

We have one parasitical bird, the cow-bird, so-called because it walks about amid the grazing cattle and seizes the insects which their heavy tread sets going, which is an enemy of most of the smaller birds. It drops its egg in the nest of the song-sparrow, the social sparrow, the snow-bird, the vireos, and the wood-warblers, and as a rule it is the only egg in the nest that issues successfully. Either the eggs of the rightful owner of the nest are not hatched, or else the young are overridden and overreached by the parasite and perish prematurely. ✓

Among the worst enemies of our birds are the so-called "collectors," men who plunder nests and murder their owners in the name of science. Not the genuine ornithologist, for no one is more careful of squandering bird life than he; but the sham ornithologist, the man whose vanity or affectation happens to take an ornithological turn. He is seized with an itching for a collection of eggs and birds because it happens to be the fashion, or because it gives him the air of a man of science. But in the majority of cases the motive is a mercenary one; the collector expects to sell these spoils of the groves and orchards. Robbing nests and killing birds becomes a business with him. He goes about it systematically, and becomes an expert in circumventing and slaying our songsters. Every town of any considerable size is infested with one or more of these bird highwaymen, and every nest in the country round about that the wretches can lay hands on is harried. Their professional term for a nest of eggs is "a clutch," a word that well expresses the work of their grasping, murderous fingers. They clutch and destroy in the germ the life and music of the woodlands. Certain of our natural history jour-