

THE KING OF BIRDS.

THE EAGLE IN TENNESSEE..... *Cincinnati Inquirer.*

There are many eagles in the Tennessee mountains, and there are mountaineers who are expert catchers of the young eaglets, who reap rich rewards in return for their perilous risks and adventures. Eagles make their eyries among the clefts and crags of the highest mountains of the state. They are found on the Stone Mountain, the great Roane, 6,296 feet high; the Bald, 5,550 feet; the Great Smoky range, 6,636 feet; the Bull-head, 6,612 feet; on the Unaka, the Big Stone, and others, none of them less than 5,000 feet above the level of the country at their feet.

The American yacht *Defender*, which defeated the English yacht *Valkyrie III.* in the famous international race, carried as its mascots two young eaglets captured in the Tennessee mountains. Private owners of yachts, captains of big ocean liners, and the steamboat men of the big rivers of America are very partial to eaglets as pets, and the eagle catchers find this class of men among their best customers. There is a well-grounded superstition among them that the boat or ship that carries the king of birds for its mascot will never go down. The superstitious belief is like the superstition of the old Romans, who, in choosing the great bird as an emblem for their imperial standard, regarded it as the favorite messenger of Jupiter, and that the bird held communion with heaven. Oriental people, too, thought that the feathers of an eagle's tail made their arrows invincible. The Indian tribes among the mountains of East Tennessee venerated the eagle as their war bird, and valued its feathers for headdresses and to decorate their pipes of peace.

Young eagles bring from \$40 to \$80, occasionally \$100. Eagles that are of some age and of a great size (such are rarely captured, however,) bring as high as \$300 to \$500. Eagles which have to be killed while

trying to capture the male valuable to taxidermists, who always find an easy market for a great stuffed eagle. Their feathers, especially the wing and tail feathers, are sold for good prices. The eagle builds its nest upon the top of a mighty tree growing far up on the mountain, among the myriad of twining vines, or in the thickest and almost inaccessible growth of bushes and shrubs, or on the summit of a high rock. An eagle's nest is a large one always, and is strongly and comfortably built. Large sticks and branches are laid together, nearly flat, and bound with twining vines. The spacious inside is covered with hair and mosses, so minutely woven together that no wind can enter. The mother bird lays two eggs, which are curiosities. The long end tapers down to a point. The color of the egg is a ground of brownish red, with many dots and spots upon it. The egg itself is proof of the wild and savage parentage. An eagle lives from 80 to 160 years. The young birds are driven forth by their savage parents to scratch for themselves as soon as they are able to fly. No training is given them by the old bird. That is left to their wild instincts, which hunger and necessity develop. There is no going "back to the old home" for the young eagle. The mother bird tears up every vestige of the nest where they have thriven since birth, and while they emit plaintive shrieks the old bird darts at them and pushes them off the crags or rocks, and, to prevent falling, they must take to their wings, and this is how they learn to fly. It takes three years for a young eagle to gain its full and complete plumage and for the development of its strength.

An eagle is always fully confident of his strength, and rarely overreaches himself in his rapacious desire for prey. The minuteness of their vision, for they can take in at a searching glance the presence of desirable prey in a radius of many miles, on mountain, valley, forest, swamp or field, humanity cannot comprehend. With this wonderful power of sight is combined a swiftness of flight equally as wonderful. In a single night and in a day a full grown eagle can fly a