

pluck it with his bill, which he does very expertly, holding it meantime quite fast in his talons; and, as soon as a portion is cleared of feathers, tears the flesh in large pieces, and swallows it with great avidity.

"If it is a large bird, he leaves the refuse parts; but, if small, swallows the whole in pieces. Should he be approached by an enemy, he rises with it, and flies off into the interior of the woods; or, if he happens to be in a meadow, to some considerable distance, he being more wary at such times than when he has alighted on a tree." — AUDUBON.

The following very complete description of the breeding habits of the Great-footed Hawk is from the pen of J. A. Allen, of Springfield, Mass., one of our most enthusiastic students, published in the "Proceedings of the Essex Institute," vol. IV.: —

"All accounts agree that the nest is placed on almost inaccessible cliffs; and often it can only be approached by a person being let down by a rope from above. The old birds are represented as bold in the defence of their nest, approaching so near as generally to be easily shot. They arrive early at their nesting-place; and, though they often bestow no labor in the construction of a nest, beyond the scraping of a slight hollow in the ground, they defend their chosen eyrie for weeks before the eggs are laid, and are known to return for several years to the same site. Incubation commences very early, the young having been found in the nest at Mount Tom, May 30, nearly fledged,¹ and on Talcott Mountain, in the same condition, June 1; so that the laying of the eggs must occur by the last of March, or very early in April. The number of eggs has been known in several instances to be four.

"Mountains Tom and Holyoke, in Massachusetts, afford several localities favorable for the nidification of the Duck Hawk; and sometimes several pairs, and probably usually more than one, breed about these mountains.² About the last of May, 1863, Mr. Bennett

¹ According to R. B. Hildreth, Esq., of Springfield, who visited this nest May 30, 1861, and noted the fact. The nest on Talcott Mountain, Conn., was found the same season, and first visited only a few days later, — about June 1, 1861.

² Since the above was written, I have been informed by Mr. Bennett, that a pair of these hawks actually raised their young on Mount Tom in the summer of 1864, notwithstanding one pair was broken up the same season.