

The Rockwood Review.

BALD EAGLE.

HALLÆTUS LEUCOCEPHALUS.

The Bald Eagle inhabits North America, ranging south into Mexico, as well as in the northeastern part of Siberia. It occurs along the Arctic Ocean as a summer resident only, though in the greater part of Alaska and southward it is found throughout the year, merely wandering whenever food becomes scarce. It breeds in suitable localities through its range.

The favorite food of the Bald Eagle is fish, and when this vertebrate can be procured the bird will touch little else. Of the hundreds of these Eagles which the writer has watched, none were observed ever to touch anything except fish or offal picked up from rivers or along their shores. What proportion of the fish consumed is taken from the Osprey is hard to estimate, but the number must be very great.

Speaking of the food of the Bald Eagle in Alaska, Mr. E. W. Nelson says: "In summer they feed upon fish and the numerous wild-fowl which breed among these islands. In winter they feed upon Ptarmigan and the sea-fowl which reside there during this season. When at the salmon run, in Sanborn Harbor, Nagai, Mr. Dall saw seventeen eagles within 100 yards. During winter he found many eagles dead, but they were too fat to have starved, and he was unable to account for the mystery." (Report Nat. Hist., Collections in Alaska, 1887, p. 144.)

Mr. J. E. West mentions a neighbor who, while watching for geese on the river opposite Wilkinsons Point, near the mouth of Neuces River, North Carolina, saw an eagle having something in its talons and flying across the river in his direction. As the river at this point is five miles wide, the bird was evidently becoming very tired and kept flying lower and lower, but finally alighted on the shore within twenty steps of the gunner, who

shot it. The object it carried was a little live lamb which was unhurt. (IBID., vol. iv, 1875, p. 166.) This note shows to what a great distance an Eagle is capable of carrying a burden fully equal to its own weight.

Along the coast of the South Atlantic States and on the lower Mississippi, this Eagle appears to feed more on waterfowl than in any other section of the country. The following note from Mr. Wm. Brewster refers to the vicinity of Cobbs Island, Virginia: "In the winter the Eagles are much more numerous than at any other time of the year, and my informant has, on several occasions, seen as many as eight at once. At this season the neighboring bays and creeks swarm with Wild-fowl, and upon these the Eagles principally live. He has never known them to catch fish of any kind, although they not unfrequently rob the Fish-Hawk. Geese and Brant form their favorite food, and the address displayed in their capture is very remarkable. The poor victim has apparently not the slightest chance for escape. The Eagle's flight, ordinarily slow and somewhat heavy, becomes in the excitement of pursuit exceedingly swift and graceful, and the fugitive is quickly overtaken. When close upon its quarry the Eagle suddenly sweeps beneath it, and, turning back downwards, thrusts its powerful talons up into its breast. A Brant or Duck is carried off bodily to the nearest marsh or sand-bar, but a Canada Goose is too heavy to be thus easily disposed of. The two great birds fall together to the water beneath, while the Eagle literally tows his prize along the surface until the shore is reached. In this way one has been known to drag a large Goose for nearly half a mile." (Bull. Nutt. Ornith. Club, vol. v, 1880, pp. 57-58.)

Mr. Charles F. Batchelder, quoting Mr. John W. Baker, mentions an Eagle on the St. Johns River, Florida, which for a period of four