

affording shelter from the north winds, and as a rule the snow has not been so deep as to entirely cover the grass. This year, however, it has all been covered and there has been little picking for any kind of animals or birds.

"And now the story comes from the section that the Magpies, which are unusually thick this year, are alighting on the backs of the horses and cattle and simply picking away the flesh until a good sized hole has been made, when they tackle the animal in earnest and make a fill of his flesh. The story is that Alva Stine has lost two or three horses, and that George Sindlinger has lost a valuable bull from the Magpie attacks."

Each of the accounts here given contains the evidence that this habit of Magpies to attack healthy cattle (free from sores or wounds) was a novelty in the respective localities.—T. C. STEPHENS, *Sioux City, Iowa*.

**Notes of the Starling.**—The U. S. Department of Agriculture bulletin (No. 868) on the Starling, commented upon in the April 'Auk' alludes to the ability of this bird as a mimic and lists ten native species, the notes of which it has been heard to imitate. The writer, located close to the center of Starling population, can add the names of the following ten native species which he has heard the Starling creditably and in several instances very exactly imitate: Tufted Titmouse, Red Cross-bill, Kingfisher, Crow, Baltimore Oriole, House Wren, Red-shouldered Hawk, Red Headed Woodpecker, Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, and in addition the harsh notes of the Guinea Fowl. On one occasion a single Starling, in a short time was heard to imitate the calls of six different species. The ability to mimic does not appear to be shared equally by all individuals, at least is not equally exercised, and good mimics are rarely met here. During the twenty-one years that this bird has been a local resident I have heard it imitate the calls of other birds on less than fifty occasions, the majority of these falling within the past five years. I do not include the so-called "Wood Peewee" note of the Starling as mimicry. It is so frequently uttered as to suggest that the similarity is a coincidence, though proof of this is only possible by comparison with the notes of the bird in Europe.

The abilities of this bird emphasize the necessity of using the eye as a supplement to the ear in making identifications in the Starling belt.—CHARLES A. UENER, *Elizabeth, N. J.*

**A Question Concerning the Cowbird.**—Does the female Cowbird take any interest in the fate of the eggs she lays in the nests of other birds?

This question has often occurred to me since an incident I observed in 1915. On June 29 of that year, at Albion, Iowa, I discovered a two-story Red-eyed Vireo nest (*Vireosylva olivacea*). The nest had originally contained one Cowbird egg, but the Vireo had at this time added to the