

a sudden crash on deck, that broke the glass in the binnacle, and put out the light. On examining into the cause, three Rail were found on deck, two of which were killed on the spot, and the other died soon after. The late Bishop Madison, president of William and Mary College, Virginia, assured me, that a Mr. Skipwith, for some time our consul in Europe, in his return to the United States, when upwards of three hundred miles from the capes of the Chesapeake, several Rail or Soras, I think five or six, came on board, and were caught by the people. Mr. Skipwith being well acquainted with the bird, assured him that they were the very same with those usually killed on James river. I have received like assurances from several other gentlemen, and captains of vessels, who have met with these birds between the main land and the islands, so as to leave no doubt on my mind of the fact. For, why should it be considered incredible that a bird which can both swim and dive well, and at pleasure fly with great rapidity, as I have myself frequently witnessed, should be incapable of migrating, like so many others, over extensive tracts of land or sea? Inhabiting, as they do, the remote regions of Hudson's Bay, where it is impossible they could subsist during the rigors of their winter, they must either emigrate thence or perish; and as the same places in Pennsylvania, which abound with them in October, are often laid under ice and snow during the winter, it is as impossible that they could exist here in that inclement season; Heaven has therefore given them, in common with many others, certain prescience of these circumstances; and judgment, as well as strength of flight, sufficient to seek more genial climates, abounding with their suitable food.

The Rail is nine inches long, and fourteen inches in extent; bill yellow, blackish towards the point; lores, front crown, chin, and stripe down the throat, black; line over the eye, cheeks and breast, fine light ash; sides of the crown, neck, and upper parts generally olive brown, streaked with black, and also with long lines of pure white, the feathers being centered with black, on a brown olive ground, and edged with white; these touches of white are shorter near the shoulder of the wing, lengthening as they descend; wing plain olive brown; tertials streaked with black and long lines of white; tail pointed, dusky olive brown, centered with black, the four middle feathers bordered for half their length with lines of white; lower part of the breast marked with semicircular lines of white, on a light ash ground; belly white; sides under the wings deep olive, barred with black, white, and reddish buff; vent brownish buff; legs, feet, and naked part of the thighs, yellowish green; exterior edge of the wing white; eyes reddish hazel.

The females, and young of the first season, have the throat white, the breast pale brown, and little or no black on the head. The males