

others flying overhead. The uproar was almost deafening, and the odour arising from the filth with which the trees and ground were covered was extremely disagreeable.

We tramped all through the heronry, and calculated that it must extend at least half a mile in each direction. The trees were swamp ash (*Fraxinus sambucifolia*), and at least two nests were built on every available one, while some of the larger ones contained as many as seven or eight. The clutch seemed in all cases to consist of three; and the nearly full grown young were scarcely to be distinguished in plumage from the adults. When driven from the nest, however, they flew very awkwardly, and alighted as quickly as possible. Numbers of the parents were feeding their young, and the capacious mouths and throats of some which we shot were completely filled with fish, about an inch long, which were evidently intended for food for their hungry offspring. The nests were all of the same pattern—great cumbersome piles of sticks, about a foot thick, but with a very shallow cavity, and no lining. They were placed from twenty to forty feet from the ground, in some instances, next the trunk of the tree, and, in others, some distance out on the large branches. The birds were very tame, making no attempt to fly until we began to climb the trees on which they were; and even then they moved lazily off, and manifested little or no alarm at our near approach to their young. It is surprising that such large and powerful birds should show so little inclination to defend their young; however, as the following incident will show, it is not always in the largest and strongest birds that this instinct is most perfectly developed.

On the 28th June a most peculiar fight was witnessed by Mr. Scott in a willow swamp about four miles from the city. The combatants were a common garter snake (*Eutaenia sirtalis* Baird and Girard), about a foot and a half long, which was trying to devour a young Wilson's thrush (*Turdus fuscescens* Steph.), and the parent thrushes, who were endeavouring to rescue it, aided in their efforts by two catbirds (*Mimus carolinensis* (L.) Gr.) and two robins (*T. migratorius* L.). The six birds were greatly excited, and every feather stood on end, as each one dashed in turn at the head of the snake. How the latter was defending himself could not be seen, as he was almost com-