

When the eaglets are hatched, they are covered with a reddish down, and possess legs and beak of most disproportionate length. Their parents do not drive them out of the eyrie until their plumage is complete and they are able to fly. But before this decisive moment, when they introduce their progeny into society, the eagles abundantly provide them with game of every description, so that the edges of the nest are covered with fragments of bone and skin and putrid flesh.

I was returning one winter evening, in the month of February, from trout-fishing in the mountains of Cumberland, and we were descending, two friends and myself, from the abrupt escarpments abutting on the valley in whose midst was built the house of the farmer who gave us lodging, when I pointed out to my companions certain long whitish and chalky lumps of ordure, undoubtedly proceeding from a bird of prey.

The peasant accompanying us informed me that there were eagles in the midst of these rocks, and pretended that he had seen them that same evening, but out of range.

"The robbers," he added, "have carried off more sheep and poultry of my master's than they are worth dollars."

I resolved, while listening to our guide, to seize this opportunity of observing the habits of the American eagles, and after persuading my friends to halt, we concealed ourselves under a projecting crag, and remained there for what seemed to us a very long period. To say nothing of the weariness of "hope deferred," I was forced to listen to our peasant, who poured into my ear all his private woes, and his particular grievances