I had, on several occasions, during the early part of the winter, noted apparently fresh borings on a Larch tree (*Larix europæa*) on our place, and had heretofore been unable to account for them. I know of no other instance of this bird's wintering in Massachusetts except that Mr. William Brewster writes me he killed one in January some years ago.— F. H. KENNARD, *Brookline, Mass.*

Breeding of Traill's Flycatcher in Eastern Massachusetts.— On June 18, 1895, I took a set of four eggs of Traill's Flycatcher in Lynnfield, a small town twelve miles north of Boston. On various occasions earlier in the month I had seen Traill's Flycatchers in a bushy meadow and the actions of individual birds led me to believe that one and perhaps two pairs of this species were intending to breed.

On June 16 I searched for a nest and soon found one with three eggs. The following morning there were four eggs. On neither occasion was a bird seen at the nest but on the morning of the 17th one of the Traill's Flycatchers flew about in the neighboring bushes and complained. On the afternoon of June 18 I went to the nest in company with Messrs. E. H. Forbush and C. E. Bailey. As on previous occasions, the bird was not on the nest. Mr. Bailey ensconced himself in the bushes and after an hour's wait shot one of the Flycatchers. The bird came near the nest and drove away a Maryland Yellow-throat, and then after an interval appeared again and lit on the nest and looked at the eggs. A moment later Mr. Bailey shot her. This bird is now in the collection of Mr. Wm. Brewster.

The nest is a typical Traill's, being constructed of fine grasses and neatly lined. The body of the nest is a quite compact and well-made structure but there is a lot of loose odds and ends in the shape of long, grasses stringing down from the outside of the nest.

The eggs, four in number, and very slightly incubated, are white with reddish spots (nearly flesh-colored), these being principally at the larger end and forming a slight ring. The nest was three and a half feet from the ground and in a small wild rose-bush. The locality is a bushy meadow, the growth being principally alder, young maple, white cedar and wild rose-bushes.— J. A. FARLEY, *Newton, Mass.*

The Western Meadowlark at Racine, Wisc., etc.— In the April number of 'The Auk' (Vol. XII, p. 192) I find a communication from an observer in northern Michigan, if I remember rightly, recording the appearance there of the Western Meadowlark— *Sturnella magna neglecta* (Aud.).

It was with much interest that I heard this bird was at Racine, Wisc., where its note sounded strange enough, although I had long been familiar with it in California. Dr. Hoy, so well known in the Northwest, some years ago reported "this variety as occurring occasionally, near Racine."

In this connection I should like to make mention of one of our eastern Meadowlarks (*Sturnella magna*) which I saw last spring in Connecticut,

soaring in the air and singing like an English Skylark. I failed to identify him until he dropped down a little distance away and became the unmistakable, every-day performer of our fields.

In relating the circumstance to a gentleman whose knowledge of our home birds is only exceeded by his modesty, he told me that he once heard a Robin (*Merula migratoria*) imitating perfectly the cry of the Whip-poor-will. I could reconcile the statement with personal experience when only last month I listened to a Robin whose pipe had evidently been attuned to the wild cry of the Nightjar or perhaps to the strains of more than one bird of song, for it was very unlike his own clear, excellent music. The ways of birds are sometimes quite as unusual as their voices. It was but yesterday that I saw a Crow Blackbird hovering over a pond after the manner of a Kingfisher. He did everything but dive into the water and plainly enough was in search of something to eat.— G. S. MEAD, *Hingham, Mass.*

Strange Habits of the Rusty and Crow Blackbirds.— Since the unparalleled cold of the past winter throughout the Southern States, we have heard and read of many instances of the great destruction among our smaller birds; and the unusual scarcity of a number of our common spring migrants, both in the east and west, only demonstrates too clearly the larger numbers which must have perished in their winter home. The most remarkable instance of which I have learned, evidently brought about by the deep snows cutting off the food supply of some species, is the preying of the Rusty and Crow Blackbirds on other species for food.

I am very much indebted to my friend Mr. Jesse N. Cummings of Anahuac, Texas, for the following interesting letter on this subject. Anahuac is in Chambers Co., at the head of Trinity Bay, and north of Galveston. "March 24, 1895. In the first place snow exceeding the depth of two or three inches was never known before in this section of the country, until this storm which commenced the 14th of February and lasted for about thirty hours, covering the ground to a depth of twenty inches on a level and remaining at about that depth for three or four days before it commenced to thaw, and then it was three or four days more before the snow had entirely disappeared. I have on my place an artesian well which has a temperature of about 70° and a flow of 60,000 gallons per twenty-four hours. This kept a large piece of ground on the bay shore free from snow and was the only place in the country where a Jack Snipe (*Gallinago delicata*) could warm his toes or get anything to eat. I did not notice the first Snipe that came in, as it was the second day after the snow-storm that my attention was directed to them, and when I went down to see them I should say that there were at least two hundred birds on a space not over one hundred feet square. It did not take me long to get my gun and kill about forty in a short space of time, as you could hardly drive them away,