

as ever. These facts go to prove, that the Rail is subject to gusts of passion, which operate to so violent a degree as to produce a disease, similar in its effects to epilepsy. I leave the explication of the phenomenon to those pathologists who are competent and willing to investigate it. It may be worthy of remark, that the birds affected as described, were all females of the *Rallus Carolinus*, or common Rail.

"The Rail, though generally reputed a simple bird, will sometimes manifest symptoms of considerable intelligence. To those acquainted with Rail-shooting, it is hardly necessary to mention, that the tide, in its flux, is considered an almost indispensable auxiliary; for, when the water is off the marsh, the lubricity of the mud, the height and compactness of the reed, and the swiftness of foot of the game, tend to weary the sportsman, and to frustrate his endeavors. Even should he succeed in a tolerable degree, the reward is not commensurate to the labor. I have entered the marsh in a batteau, at a common tide, and in a well-known haunt have beheld but few birds. The next better tide, on resorting to the same spot, I have perceived abundance of game. The fact is, the Rail dive, and conceal themselves beneath the fallen reed, merely projecting their heads above the surface of the water for air, and remain in that situation until the sportsman has passed them; and it is well known, that it is a common practice with wounded Rail to dive to the bottom, and, holding upon some vegetable substance, support themselves in that situation until exhausted. During such times, the bird, in escaping from one enemy, has often to encounter another not less formidable. Eels and cat-fish swarm in every direction, prowling for prey; and it is ten to one if a wounded Rail escapes them. I myself have beheld a large eel make off with a bird that I had shot, before I had time to pick it up; and one of my boys, in bobbing for eels, caught one with a whole Rail in its belly.

"I have heard it observed, that on the increase of the moon the Rail improves in fatness, and decreases in a considerable degree with that planet. Sometimes I have conceived that the remark was just. If it be a fact, I think it may be explained on the supposition, that the bird is enabled to feed at night, as well as by day, while it has the benefit of the moon, and with less interruption than at other periods."