

TWO MOMENTS OF DRAMA

BY TURNER E. McMULLEN

One day while searching for eagle nests in South Jersey, I saw an eagle flying toward a nest which appeared to be by its size the nest of an osprey. An osprey appeared and dove at the eagle from above and behind. The birds line of flight came directly over my head at a height of about 150 feet. It was at this time that the osprey chose to make a dive much bolder than any he had previously attempted. As he appeared about to hit the eagle, the larger bird turned over on its back with such speed that the air whistled with the swift movement of the great wings and could be distinctly heard by me. The eagle reached upward toward the osprey with outstretched talons which with a sharp turn the smaller bird just managed to avoid. The osprey at this point lost interest in further attempts at dive bombing.

While on a ledge on a high cliff engaged in research at the nest of a Duck Hawk, I chanced in a moment of relaxation to glance out over the broad valley. One Duck Hawk approached another from the rear and underneath. As he made contact he turned over and snatched something from the claws of the unsuspecting bird. With the booty safe in its claws it dove toward the ground and made away. Whether or not the Duck Hawk that was robbed actually suspected the Turkey Vulture that happened to be near of this act of flyway robbery or not I do not venture to guess. At any rate the empty taloned falcon vented his chagrin on the hopeless Cathartidae and there ensued such an explosion of feathers as was truly remarkable. Both birds then disappeared and I returned to my research.