

an almost unknown chapter of this common bird's life I quote his article at length: "In 1895, the writer, chancing to be in close proximity to a field, observed a bird perched in a tree-top. Its position and actions proclaimed it a Meadowlark at the first glance. As I approached, it took wing and flew swiftly upward, its wings vibrating rapidly as the bird ascended spirally into the air, uttering a hushed but penetrating, chattering noise resembling somewhat the notes of the *Chatura pelagica*. Suddenly these chattering noises are interrupted by loud 'chirps' or 'cheeps' like those of a Canary uttered in quick succession. The bird flew in almost a circle, slowly descending to the ground again. It seemed to have great power of ventriloquism (or else the damp air caused a misleading influence in determining its position by hearing), for the notes appeared to come out of the tree—near which I stood—but every twig was visible and no bird was to be seen: and, as I had lost sight of it in its flight, I knew not where it could be. The notes grew louder and louder. I was positive the bird was in the tree. But it was not, for I was still gazing upward, above and partially through it. I was puzzled. The bird was certainly coming nearer, for the notes continued to grow louder, until I almost imagined it would end by lighting on my head. But the misleading notes did not end here. The noise ceased for a moment, then a sharp and harsh grating 'cheep' came from a point in the field above, 80 or 100 feet distant. I was vexed the first time this occurred, but realized that either the bird was deceiving me or the air had a hand in the deception. The loud, hoarse call was repeated at intervals, and I could easily determine its position. A few moments later it again took wing, and the chattering began, broken in upon occasionally by the chirping, until it again seemed almost upon me. Then a repetition of the intervals of silence and once more the tell-tale 'cheep' from the field. On one occasion while gazing up, the bird flew directly over my head only about thirty feet above; his voice had so bewildered me that I could not ascertain his whereabouts until I saw him sail smoothly over. Whether the dampness, the clear moist air, or the bird itself caused this ventriloquial effect I do not know, but I rather favour the latter supposition."