

belltown was, during the summer months, crowded with strangers who came to angle in those waters, now the village is nearly deserted by that class of tourists.

At this age everything that tends to restrict the liberties of the general public for the benefit of a few, will be put down with a strong hand. All Salmon rivers that are of easy access to the public, such as the Restigouche, Matépédia, Cascapédia, &c., instead of giving the Government, as they do now, a mere pittance, should yield a revenue of several hundred dollars a week during the open season. Unless this evil is soon remedied there will be serious trouble, for the feeling here against it is strong and deep, and will sooner or later show itself on the surface with a power that will sweep all opposition before it.

STANSTEAD.

Restigouche, N.B., July 9, 1881.

DEER'S HORNS—A ROYAL HEAD.

Every hunter has heard disputes regarding what may be termed a full-grown, or "Royal" head. The fact is, a deer's age is known like sheep, viz: by the teeth, so that a practical butcher is a better judge on this point, whereas I am only an expert. The horns of our common deer (*Cariacus Virginianus*) take three seasons to come to maturity, so that in its fourth autumn or fall, they are as large as that animal is likely to produce them. In the first fall there are no horns, although I have once or twice seen little nubs one inch or so in length, and it is foolish to look to the size of the horns as a criterion of his age. It is similar to guessing the age of a game cock by the length of its tail feathers. In the first growth, or second fall, the horns are very variously produced. Some bucks have merely a long, single prong, and hunters then call them "spike," or "prong" bucks, and they are often represented as a distinct species. This is not so, as no one has seen the doe of the spike buck. Sometimes there are two branches only without a pointlet, or there may be three, but I never saw more than four. The first growth horns are always small, and look diminutive on the crown in proportion to the size of the buck. In the second growth, or third year, they are nearly as long and large-looking as they will attain, but thinner and more slender; and in the third growth, or fourth year, they become as large as they are generally; solid and massive. Occasionally there may be five, or even

six spikes, and I have seen various spikes with one, two, or even three spikelets of them, giving a grand and imposing aspect to the antlered head. But this is merely chance, and may depend on various causes. Particular localities, seem to have a great influence. For instance, in the County of Bruce, deer are found with antlers having long, straight prongs, and generally five, with very few spikelets. There is first the frontlet, then three full spikes gradually decreasing in length, and the terminal spike of the main branch, making five pointed extremities. I describe this from a full grown head, at this moment on my table, and I may add that the lesser heads are also here. In the Counties of Essex and Kent, and along Lake Erie, horns are more spiked and have quite a different aspect from the more northern forms. Spring opens there two or three weeks earlier than in Bruce. The feed is very different. The soil is low clay, and the water stagnant, and surface water. In the north, the county is a rolling sandy soil, with magnificent rills, that come from pure limestone springs, and formerly there was not one of these but had numerous beaver dams all over them. Into these open spaces deer came, especially in the evening, to feed and get rid of mosquitoes, black flies, horse flies, *et hoc genus omne*; and I have been lucky to drop many a fine buck when in the beaver dams.

Now there is another point sportsmen seem entirely to overlook, viz: the singular effect of peculiar seasons on the size and proportions of the horns. This, Mr. Editor, is no imaginary matter, but a fact. I have observed for years that when there is a warm early spring, with plenty of good succulent herbage, that next fall larger deer are procured, with finer heads; altogether they are fatter and heavier. The reason is thus explained: In spring, when there is not much food, the deer are invariably emaciated, and they have to wander continually for it, consequently there is a corresponding consumption of strength, and a systematic weakening, requiring time to recuperate. This naturally retards the growth of the horns, and after they are fairly in the velvet form, a frosty night takes great effect on them. It seems to stunt their growth, and to a certain extent, inflame them. An old hunter in referring to a head I once had, said that when the horns were a particular size, probably a keen frost took effect on them. I knew this by the rough thick nubs on a particular part. I may mention, that these horns were small, but thick and massive with little elegance of shape.