

Spotted Rail of the same country, which in its plumage approaches nearer to our Rail, is another notable example of the same general habit of the genus. "Its common abode," says the same writer, "is in low swampy grounds, in which are pools or streamlets overgrown with willows, reeds and rushes, where it lurks and hides itself with great circumspection; it is wild, solitary and shy, and will swim, dive or skulk under any cover, and sometimes suffer itself to be knocked on the head, rather than rise before the sportsman and his dog." The Water Rail of the same country is equally noted for the like habits. In short, the whole genus possess this strong family character in a very remarkable degree.

These three species are well known to migrate into Britain early in spring, and to leave it for the more southern parts of Europe in autumn. Yet they are rarely or never seen in their passage to or from the countries where they are regularly found at different seasons of the year; and this for the very same reasons, that they are so rarely seen even in the places where they inhabit.

It is not, therefore, at all surprising, that the regular migrations of the American Rail or Sora should, in like manner, have escaped notice in a country like this, whose population bears so small a proportion to its extent; and where the study of natural history is so little attended to. But that these migrations do actually take place, from north to south, and *vice versa*, may be fairly inferred from the common practice of thousands of other species of birds less solicitous of concealment, and also from the following facts.

On the twenty-second day of February I killed two of these birds in the neighborhood of Savannah in Georgia, where they have never been observed during the summer. On the second of the May following, I shot another in a watery thicket below Philadelphia, between the rivers Schuylkill and Delaware, in what is usually called the *Neck*. This last was a male, in full plumage. We are also informed, that they arrive at Hudson's Bay early in June, and again leave that settlement for the south early in autumn. That many of them also remain here to breed is proved by the testimony of persons of credit and intelligence with whom I have conversed, both here and on James river in Virginia, who have seen their nests, eggs and young. In the extensive meadows that border the Schuylkill and Delaware, it was formerly common, before the country was so thickly settled there, to find young Rail in the first mowing time, among the grass. Mr. James Bartram, brother to the botanist, a venerable and still active man of eighty-three, and well acquainted with this bird, says, that he has often seen and caught young Rail in his own meadows in the month of June; he has also seen their nest, which he says is usually in a tussock of grass, is formed of a little dry grass, and has four or five eggs of a dirty whitish color, with brown