

given me permission to publish the following interesting extracts from two letters which he has lately sent me.

In his first letter, dated at Naushon on July 7, 1901, he says: "This afternoon I had a most exciting bird experience. As I was riding through the Naushon woods I heard a peculiar whistle wholly new to me. I dismounted, tied my horse and followed up the sound. The author I found was a bird of Wren-like appearance and of about the size of a Song Sparrow but shorter and stouter. It had a nervous habit of squatting and jerking its body whenever it gave utterance to its whistled notes. Presently its mate came with food in her bill and I went off to let both birds settle down. As I was watching the male from a distance he suddenly began a most delicious song. A few minutes later I found the nest which contained three or four young nearly ready to fly. It was placed on the ground in a hole among some dry leaves, under the dead branches of a fallen tree, and was partly roofed over with leaves. I did not examine the interior of the nest closely as I did not wish to disturb the young. I thought at the time the birds must be Carolina Wrens and on coming home found that Mr. Chapman's description corresponded in almost every respect with what I had seen and heard. His representation of the song as *whee-udel, whee-udel* seems to me very good indeed."

Under date of August 12, 1901, Mr. Forbes writes again as follows: "Yesterday to my surprise a pair of Carolina Wrens appeared in the garden behind our house and stayed there all day. The male (I suppose sang several times and uttered a variety of queer notes, but the song did not seem to have quite the same ring as when I heard it in the deep woods. I wonder if this is the same pair and if so where the young are. When I revisited the nest a week after I found it, the whole family had left the vicinity. I saw more clearly on this pair, the white or yellowish line above the eye which the young in the nest had."

Mr. Minot's record (Bull. N. O. C., Vol. I, No. 3, Sept., 1876, p. 76) of a pair of Carolina Wrens which he saw in Roxbury about July 4, 1876, and that by Dr. Brewer (*Ibid.*, Vol. III, No. 4, Oct., 1878, p. 193), of a bird taken in Lynn on July 6, 1878, have of course already led us to suspect that the species occasionally breeds in eastern Massachusetts, but Mr. Forbes is, I believe, the first observer who has been fortunate enough to definitely establish the fact. There would seem to be no reason why the birds should not continue to resort to Naushon, for the grand old forest which covers so large a part of that island is admirably suited to their requirements. — WILLIAM BREWSTER, *Cambridge, Mass.*

Massachusetts Bird Notes.—*Ionornis martinica*.—Another instance of the occurrence of this species in northern Essex County has come to my notice. In June of the present year I saw at the residence of Mrs. Wm. S. Horner of Georgetown a mounted specimen of the Purple Gallinule. Mrs. Horner informs me that the bird was shot by a local gunner in the spring "several years ago" (probably not less than ten years) in a

meadow in Byfield parish, town of Newbury. The locality is not many miles from the pond where the pair of Purple Gallinules was seen in June, 1897, as I have already recorded in 'The Auk' (April, 1901, p. 190).

Dendroica blackburniæ.—The peculiar behaviour, akin to that of many ground-nesting species, of a female Blackburnian Warbler whose nest with three young and an infertile egg I found on June 21 of this year in Lynnfield, a small town near Boston, may be worthy of note. The nest was at the end of a long branch of a hemlock, being 18 feet out from the trunk and 30 feet from the ground. Before any attempt was made to crawl out on the branch, the female, alarmed doubtless by a slight movement of the limb, suddenly tumbled out of the nest and fell, in fluttering, fledgling style, straight down through the foliage to the ground, recovering herself at the last moment before touching the earth and flying up into the underbrush. The helpless way in which she fell led me to believe for a moment that a full-grown young bird had dropped out of the nest. Even when there were young in a nest, I never before noticed such behaviour on the part of a tree warbler nesting at such a height.

Dendroica blackburniæ is a rare but regular breeder in the town of Lynnfield. It also probably breeds in the adjoining well-wooded towns of Middleton and North Reading, as I have observed the species in summer in both places.

The Lynnfield Blackburnian's nest above referred to agrees with a nest of the same species taken in Winchendon, Mass., by Mr. Brewster in resembling "rather closely the nest of the Chipping Sparrow" (Auk, Oct., 1888, p. 392). It is composed of fine hemlock twigs and lined with a few pine needles. It was set firmly in among twigs and was beautifully concealed from view above by a long, full-leaved, horizontal spray, which, arching over within two inches of the structure, made a miniature A-tent for the sitting bird.

Progne subis.—Mr. A. H. Kirkland, late entomologist to the Massachusetts State Board of Agriculture, informs me that while observing the ravages of the fire-worm (*Rhopobota vacciniana* Pack.) in the cranberry bogs of Plymouth and Barnstable counties, he found the Purple Martins feeding freely on the imagos of the pest. The Martins were abundant at many of the bogs, a Martin box on a pole being, according to Mr. Kirkland, "apparently as much a necessary adjunct to a well-regulated bog as a dyke or a cranberry house."

As two broods of the imagos of the fire-worm are on the wing during the summer, and as the female imagos are most active before laying their eggs, the benefits accruing to the cranberry grower from the presence of the Martins are obvious. Mr. Kirkland states that the cranberry growers estimate that in a term of years they lose fifty per cent of their crops because of the damage done by injurious insects, chief among which is the fire-worm.

Colaptes auratus.—The instance of the nesting of the Flicker (*C. auratus*) within a building, as recorded in the Monograph of the Flicker (Wilson

Bulletin, No. 31), reminds me of a somewhat similar case which came to my notice in June, 1897. A barn in Lynnfield, unoccupied and seldom visited, was frequented by Flickers, several holes being made by them in the sides of the building. All the holes that I saw were made where a seam was formed by two boards. A pair of the Flickers nested in the barn laying their eggs on some hay. I did not myself see the eggs in position but the facts in the case were later furnished me by Mr. J. W. Ross, the owner of the property.

A pile of hay some five or six feet high occupied one corner of the barn. The Flicker laid her eight eggs on this hay pile, making a slight depression. The eggs were laid close to the side of the barn and about one foot below the hole made therein by the birds.

Mr. Ross visited his barn at infrequent intervals and thinks that this will explain why the Flickers nested therein. On the occasion of one visit in May the bird flew from her eggs on the hay and made her escape through one of the holes. Two of the eight eggs were taken by boys, but the others hatched and Mr. Ross believes that the young were safely reared. This instance of the Flicker nesting within a building differs from that recorded in the 'Wilson Bulletin' in that the Massachusetts bird utilized hay for a nesting-place while in the other case the eggs were laid on boarding. — J. A. FARLEY, *Malden, Mass.*

Maine Bird Notes. — The Swallow Roost, of which I gave an account some years ago (Auk, Jan., 1895, p. 48) has moved to another location within two or three years.

I think the first impulse to change was given by the felling of most of the willows which they were wont to frequent. From time to time trees had been cleared away, but this cutting was on more wholesale lines and not to the Swallows' liking. There was, however, sufficient small willow growth farther back on the point for roosting, but they did not take to it, and though the banks are again thick with new growth they have not returned.

The next summer after the cutting of the trees they would collect, yet in smaller and smaller numbers, and go through some of their evolutions, either in memory of old times or from force of habit, and then depart half a mile southeast to the Kennebec River. I have been told by people living close by, that there had been for some time a smaller roost on an island in the Kennebec, seven or eight hundred feet long and covered by a thicket of willows with an occasional elm tree. It was to this roost that the Messalonskee Swallows joined themselves. Here are performed by a countless host similar interesting manœuvres to those before described and by the same kinds of Hirundinidæ.

I have never seen any suggestion of Martins (*Progne subis*) being night birds, but a few years ago, about ten o'clock of a bright moonlight night in August — my note-book says August 8 — I was resting in a hammock outdoors, when I heard the calls of Martins. A few minutes later my husband coming up the walk said, "Did you hear that?"