
"GRAM" SAYS—

A man in California has a pet owl, which after sitting on two infertile eggs and getting no results, was so disappointed that it was given some hen eggs. Now it is playing mother to chicks.

A year ago, we had a pair of owls that each evening, came to an old oak tree in our yard and told each other the days happenings. Such a talkative bird family! It was not the common whoo, whoo, but a new vocabulary and very amusing to us. This continued until all of once we missed the chummy talks and it was only one owl, who called and no answer.

One afternoon I noticed perched high in an elm in our back yard, an owl. I always (Grand-dad says) jump to a conclusion. I thought probably its mate had been killed. Each day it came and sat brooding until around five o'clock, then flew away. I became curious and watched. I found he had an appointment for dinner. He had to supply food for his new family, two babies, in the oak tree.

I had never known of an owl selecting a place for its nest so close to civilization. I had always been led to believe that owls were wild and also not to be trusted around chickens.

A few weeks later Grand-dad found a little owlet on the ground, so we kept it on the back porch and proceeded to become its foster parents. After trying different foods, we gave it a taste of our dog's food. Horse meat was its choice. He made a funny little hissing sound which was his signal for food.

He grew, thrived and was satisfied where he lodged with us. He had big serious eyes with a rim of black feathers around them, which looked like a pair of glasses. He seemed to fit in with photographs of a certain politician in Washington, so we named him "Harry." Each evening in the elm sat Mr. Owl. He could probably hear Harry call.

After he had grown strong enough to fly, we took him out to the elm, sat him on a limb and waited. It was about dusk when we heard a fluttering of heavy wings which told us Mr. Owl had arrived. He flew down on a limb just above Harry, looked him over, chatted a bit and flew a limb higher. Then a few more words of encouragement and Harry followed, a limb at a time in his clumsy fashion until he was high above the ground. Now Mr. Owl seemed satisfied and left Harry all alone with nothing but the stars blinking above him.

Before I retired I took a flashlight and flashed it up into the elm and there he sat and he gave his hissing sound. I told him no more horse meat unless Mr. Owl finds it.

All last winter an owl came to visit and talk in the moon light. Now after a year, two owls are talking things over and maybe one of them is Harry. He always seems to make himself heard.

I now believe it is man that has caused the birds to be cautious, not wild. Man who kills for the sport of killing is the wild one. Any bird or animal with a little care and patience can become tame.

Gram S. E. B.
