

OUR GAME.

REPORT ON NOMENCLATURE.—*Continued.*

Cariacus—"Horns smaller, curving forward, the first spur short, curving upward; tail long; hoofs rather elongate; size smaller."

Now, in all conscience, what earthly object is achieved in all this but a general muddle? A sub-family is erected on the ground that certain forms have deciduous horns, or that they may want these ornaments, forgetting also that the so-called non-deciduous horns are deciduous at some time of their existence. This is certainly factitious, so we may discard the sub-family *Cervine*, and thereby benefit true science.

Now, look at the genera: *Alces* and *Rangifer* are separated namely on the ground of a few hairs at the tip of the nose, which are by no means constant, and the possession of horns by the females of the latter. To follow the rule, the females might constitute a genera by themselves, as their horns are rarely palmate. Again, the presence or absence of horns is by no means a generic characteristic, scarcely even a specific one, as it is now known that there is a tendency among all these genera to horns in the female. *Cervus* and *Rangifer* are separated on the grounds of want of marked palmation in the former, and absence of antlers in the female sex. *Cariacus* is divided on the basis of a rather more elongated hoof, the angle of curvature in the antlers, and—horror of horrors—a faint difference in tail.

Now, gentlemen, here is not evidence sufficient to found a genera, though of undoubted value in the distinction of species. Formerly, great stress was laid upon the supposed fact that the young of the moose and caribou never exhibited the spotted coat, but the falsity of this has been shown by the researches of Capt. Campbell Hardy. This leaves no ground whatever for the puerile classification and nomenclature exhibited, and we may with propriety return to *Cervus* as the generic title of all our deer; there is no mistaking *Cervus Alces* for the elk or moose deer, *Cervus Rangifer* for the reindeer, *Cervus Canadensis* for the

wapiti, and *Cervus Virginianus* for our common species. Judge Caton has already recognized this fact, and took the initiative in his work on the "Antelope and Deer of North America."

Even to erect a new species is a grave mistake if it naturally coincides with any other. We have at present *Cervus (Cariacus) Cucurus* and *Cervus Mexicana*, which are but the common Virginia species slightly modified by range, climate, differences in food, etc. It is a well known rule of classification, but little recognized by the pseudo-scientists of the day—that to give birth to a new species—letting alone genera—it is necessary that characteristics should be observed that are prominent, constant and uniform in every individual, and wanting in all other individuals of the same class, and that cannot by any possibility be attributed to variation in habitat, food, climatic causes, etc. Let this, then, obtain with us as a body and as individuals.

Of birds, the same may be said in a general way as of mammals. But this report is already too long to admit of reviewing their classification as thoroughly as has just been done, following step by step down to well-known objects; such would be taxing an already over-taxed patience. Let us commence at once, therefore, with our grouse.

Under our present absurd method of classification and nomenclature, America possesses no less than six genera of grouse, exclusive of the ptarmigan. These genera are divided into twelve species, or six species and six varieties of species, viz: the spruce grouse and Franklin variety of the same, the dusky grouse, and a darker variety, the pinnated grouse and a variety, two forms of sharp tail, one sage, and three ruffled grouse.

The following table exhibits the different genera and the characteristics on which each is supposed to be based; the genus *Dendragapus* has been denied by one author, and relegated to *canace*, as he evidently felt that its discoverer was poaching on his preserves, but its existence is equally valid with those at present accepted.