

Childhood of Ji-shib

They had scarcely gained their outlook when their sharp sight caught the reflection of an eagle in the water. As they cautiously raised their eyes they saw a female eagle approaching over the lake; and they could plainly see that she was carrying something in her claws. Very soon she flew into the cliff some distance from them, and they heard the eager cries of a nestful of hungry young birds.

A tame porcupine was tame indeed, as compared with a caged eagle, so as soon as the mother-bird was out of sight again over the forest trees, the boys carefully picked their way up the cliff.

It was very difficult climbing part of the distance, but in places they could almost run. At times one pushed the other up over his head, and he, from his higher position, let down the end of his breech-cloth and hauled the lower boy up. But they were expert climbers, and at last, thanks to frequent but niggardly ledges and occasional balsams and pines which found a prisoner's fare in the narrow cell-like crevices, they arrived at the nest. Two young birds scarcely a week old were asleep within full sight of their position.