believe in ghosts, especially during its breeding-season, when it also emits a peculiar kind of languishing sigh. Like the Scops and Barn Owls it has also the habit of pursuing by night, and especially in the early morning, with loud cries all who may pass along the roads bordered with trees near the places in which it is searching for prey. I have several times been accompanied by this Owl along the pathways and fields when going out shooting in the autumn. Near Chambéry one followed me for half an hour, jumping from tree to tree, and from house to house. Two shots fired at it, at random, did not prevent its following me; on the contrary, they caused it to redouble its cries; and in an instant afterwards I found myself accompanied by two others, which had doubtless been attracted thereby. The Little Owl seems to feed on small birds, mice, young rats, large insects, especially grasshoppers and crickets, small reptiles, especially the wall lizard (*Lacerta muralis*) and the spotted salamander (*Salamandra maculosa*), little frogs, fish-spawn, but rarely upon anything destitute of life. A living one I had in 1847 was sensible of kindness, and would allow me to rub its breast, back, and head, during which operation, which seemed to give it pleasure, it remained as without life, sometimes lying on its back, at others on its breast. The fowlers of our country do not make use of this species to attract birds to their snares, but prefer for that purpose the Scops Owl."

Naumann, in his 'Vögel Deutschlands,' confirms much of the preceding account of this bird, and says that its true home is Central Europe, but that it is sometimes found in Sweden and Livonia. In Germany it is a bird of passage, although a number remain there all the year; it is fond of the neighbourhood of man, dwells on old town-walls, at a moderate height in church-steeples, and in the holes of trees, is often seen about the heads of pollarded willows, and sitting on old stone bridges and on the upright gravestones in church-yards, and is therefore considered by some people a bird of ill omen; during the nesting-season it often utters its discordant cries in the daytime, is of an untamable disposition, and in its flight differs from that of other Owls in its being less easy and soundless, and of an undulating character like that of the Woodpecker and Hoopoe. It food consists of mice, bats, small birds (such as sparrows and larks, which it surprises in their sleep), and insects; of mice it is said to eat as many as five or six at a meal, and it frequently hoards up a supply of food, apparently in anticipation of inclement weather. As in Italy, it is used by the bird-catchers as a decoy to attract the smaller birds towards the limed twigs. Old birds are sometimes employed for this purpose, but young ones are more easily tamed and answer better.

The *Athene noctua* is generally spread over central and southern Europe, and, if the *Noctua bactriana* of Blyth be the same, Thibet and Affghanistan. I am aware that some ornithologists consider the Little Owls of Eastern Europe and Northern Africa distinct, and have applied to them the specific names of *persica*, *meridionalis*, and *numida*; but whether they are really different is still undecided; if they are not, then the range of this species is indeed an extensive one. Temminck says that it does not go further north than the fifty-fifth degree of latitude, which proves that it is a southern species, Lord Lilford having found it nesting in the ruins of Nicopolis, in Epirus, in March, and at Santa Quaranta in May.

I may remark that by Latham, Cuvier, and others this species has been treated of as the *Strix passerina* of Linnæus; but this is an error, the bird characterized by the learned Swede under that name being a still more diminutive one.

The sexes are alike in colour, and the young differ merely in being less bright, and by the redder tint of the spots on the neck.

The Plate represents the bird, of the natural size, with the nearly fledged young, from a drawing by Mr. Wolf. The little quadruped is the Short-tailed Field Mouse (*Arvicola agrestis*).