

## EAGLES IN ENGLAND.

At one time the golden and white-tailed eagles bred not uncommonly in the mountainous environment of the English Lake District. Most majestic of the winged poachers, they held sway over a wide area and suffered no intrusion. The eyries were perched high upon the almost inaccessible mountain fastnesses. It is asserted by the shepherds of the district that the eagles during the breeding season destroyed a lamb per day, to say nothing of the carnage made on hares, partridges, pheasants, grouse, and the waterfowl that inhabit the lakes. The farmers and dalesmen were always careful to plunder the eyries, but not without considerable risk to life and limb. A man was lowered from the summit of the precipitous rocks by a rope of fifty fathoms, and was compelled to defend himself from attack during his descent. The poet Gray, in his "Journal," graphically describes how the eyries were annually plundered, upon one of which occasions he was present. Wordsworth says that the eagles built in the precipices overlooking one of the tarns in the recesses of Helvellyn, and that the birds used to wheel and hover over his head as he fished in the silent tarn. Now the spot is occupied by a pair of patriarchal ravens—the sole remaining relics of the original "Red Tarn Club."

Among the mountains an instance is related of an eagle which, having pounced upon a shepherd's dog, carried it to a considerable height; but the weight and action of the animal effected a partial liberation, and he left part of his flesh in the eagle's beak. The dog was not killed by the fall; he recovered of his wound, but was so intimidated that he would never go that way again. Subsequently the owner of the dog shot at and wounded one of the eagles. The bird, nearly exhausted, was found a week afterwards by a shepherd of Seatoller; its lower mandible was split, and its tongue wedged between the interstices. The bird was captured and kept in confinement; but it became so violent that, ultimately, it had to be shot. On the eagles being frequently robbed of their young in Greenup they removed to the opposite side of the crag. At this place they built for two years, but left it for Raven Crag; here they built annually during their stay in Borrowdale. On the loss of its mate the remaining eagle left the district, but returned the following spring with another. This pair built during fourteen years in Borrowdale, but finally abandoned it for Eskdale. At the last-mentioned place they were also disturbed, and the female eagle being afterwards shot, the male flew off and returned no more.

Eagle Crag is a grand towering rock, or collection of perpendicular rocks, connected by horizontal spaces of variously coloured vegetation. Its form is fine, and it is a majestic background to many pleasing foregrounds. On that part of Eagle Crag which is opposite to Greenup the eagles occasionally built their nests. But they were so destructive to the lambs, and consequently injurious to the interests of the shepherds, that their extermination became absolutely necessary. Their building-places being inaccessible by climbing, a dangerous experiment was ventured upon. A man was lowered by a rope down the face of the cliff for ninety feet. A piked staff such as is used by shepherds was the weapon with which the man defended himself against the attack of the parent birds while he robbed the nest of eggs or eaglets. If birds, their possession was to be his remuneration; but if eggs, every neighbouring sheep farmer gave for each egg five shillings. The nest of the eagles was formed of branches of trees, and lined with coarse grass and bents which grew upon the neighbouring rocks. The eagles sometimes flew off with lambs that were a month old,

and in winter frequented the head of the Derwent, where they preyed upon waterfowl.

The white-tailed sea eagles bred upon the rocks of a towering limestone escarpment overlooking a recess of the sea, and fed upon gulls and terns. The vast peat mosses which stretched away for miles below them abounded with hares and grouse, and among these the birds made devastation. Year after year they carried off their young from the same cliffs, and now return only at rare intervals, when storm-driven. The peregrines have the eagles' eyrie, and are only eagles in miniature. The sea-fowl form their food in summer, so do wild ducks in winter. At this latter season the Osprey or "Fish-Hawk" comes to the bay and the still mountain tarns, adding wildness to the scenes which his congeners have left never now to return.

## A COLLAR BUTTON COLUMBUS.

The man at the desk was rushed and did not want to be bothered by visitors, but this one had a business air about his person which demanded attention.

"You've heard about collar buttons and how they get lost so often and imperil a man's immortal soul by the language they drive him to?" he said inquiringly.

The editor put his hand up to his neck and nodded, as he jagged his finger on the point of a pin stationed there.

"Well, I'm on to a scheme to put an end to that business."

The editor's face brightened and an interrogation point grew out of its lines of care.

"You see it's this way," the inventor went on, "I've practiced with one of the darned things till I've got it down to a mathematical point. I stood up before the glass, as we all do in dressing, and dropped the button on purpose. It struck the floor and went north under the bureau. Second time it rolled soath under the bed. Third time it went east under the wash stand. Fourth time it started west and landed under the grate. Then it hustled all around the compass, northeast by east, northwest by west, east by north, east by northeast, and at last got back to the place of beginning. Do you follow me?"

The editor nodded.

"Then I had it, sir," and the man's face shone. "I had it, sir, and I had its conqueror. I got the right twist on it and every time I dropped it after that it went to the same spot. *Veni, vidi, vici*. That's me. All you've got to do is to put the fore and aft twist on to her and no more lost collar buttons and immortal souls. See?"

The editor looked doubtful, but the visitor didn't notice it.

"Now print that in your paper at top of column, next to reading matter and ameliorate the condition of mankind. That's all, good by," and the man went out with a hop, skip and a chuckle.

Three hours after, he returned, just as the editor began to prepare an article on the subject of his first visit.

"Well," was the brief inquiry, "any new discoveries?"

"Yes, one; you'll find it in this," handing him an envelope with a dollar bill pinned to it, and disappearing hurriedly.

The editor opened it and read as follows:

LOST—SOMEWHERE IN THE HOUSE, A plain gold collar button, valuable only as a memento of a wife's affection. Finder will be rewarded by leaving it at this office and no questions asked.