

"The swan made a vain attempt to escape; but his enemy, striking him under the belly and under the wings, with restless eagerness, contrived in four or five minutes to fling him downward, with his back upon the earth.

"The most hideous spectacle possible was then presented to our horrified gaze. The fierce bird clasped the bleeding body of the beautiful northern pilgrim with his greedy talons; he muttered with a terrible delight, as if enjoying the sight of the last convulsions of his victim. Meantime the female remained perched upon her tree, calm and indifferent, trusting to the strength of her lord and master for the successful issue of their stratagem.

"But from the moment the swan ceased to move, she understood that the banquet was ready for her participation; and flinging herself into the air, she crossed the river in the twinkling of an eye, descended on the shore like an aerolite, and took her seat at the board without being invited and without inviting permission.

"I had waited until now to act on my own behalf," continued my Philadelphian friend; "and I ordered my negroes to row softly in the direction of the spot where the two birds of prey thought themselves entirely free from danger. Without taking heed of our approach, they gorged themselves with blood and fragments of flesh, and we were able to drop down within range. My carbine was loaded with deer-shot. I raised it, took aim, and fired. My dear sir, it was a splendid shot. The female never stirred; she had been struck dead. As for the male, it was quite another affair. I had broken his two wings, but not hit his body; and we had to finish him off with a blow or two from our oars. This *coup de grâce* we gave with all possible care, for I wanted to