Farm, near this city, with three young ones in it. The luxurious and voracious habits of the Owl may be imagined from the contents of this nest, which consisted of two leverets, one rabbit, three blackbirds, one thrush, and two large trout. They were all fresh, and had been apparently caught during the night."

This statement interested me so much, that I requested a friend then living in Bath to ascertain who was its author; and the following is an extract from a letter of the writer, which was immediately transmitted to me:—
"You may rely upon it that the article entitled 'An Owl's Larder' is strictly true: when I sent it to the 'Bath Journal,' I felt convinced that most persons would doubt its being so. The pair of birds alluded to built their nest and fostered their young in the spring of this year at Burnett's Farm, near Saltford. It was the great quantity of fresh-killed food which attracted my attention and induced me to make a note of it."

Were I to enumerate all the localities in England and Scotland which are inhabited by the Brown Owl, I might fill many pages to no purpose; I may mention, however, the great woods of Tregothnan, the seat of Viscount Falmouth, in Cornwall, where, if it be not strictly preserved, it at all times enjoys the friendship of the noble proprietor. Keepers will, however, often retain their own opinions, in spite of advice and remonstrance, and I fear the poor bird finds but little favour in that quarter. In the romantic and beautiful woods on the banks of the Thames, at Cliveden in Buckinghamshire, the Brown Owl lives in comparative safety, breeding yearly in the deserted fox-holes and hollow trees; and it gives me great pleasure to say that the Duchess of Sutherland extends to it the most friendly protection. Within a week of the time I am writing (April 8, 1864), at the close of the most wonderful evening carols of Thrushes and Blackbirds I ever heard, the Brown Owl commenced his nightly serenade, his hollow hoo-hoo resounding over the water until it was lost in the distance. At Elveden, in Norfolk, the bird has always been befriended by those excellent ornithologists Alfred and Edward Newton, Esqrs., as will be seen from a note given below from the 'Ootheca Wolleyana.' I might go on particularizing many other friends whose estates the bird frequents, and who favour it with their protection. If allowed to do so, the Brown Owl would contentedly live in any of the wooded districts of England and Wales and the southern parts of Scotland. In the far north of the latter country it becomes more scarce; and I believe we have no authentic account of its having been killed in Ireland. On the Continent the Brown Owl enjoys a wide range, for it is found everywhere except in the extreme north; it also occurs in Northern Africa, and doubtless in Asia Minor and Persia; while the Himalayas are frequented by an Owl so closely resembling it, that it can scarcely be regarded as distinct.

"From 1844, and probably for a much longer time," says Mr. A. Newton, "a pair of Brown Owls had frequented some clumps of old elms near the house at Elveden. There were three of these clumps, in one or the other of which they invariably laid their eggs. The trees were of considerable age, and mostly quite hollow, with an abundance of convenient nesting-places. By waiting quietly about an hour after sunset, my brother Edward or myself could generally discover whereabouts the Owls had taken up their quarters for the season; but it sometimes happened that we did not find the nest until the young were hatched. Throughout the winter the Owls kept pretty much in company; but towards the middle of February they used to separate, the cock often passing the day in a tree at some distance from the hen. As soon as he came out in the evening to hunt, he announced the fact by a vigorous hoot. Upon this the hen would emerge silently, and, after a short flight, reply to her mate's summons by a gentle note. He then generally joined her, and they would fly off together to procure their food. The eggs were commonly laid about the second week in March, and the nests were almost always easily accessible. I never knew these birds occupy the same hole for two successive years; but, after an interval of two or three years, they would return to the same spot. There were never any materials collected to form a nest, the large white eggs being always placed on the rotten wood, which in most cases formed a sufficient bedding. We never found more than four eggs in the nest. These often, but not always, proved to have been incubated for different lengths of time, showing that the hen bird sometimes began to sit as soon as the first egg was laid; but we could never divine what might be the cause of this irregularity of habit. After the young birds had left the nest, it was some time before they began to shift for themselves; and they used to sit in the shadiest trees for the best part of the summer, uttering a plaintive note, like "keewick," night and day, almost without cessation, to attract the attention of their parents, who assiduously brought them the spoils of the chase."

Every ornithologist who has directed his attention to our native birds must have noticed the great variation which occurs in the colouring of different examples of the Brown Owl—differences so great as to have induced even Linnæus to regard them as specific, and to characterize them as such under the terms *aluco* and *stridula*; and I must admit that I was for a long time sadly puzzled respecting them; the generally received opinion, however, is that the rich russet-coloured birds are the young of the year, and that this colour gradually disappears as the bird attains maturity, when it gives place in both sexes to a greyish brown: the former state has given rise to the trivial name of Tawny Owl, the latter to that of Brown Owl. When first hatched, the young birds are clothed with a grey down, upon which, as they progress in stature, crescentic and circular markings of reddish brown gradually appear, until they assume the colouring which has obtained for them the former appellation.

The front figure in the accompanying Plate is somewhat less than the natural size.