

these records.—W. S. LONG, *Museum of Birds and Mammals, Lawrence, Kansas.*

Samuel Champlain's Notes on West Indian Birds.—In the 'Narrative of a Voyage to the West Indies and Mexico in the years 1599–1602' by Samuel Champlain, translated by Alice Wilmore and published by the Hakluyt Society in 1859, there are some interesting references to West Indian birds.

Champlain stayed at Puerto Rico for about a month. He wrote (p. 12) "The air is very hot, and there are little birds which resemble parrots, called perriquitos, of the size of a sparrow, with a round tail, and which are taught to speak: there are a great number in that isle." Presumably this refers to *Eupsittula pertinax pertinax* (Linn.) of Curaçao introduced into the island in pre-Columbian times and since extirpated, though still existing in small numbers on St. Thomas. So far as I am aware there is no other reference to this bird on Puerto Rico.

Champlain anchored at the Cayman Islands, and remained one day. He landed on one of the islands and "walked about a league inland, through very thick woods, and caught some rabbits, which are in great quantities, some birds, and a lizard as large as my thigh, of a grey and dead-leaf colour," evidently *Cyclura caymanensis*.

He also landed on another of the Caymans "which was not so agreeable; but we brought away some very good fruits, and there were such quantities of birds, that at our landing there rose so great a number, that for more than two hours after the air was filled with them: and there were others, which could not fly, so that we took them pretty easily; these are of the size of a goose, the head very large, the beak very wide, low on their legs, the feet like those of a water-hen. When these birds are plucked, there is not more flesh on them than on a dove, and it has a very bad taste."—AUSTIN H. CLARK, *U. S. National Museum, Washington, D. C.*

Some Early American Bird Lore.—For a generation or more following 1789 the geographies of Jedediah Morse seem to have been popular in the United States. A publishers' announcement even refers to an abridged edition as a *classic*. A borrowed copy of the edition of 1819 is interesting. The Sapajou and the Sagoine are "said to inhabit the country on the lower part of the Mississippi." There has evidently been little revision in the author's bird lore since earlier editions, other than the elimination of a long list of American birds. Of a number of lists of birds representing different states, Dr. David Ramsay's list from South Carolina is the longest.

Among birds listed for the United States is the Wakon Bird, "which probably is of the same species with the Bird of Paradise." The name indicates the Indians' idea of its superior excellency, it being the bird of the Great Spirit. A beautiful tail of four or five feathers, three times as long as the body and shaded with green and purple is carried "in the same manner as the peacock does his, but it is not known whether, like him, it

ever raises it to an erect position." The Wakon "is nearly the size of a swallow." The Whetsaw is listed too. It "is of the cuckoo kind . . . scarcely ever seen." Its note, like the filing of a saw, is heard in the groves during summer.

Paroquets, we are told, "are plenty in West-Tennessee chiefly in the neighborhood of salt licks," while an interesting ecological note occurs in the seeming increase of Quails or Partridges with the advance of civilization, and in the record of an Indian proverb, when they found a swarm of bees in the forest, "Well, brothers, it is time for us to decamp, for the white people are coming." Morse's naive record of the Wakon serves to remind us how few mythical birds of the Indians survived in popular lore, although the horn snake, the hoop or hump snake, and the joint snake, each perhaps tracing back to Cherokee mythology, seem almost ineradicable among certain white beliefs.

Imported European lore regarding birds has survived better. Lapwing, Milhatch, Parvee, Skirk, Swint, Lonegar, and Tontil are unscientific bird names picked up in the South. The Nightingale, the Swamp Robin, the Swamp Angel, and the Sonnet Thrash, with perhaps the Knight appear to refer to the Wood-thrush, but many even fairly well educated people do not distinguish between the Wood Thrush and the Brown Thrasher! Whether Parvee is an imitation of a bird note or a corruption of *parvus* can only be guessed. *Skirk*, however, is a medieval English word for shriek and may refer to the Shrike. This word is not found in one of the most exhaustive dictionaries published in England, so obsolete is it! *Swint* calls to mind Chaucer's *sweynt*, meaning "wearied," or *swind*, to waste away. More probably the obsolete *swen* for swallow represents the origin of this term that reappears in America, and it is probably related to *swim* and *swimble* the latter meaning to feel dizzy and perhaps to stagger. The *Lonegar* suggests the giant roc-like *Tlanuwa egwa* of Cherokee mythology, but a more probable source would seem to be "Lone Egar" the last word meaning *wander* or *stray* and in good use in the late sixteenth century English, so indicating some bird of solitary habit. *Milhatch* cannot be placed; it suggests English, but might be a corrupted Creek word. Such vernacular words, bandied about by the inaccurate one often cannot place on any specific form. Even the "Poor Job" so definitely placed by Bartram, may be a much broader term in the "Poor Joe" of the modern natives of the Carolina swamps. *Tontil* is apparently an unforgiveably slovenly rendering of "Tomtit" but may have arisen quite respectably from nasalizing the m and suppressing the d of the English Tom Tiddler used in children's games.—A. L. AND BELLE M. PICKENS, *Greenville, S. C.*

Intergradations of Life Zones and Sub-species in the Southern Piedmont.—By far the greater part of South Carolina is, paradoxically not Carolinian, but Louisianian as to life zone alignment. The Carolinian, is a very narrow fringe along the northerly boundaries of Oconee, Pickens and Greenville counties; in the area below neither zone is prominent.