Mediterran  
great Jama  
wards the  
quake, and  
the present  
but they m  
have been  
greatest pa  
next impor  
from thirty  
great parox  
been crow  
portance, a  
As the rec  
be found in  
of remark  
of the Chr  
of earthqu  
in civilized