

layer of decomposing leaves or moss, that everywhere in the woods forms the surface. While excavating the Rideau Canal about twenty-five years since the perfect skeleton of a Wapite was exhumed at the Hogs-back, near the site of the present City of Ottawa. The horns were attached to the skull, and five feet long. Three years since the skeleton of a large deer was discovered in the County of Lanark, which was probably of this species.

The Wapite is still somewhat abundant in the Western prairies. In the paper from which our engraving of the animal is taken. Professor Baird says :—"The American Elk, sometimes called Wapite, was once extensively distributed throughout the present limits of the United States. At the present time, in the eastern parts, it is only found in a few counties of Pennsylvania—as Elk and Clearfield—where, indeed, their numbers are decreasing day by day. Occasionally one has been seen in the Moose range of the Adirondacks, in Lewis, Hamilton, and some other counties of northern New York. This has not been the case, however, for more than twenty years.—A few are known to exist in the Alleghanies of Western Virginia. We next find them in the Southern part of Michigan, but it is only as we proceed farther West, that they present themselves in numbers. In Minnesota they are found in large herds, and in still larger on the Upper Missouri, Yellowstone, and other streams. Of the vast number in these regions, some idea may be formed from the piles of shed horns which the Indians are in the habit of heaping up in the prairies. One of these, on Elk Horn prairie, about eighty miles above Fort Union, has for many years been a conspicuous land-mark to the traveller, showing like a white monument many miles off. This which was torn down in the summer of 1850 was about fifteen feet high and twenty-five in circumference ; others still larger are found on the Upper Yellowstone."

In the Western prairies they congregate in herds of from twenty or thirty to six or seven hundred, and it is said that in those vast oceans of meadow the animal grows to a great size. Individuals nearly the size of a horse are not unfrequent. In California and New Mexico antlers, it is said, have been found so large that when resting on their tips a tall man could walk erect between them. Their food consists of the grass found in the woods, wild pea vines, the branches of willows, lichens, and the buds of the wild rose. During the winter they scrape the snow from the ground with the fore feet and eat the tender roots and bark of shrubs and small trees. They are fond of residing in wooded dells, islands covered with willows, or points on the river side, still clothed with forest. They make for themselves a bed upon the long grass, and occasionally upon the top of a fallen tree, where they sleep during the hot sultry hours of the day. During hot weather when mosquitoes abound in the woods, they retire to ponds or proceed to the rivers and immerse their bodies and heads, leaving merely enough of their noses above the water to allow them to breathe. A pair of them kept in confinement at New York by Mr. Audubon, were fed upon green oats, hay, Indian corn, and all such food as is usually given to a cow. Turnips they would