

incidents related by our guests, caused our sitting to last until a late hour. The trappers, who had been so long debarred from society, and from everything esteemed by them as luxuries, were not in a hurry to sleep: they seemed by no means to tire of sipping hot tea, eating biscuits, and, at intervals, smoking their pipes. But all mankind grow weary even of the highest enjoyment; and, finally, we all sunk to rest, the beavers creeping under the robe of cariboo skins in which Nicolah rolled himself, and nestling close to him.

The next morning, while we were all at breakfast, a pair of loons, who had possession of the lake made their appearance in front of us, and led to some jokes at our expense: we were asked why, with so many guns among us, we had been unable to secure one of these "masters of the lake." The loon, known to naturalists as the great northern diver, frequents the numerous lakes with which the interior of New Brunswick abounds. These birds are not fond of society, for it is rare to find more than one pair in each sheet of water; they procure the fish on which they feed, in the deepest water, by diving for them, and continuing under a great length of time: they seem averse to flying, being rarely seen on the wing; and as they are exceedingly wary birds, with a very quick eye, they are but seldom hit. The loons will boldly venture near the sportsman, trusting to their astonishing faculty of diving for safety: they always go down at the flash, for which they seem to wait; and as their skins are exceedingly thick, it is somewhat rare to kill one of them, even under the most favourable circumstances.

We had again and again fired at these birds without success, and had finally given them up as a bad bargain: our Indians would not interfere, always laughing heartily at our failures, and saying it would be a pity to kill the loons, as then we would have nothing for targets.—The flesh of these birds is black, hard, and fishy, and perfectly uneatable; and they are only valued for the skins, which, being dressed with the feathers on, are made into caps and vests, and are sought after to form a somewhat fanciful article of dress. Nicolah said he thought he could get the male bird for us; and we desired him to try. Having charged one of our long guns with a handful of swan-drops, he borrowed a red silk handkerchief, which was fastened to the end of a short stick, and handed to Wahpoose, who immediately crept with it toward the end of the point, working his way, at full length on the ground, over the

dry twigs and dead leaves, with noiseless and snake-like motion. Nicolah followed in the same fashion, drawing the gun after him, and the pair took up their position in a clump of alders near the water's edge, which they had been anxious to gain without observation, and where they lay perfectly concealed. Wahpoose began waving the handkerchief gently, to attract attention, at the same time imitating closely the loud shrill cry of the bird; the loons were about a quarter of a mile distant, and we observed them instantly roused on hearing the cry, and at once bearing down for the point. On they came, the male bird answering the excellent imitation with loud notes of defiance; when he came within shot, he appeared very angry and greatly excited, and, partially opening his wings, began to peal forth one long continued scream: he was off his guard; Nicolah saw it, and the next instant the loon lay dead upon the water.

This bird, as nearly as we could judge, weighed about twelve pounds; he was three feet from the tip of the bill to the end of the tail, and nearly five feet between the extremities of the wings, when spread. The head, and half the length of the neck, were of a deep black, with a green gloss and purple reflections, below which the neck was encircled by a band of black-and-white lateral stripes. The back was of a deep black, slightly glossed with green, and thickly spotted with white, in regular rows, there being two spots on the end of each feather. The breast and under part of the bird were of a brilliant silvery white; the legs were jet black, and, being placed very far behind, nearly in a line with the body, the bird was enabled to propel himself in the water with great velocity, and turn with astonishing quickness.

One of the Indians pointed out to us a peculiarity in the formation of the bill of these birds, which is very strong and sharp, and of a glossy black. The lower mandible is in two parts, united by an elastic membrane, which allows them to recede from each other, so as to form a wide space, and enable the bird to swallow a very large fish. The loon is exceedingly restless before a storm; and the loud, shrill cry they make may be heard at the distance of a mile or more, and is the certain forerunner of bad weather. The Indians never heard them cry without saying that there would be wind, "great deal wind;" which was sure to follow very soon after.

But the time had now arrived when our party was to break up: the trappers were making