

bird's call. Edward R. Ford in 1930 (*Auk*, 47: 254) comments on Stone's note and on Spanish pronunciation, indicating his belief that Sennett in first writing the name transliterated the Spanish sounds as they sounded to his English ear, with resultant error.

While working in the south-Texas border country in the vicinity of Rio Grande City, in 1938, I had frequent occasion to discuss, in Spanish, the fauna of the area with the local Mexicans, who, although often American citizens, usually possessed only the scantiest fragments of English, and had mostly come more or less recently into this country from Nuevo León, Tamaulipas, and other Mexican border states. The people called the bird "Parruaca" which, in accordance with Spanish rules of pronunciation generally, and local usage in particular, is pronounced, "Pahr-r-r-wah'-kuh," the "r" being rolled rather strongly, the accented syllable "wah" cut rather short, and the final syllable "kuh," swallowed—that is, pronounced on an indrawn breath. As the "pah" part of the first syllable is also pronounced rather shortly, or not voiced distinctly, the general effect when heard is of the trilled "r" and the accented "wah," followed by a clean cut "kuh." The result as absorbed by the ear is not unlike our word "squawk," though softened by the preceding and following sounds. The spelling is in accordance with usual Spanish usages, as "Pauraque" and "Parauque" are not. These, though pronounceable in Spanish, give a distinct shock to the sensitive Hispanic eye. I believe that Ford's interpretation of Sennett's mistake is correct, so far as it goes, and that Stone's correction, while a step in the right direction, is in itself incorrect.

These birds were often observed flying at dusk in the brushy border country, and were seen to come to the local cattle "tanks,"—water containers standing five or six feet high above the earth, and ten to fifteen feet across—over which they were frequently observed to pass, leaving small ripples in the water behind their beaks, either while engaged in drinking on the wing, or catching insects just above the surface of the water.—RODGERS D. HAMILTON, *Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan.*

Those tall Sinai quails.—Dr. Joshua L. Baily, Jr., writing in *Herpetologica* (3: 41–48, 1946) says that Moses' statement that the quails of the Sinai peninsula stood two cubits above the ground (*Numbers*, 11: 31) strains the credulity of most readers and has led to at least one suggestion that these birds may have been herons or dodoes. (J. M. C. Plowden, *Once in Sinai*, Methuen & Co., London, 1940, p. 192).

Mr. Anthony Curtiss of Port-au-Prince, Haiti, has this to say in rebuttal in a letter dated: "1946, Friday, Eighth night of Dhul hijja approaching All Saints' Day. Your author is surely in error in saying that Moses related that the miraculous quails stood two cubits high. The Hebrew is not very explicit; it says: ' . . . and about two cubits above the ground.' St. Jerome's old Vulgate translation is most helpful in cases of this kind for it is based on fourth century Hebrew MSS, whereas the oldest Hebrew MS that we now have is a tenth century one. St. Jerome says that the quails flew at a height of two cubits above the ground. Indeed the Hebrew context indicates that to be the true meaning."

Mr. Curtiss' explanation seems to be a good one. The writer had thought that the birds referred to might have been bustards, similar to our present giant bustards.—CHAPMAN GRANT, *San Diego, California.*

American Raven nesting in houses.—For a number of years we have been exploring a wild canyon country in the Columbia Basin in eastern Washington. One of the surprising discoveries made on our trips into this area was the not infrequent