

perched upon the side of the nest, and first thing next morning it was revealed, wifey having temporarily left the nest, that the eggs had given place to bare-backed little strangers, mostly head. During that day only the smallest particles of food were provided and these at long intervals, the happy mother being content to mostly sit upon her brood of babies and keep them warm. At one stage a large soft feather was brought home and packed away amongst the family. For the following 18 days, or for exactly the same period taken over the sitting, father and mother were kept extremely busy, and it was noted that the older the youngsters grew the longer the moth or worm or caterpillar became. During the early stages both pa and ma, after bringing home some food, would stay at the nest closely examining the babies and appeared to be very gently removing something, probably lice, and at all times every attention was given to the keeping of the home scrupulously clean, any droppings being taken away at departure. It was not until the feeding process had been going on for a fortnight that the family was seen to consist of 5, and it was about this time that the little home was getting all too small. On the 11th December two of the family were out on the edge of the nest stretching and fluttering their wings, and on the afternoon of that day there was some excitement when a hand was put into the nest and the whole brood tumbled out to the ground. Pa and ma flew round greatly flustered while the gathering in took place, and little difficulty was experienced in returning the straying family to bed. It was then observed that three of them were cock birds and two hens, the colouring of the former being quite pronounced though not so marked as in the case of father. On the evening of the 14th (Wednesday) all were at home with mother keeping them warm, but before 7 o'clock next morning the home was deserted. During that day and the next, the family of seven remained in the immediate neighbourhood, but by the week-end had taken their departure—it is hoped to be individually a source of pleasure to others as they had been collectively to the writer.

OWLS TO THE RESCUE.

Lord Howe Island in the South Seas has been beset with an army of rats, particularly bothersome to the eleven inhabitants of the island. Poison and cats have failed to execute the rodents, and recently a number of owls were shipped from San Diego to wage war on the rats. Let us see, didn't some powder company list the owls as vermin and urge their extinction?—(*Nature Magazine.*)