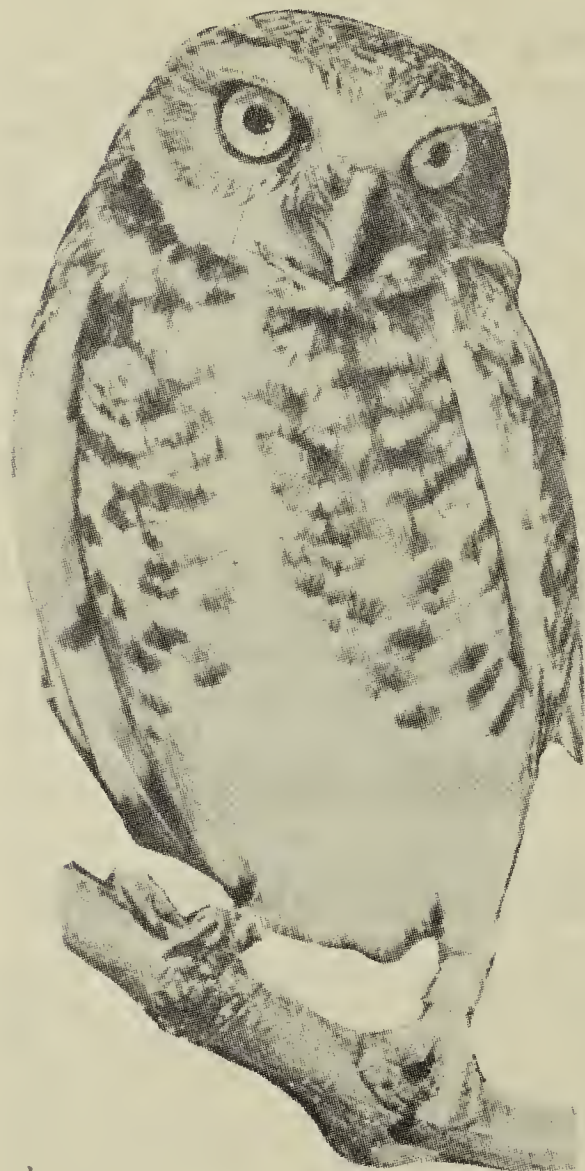


THE GROUND OWL

DOROTHY DURR, Broomhead, Sask.



Taverner calls him the "Burrowing Owl", and other authorities, the "Prairie Owl." However I have chosen to use the name in local use. Here, about eight miles from the International Boundary, we had them in plentiful supply during the dry years. Could be, they prefer cosy dry nests to a "built-in-bath tub" at the base of a badger hole where they usually nest. However, we never lack for at least one family in the higher and drier parts of the pasture.

They are not at all shy, coming at dusk to the house-yard where they search for scraps, picking up small bones which we later found, cleaned, on the nesting knolls. I once found a baby owl outside the hole, and picked him up. The fluffy, round little urchin showing absolutely no

fear. Their legs are long and un-owl like, and the large nostril holes on the beak give a peculiar spectacle-like appearance — on the babies in particular. It is quite a sight to see those babies out for an airing in the evening — as many as eight lined in a row.

The following verses illustrate their chief characteristics, and our feeling towards them.

Funny, little Ground Owl
 Funny, little round Owl
 From the pasture knoll we hear you call
 For in the evening cool,
 Your children go to school
 In scholar's row, eight or nine in all.

Funny, little Ground Owl
 Funny, little brown Owl
 Sitting on my clothes-line in the dusk
 You've been searching for the scraps
 Left here by the cats,
 Taking all us human folks on trust.

You funny little cuss
 We know you're fond of us,
 For you're in our Badger holes each year.
 From early spring till fall,
 We hear your chirping call,
 It isn't summer-time till you appear.

SUMMER RAIN

The rain clouds loom in the sky to-night,
 And clouds in the sky are a welcome sight.
 After the days of blistering heat
 The tune of a beating rain is sweet.
 Tonight the Earth will breathe again,
 For tonight will bring the patter of rain.
 Rain to freshen the torrid air,
 Rain that will make the green life stir,
 Rain to moisten the sun-choked flowers.
 Thank God for the clouds and the cooling showers.

Eric A. Dowson, Nanaimo, B.C.