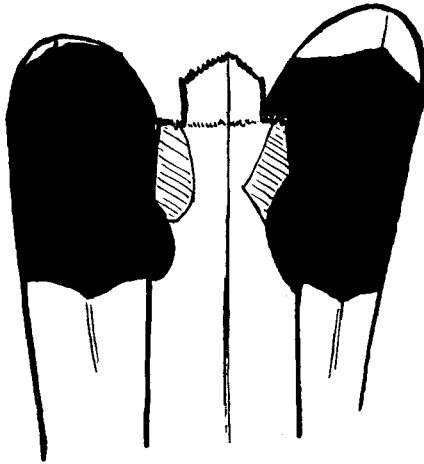


tion so that they covered the ground to the height of two cubits.' You are right in surmising that the Hebrew text means that the quails were spread pretty evenly all over the ground to the height of two cubits. You may be right in figuring that according to the text [v: 32] 66,000,000 bushels of quails were gathered. I leave the mathematics to you. In any case, it is recognized by modern historians that the Israelites in the desert with Moses did not number, as the text [XI: 21] with incredible exaggeration reports, 600,000 footmen, but probably less than one hundredth of that impossible figure. Late biblical authors (such as this one) love great figures. The Hebrew word *salwim* in Numbers XI: 31-32; Exodus XVI: 13; Psalms CV: 40, (translated 'quails') is generally identified with the *Coturnix communis*."

My figures of 66,000,000 bushels were reckoned on 10 homers of 11 bushels each for each of the 600,000 men. If there were only 6000 men gathering 10 homers apiece, 660,000 bushels would indicate pretty good hunting. Even if the quails were not tall themselves, the story is a tall one!—FRANCIS H. ALLEN, *West Roxbury 32, Massachusetts*.

Abnormal rectrix of Sparrow Hawk.—Sutton and Arnold (Auk, 55: 281, 1938) and Shortt (Auk, 59: 438, 1942) report abnormally developed primaries in a Blue Jay



TEXT-FIGURE 1.—Abnormal rectrix of Sparrow Hawk.

and Ring-billed Gull, respectively. While examining Sparrow Hawk skins in the Louis Agassiz Fuertes Memorial Collection (Dept. of Ornithology, Cornell University) I found a specimen labeled *Falco sparverius paulus* (C. U. No. 1132) with an abnormal tail feather. The bird, a male from Dade County, Florida, was collected by Mr. Fuertes on March 26, 1908. This skin is normal in all respects except for the peculiar rectrix, which is striking because it has no subterminal black band. The tip of the feather is very worn, and a mark of weakness shows about eight mm. from the end. The worn area is rufous in color, and where the band would normally be situated are two patches of gray, one on each side of the rachis, with a small spot of black at the proximal end of each. (See Text-fig. 1).

There is no positive way of accounting for this odd feather unless it was caused by injury to the developing follicle, in which case it is difficult to explain how the feather

could have grown to almost normal length. The excessive wear shows, however, that this feather was weak in structure as well as unusual in color pattern, and as only one rectrix is affected, local injury is probably the correct answer.—IRWIN M. ALPERIN, *Brooklyn, New York.*

A partial Albino Robin.—On August 15, 1939, an adult male Robin (*Turdus migratorius*) was trapped and banded. This bird was a partial albino—its body nearly all white, some red on the front of the breast, part of the forehead dark, and the wings and tail showing the only normal coloring. A short motion picture in color was taken of this bird when captured because of its unusual markings. This bird never again entered the traps since the day when first captured, but for the next eight summers a Robin marked exactly like this and wearing a band has been seen at various times each year around the banding station. It arrived annually about April 1, except in 1946 and 1947, and has been seen almost daily during each of the eight summers. I have never found its nest but its headquarters were mostly on the western part of our ten-acre farm, some two hundred yards from the trapping area. It was a breeding bird, as on several occasions it nested in near-by gardens; this was reported to us each year after the young had flown. Also each time the report came in that the young had been normally colored.

While this must remain entirely a sight record, yet each year we have been sure to see that the bird still wore a band; also each year we have reviewed the motion picture to make a careful comparison with the present markings and note that there has been no change through the years. Consequently we have no hesitancy in placing this on record.

The following dates are those of annual return: April 1, 1940; April 2, 1941; March 30, 1942; April 5, 1943; March 23, 1944; April 1, 1945; June 1, 1946; May 4, 1947. This bird is now at least nine years of age.—RAYMOND J. MIDDLETON, *Norristown, Pennsylvania.*

An albino Cliff Swallow.—On July 31, 1946, a woman brought to me an albino Cliff Swallow which she had captured in a shed near her house, about three miles southeast of Bennington, Vermont. The bird was uninjured. It was pure white all over, although it did not have pink eyes.

It was kept overnight and released the following day, and it has not been seen since.—LUCRETIOUS H. ROSS, *Bennington, Vermont.*

Orchard Oriole nesting at Madison, Wisconsin.—The Orchard Oriole (*Icterus spurius*) has always been considered a rare spring migrant on the University of Wisconsin Arboretum at Madison, Wisconsin, but during the spring of 1947 one pair nested on the area. On June 14, I saw a female constructing a nest in a 12-foot hawthorn (*Crataegus*). The nest was on the east side of the tree seven feet from the ground. It was about one-half built. The male of the pair was an immature bird and was not at all shy. It did little calling and on my several visits to the nest area it was never heard to sing. The nest contained four eggs on June 23. At that time, too, a Kingbird was seen to flush the female from the nest tree. Subsequent visits to the nest always found the Kingbird harassing the orioles. On July 12 the nest contained three live but slightly emaciated young of varying size and a dead nestling (apparently the youngest) which was very thin. The largest bird was about a week old. At this time no parents were about and I chased a Kingbird from the nest tree. Three days later the nest contained one dead nestling. The larger two perhaps fledged, but a search of the area showed no sign of young or adults. The belligerent Kingbird, however, was still in the vicinity.