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THE CANADIAN SPORTSMAN AND NATURALIST.

No 7.

MONTREAL, JULY 15th, 1881.

VOL. I.

TO ANGLERS.

We will publish the salmon scores of gentlemen fishing Canadian rivers this season, provided they are thoroughly vouched by one of the parties. We would be pleased to have scores already concluded sent to us in time for our August issue.

SALMON FLY CASTING.

Gentlemen fond of surface fishing, and who have had experience in the art of casting the fly, have, generally speaking, a fair knowledge of the sporting value of Canadian rivers. A rough estimate of the product of a river can be given by any one who for a few seasons has handled the rod on its pools. Those who have studied the salmon run of a river, can give a rough calculation of the number of fish entering it. Independent of the annual score of a good surface fished river, the average amount of salmon passing the pools to the spawning grounds can be ascertained. Ask any one of the proficient fishermen of the Department at Ottawa, the cause of the late scarcity of salmon in Canadian waters, and he will give you as much information on the subject as astronomers do regarding the late comets. There are several maritime rivers which should be a source of revenue to the Dominion, and they are evidently neglected by the Fishery Department. Not that alone, but it seems as if ignorance prevailed in regard to what constitutes a salmon river. We have an instance of this in the Trinity River near Pointe des Monts, which is delightfully situated, and on which a guardian has been placed for years past. The Trinity could not be leased for surface fishing, although a Government official made annual repeated attempts to fish it with the rod. It was abandoned. It is known to us that the Trinity River could be leased for years past, indepen-

dent of an expert fisherman's report that the river was worthless for surface fishing. The truth is that he could not hook a fish because he did not understand the proper mode to fish the Trinity, and the river was therefore thrown off the list of salmon rivers for years past. Residents on the coast know that it was good, or at least that Salmon entered it, therefore one of them made a proposition to the Fishery Department, offering to make a trial of the river if the Government would pay for his time in company with two Indians. The offer was accepted, and he proved that the Trinity was a fair salmon river, he having hooked fish with the fly on the first trial, while the expert sent from Ottawa could not get a rise. The way in which this is accounted for is simply that the casting of the fly cannot be the same on all rivers. We have been informed that this is a well-known fact to parties who have fished various rivers. For instance, the casting of a salmon fly on the Mingan is different from the mode of casting it on the Trinity, and since the parties who now lease the latter river, have discovered the style they sometimes procure as good sport as on other rivers on the same coast. Now, after deriving this knowledge, it occurs to us that there may be several rivers on both sides of the Lower St. Lawrence within the ken of the Fishery Department in which salmon enter that are rejected, because they were never properly fished. We have penned the above for the simple reason that we are aware that the maritime rivers are not properly looked after by the Fishery Department, and besides we consider that too much money is being expended on lake fish breeding, to the detriment of the salmon rivers, which should receive more attention. Take the Godbout for example; look at the improvements made on it by the present owner, who has profited by the outlay, by pleasure and comfort.

BIRD NESTING IN LABRADOR.

The Canadian coast and islands which margin the south-eastern portion of the Peninsula of Labrador, embracing the north shore of the Lower St. Lawrence, from Seven Islands to Blanc Sablon, near the North-West River, are interesting localities for the naturalist to visit. The aborigines, and their modes of life; the magnificent lakes and picturesque rivers; the fisheries of the white man, and the singular methods by which he obtains a subsistence on the rock-bound coast, are subjects claiming our attention at this age of human knowledge. Labrador was visited by Audubon before he issued his beautiful work on the Birds of America. He was aware that without a thorough ornithological knowledge of these northern bird breeding-grounds, his book would contain but few facts in addition to those given by Wilson and prior writers on our birds and quadrupeds. The naturalist who now retraces Audubon's footsteps along the Labradorian coast may fully realize the accuracy and truthfulness of this clever writer. In 1867, such was the object of the Editor of this journal, who went there to collect a series of bird eggs, and determine the species breeding on the coast. On the rocks surrounding the beautiful Bay of Seven Islands, the nests of several marine birds may be found. The greater portion being the Herring Gull, (*Larus argentatus*) and the White-winged Guillemot (*Uria grylle*). Proceeding towards Mingan, Leach's Petrel, (*Thalassidroma Leachii*) may be seen skimming over the stormy sea, but where the birds nest is only conjecture. There is a sand cliff between the Shel-drake River and the latter place, which may be occupied by these birds. The nesting habits of the Petrels being similar to the Sand Martin. Approaching the St. John River, a rock stands some distance seaward; it is called Isle Parroquette; it is covered with earth and turf to allow numbers of the Arctic Puffin (*Mormon gracialis*) to burrow and form their nests. This rock is an extensive Puffin breeding-

ground. The Mingan group of Islands in the vicinity are heavily wooded, and nests of the common Eider Duck (*Somateria mollissima*), may be found occasionally. The nests of this species have been so frequently robbed by the people from the coast, that these islands are not now selected by the Eider Ducks for purposes of nidification. It is only on the islands below Point Esquimaux, which are not so easily accessible to man that the nests of these birds are found. The oölogist who can visit the group of islands between the latter place and Watsheesho, about the middle of May, will find plenty of material, but few species. There are abundance of Eider Duck's nests. Indeed, one small island visited by us, was almost covered with the nests of this species, and here we first found the nests of its congener the King Eider, (*S. spectabilis*.) It is in this region that one can realize the wildness of northern scenery. The diversity of the innumerable rocky islands which are surrounded by the sea; some bare and weather-beaten; others with trees of stunted growth, while a few tower to a great height, and are densely covered with wood. Such are the island homes of the sea birds. On one of these rocks called Table Rock, representing a platform about two acres in extent, we found the nest of the Black-backed Gull, (*Larus marinus*), and the Herring Gull (*L. argentatus*). It is a curious fact, that each of the rocky islands have been for centuries, the nesting-ground of marine birds, each species selecting and holding to this day its favorite island, where they produce a progeny forming a community of thousands each succeeding season. For instance, an island on which the Arctic Tern (*Sterna macroura*) breeds, cannot be invaded by any other species; the little creatures will fight even the larger gulls, and hold the locality to themselves. This is not the case with the Great Black-backed Gull, and the Herring Gull, the nests of which are frequently found on the same island, almost within three feet of each other. This is partially accounted for, and further to show the instinctive nature

of the same species which formerly bred in large numbers on the south coast of the Gulf, where their nests were annually robbed, the gulls as a last resource took the trees to build their nests, in order to be out of the easy reach of man. Several miles further down the coast between Watsheesho and Washshecootai, the rocky islands contain many fissures, and these are occupied by the Razor-billed Auk, (*Alca torda*), a bird which makes no nest. It deposits a single egg which is laid in a crevice. When searching for the eggs of the Auk, on several occasions the parent bird was found dead alongside of its egg. In every instance a slight wound was detected on the side of the head, behind the ear. We were afterwards informed that these birds were frequently destroyed by a species of weasel which inhabit the island. As we proceed further, the harbor of Kegaska is reached, below which stands the rocky islands of Musquarro, about five miles from Washshecootai Bay. Here the collector will find the home of the common Guillemot, (*Uria ringvia*). From this point northward this bird deposits its egg on any bare cavity it can find. These rocks are visited by men from vessels sent to collect them when fresh, and a large trade is annually made in the eggs of marine birds, which are thus collected and carried to the American markets for sale. The Indians, generally arrive on the coast at the time when ducks, gulls and guillemots are nesting. On their way to the Mission Church at Mingan, all the bird-frequenting islands are visited by them, and every fresh egg found is taken away and eaten. They also collect the down from the nests of the Eider Duck, which they generally sell at the rate of sixty cents per lb. We have slept on eider-down beds on the Labrador coast, each of which was valued at from sixty to seventy dollars. The residents send boats to these islands where the eggs of ducks, gulls, guillemots are collected and tested by placing them in water. The fresh eggs are placed in barrels containing a solution of water and lime, and in the absence of the latter, ashes will answer,

and they thus keep good for winter use. The great bulk of the marine birds found breeding on the northern coast of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, are similar to those found in the North of Scotland. The true American marine birds, such as the Labrador duck, (*Camptolæmus Labradorius*), Velvet duck, (*Melanetta velvetina*), Surf Scoter, (*Palionetta perspillata*), Brant Goose, (*Bernicla brenta*), Sea Dove, (*Mergulus alle*) and the genus *Stercorarius* have not been discovered breeding on the southern coast at Labrador. Audubon says that he found nests of the Surf Scoter on the margin of lakes near the south coast, but the Indians inform us that these ducks now nest only in Northern Labrador. The Northern Phalarope (*Phalaropus hyperboreus*), in summer plumage was shot near Mingan, but the nest has not been discovered. The Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*) occurs abundantly, nesting on the margin of inland lakes. The woodland birds which were found breeding near the coast were very few. Sir Gréville Smyth, who was fishing the Mingan, found a nest of the Red-tailed Hawk, (*Buteo borealis*). It contained two young ones, which could feed themselves at the end of July. The Pigeon-Hawk, (*Hypotriochius columbarius*) nests on this coast, and also on the island of Anticosti. We found the nest of the Black-poll Warbler, (*Dendroica striata*), on the third of June. It was in a low fir tree, and contained four eggs. A nest of the Black and Yellow Warbler was discovered on the 17th June. The common Yellow Warbler (*D. æstiva*) was abundant, also the Redstart, (*Setophaga ruticilla*). The White-throated Sparrow (*Zonotrichia albicollis*), and the White-crowned Sparrow (*Z. leucophrys*). Two species of Cross-bill; the Pine Finch, and the Purple Finch were noticed. The sweet song of the Fox-coloured sparrow (*Passerella iliaca*), is pleasing to the ear as we wander through the open parts of these northern forests, and it was with no little joy that we discovered the nest on the 15th of June, and authenticated its eggs for the first time. Audubon has made a

mistake in his description of the eggs of this species. The egg is larger than that of any other sparrow found within this latitude, and they are completely covered with blotches of a ferruginous tint. Contrary to the habit of sparrows, this nest was built in a low fir tree, about three feet from the ground. The Blackburnian Warbler was common in June in the woods of Natashquan, but no nest was found; it is possible that they pass on to the northern margin of the forest which adjoin the plains to breed. Five eggs of the Ptarmigan (*Lagopus albus*) was noticed strung against the wall of a house in Kegaska. The nest was found in the woods behind the settlement. On the 8th of June, when at Watsheesho we noticed the Canada Jay (*Perisoreus Canadensis*) in company with its young, which were nearly fledged. Being anxious to ascertain what these birds fed on, as their nests must have been formed about the middle of April: four of these were shot, and their stomachs contained abundance of a soft red berry that grows in swampy places on the plains. It is a species of cranberry, which ripens under the snow during winter. They are gathered by the people on the coast who convert them with sugar into a delicious preserve. We will close our present remarks by noticing that the Bald Eagle and the Raven occupy the cliffs near the River Corneille, where they bring forth their young. We will give a list of the Western forms of birds occurring on the Labrador coast, in our next number.

TO SPORTSMEN AND NATURALISTS.

Our periodical is the only one in the Dominion of Canada which professes to devote its columns to pure sport and Natural History. It is within the reach of all who wish to obtain information on these matters. We are anxious to increase our list of subscribers, and therefore ask all lovers of true sport to support it. We solicit correspondence from the Sportsmen and Naturalists throughout the Dominion; also ask them to advance our efforts to sustain

the journal. So far, we cannot complain of our success,—we have some of the best men in the country on list—but doubtless there are many Canadian gentlemen, fond of the rod and gun, who have not seen our magazine. We would therefore consider it an act of kindness if those who have subscribed, would induce their friends to send us their names. The price is one dollar per annum in advance. The back numbers from January can be supplied.

THE RACCOON.—(*Procyon lotor*.)

This quadruped appears to have a wide range, occurring from Carolina to the cold latitudes of the fur country. A male raccoon was shot on the 1st of July, a short distance west of the water wheelhouse of this city, near where a female of the same species was shot last year. The animal is not common on this island. It belongs to the plantigrade section of the *Carnivora*, but though the soles of the feet are naked, it is only while at rest that they are fairly applied to the ground. While in motion the heel is raised, yet the gait of the raccoon is heavy and awkward; its limbs are short and stout, its back is arched, and the body is round, thick, and massive, with a marked fulness about the flanks, adding to its breadth and making the limbs seem shorter than they are in reality. Its fur is of two kinds, a soft full undercoat, and an upper vest of long and rather coarse hair. The general colour is dusky grey, the tint arising from each long hair being annulated with white and tipped with black. The face, cheeks and throat are white, with an oblique black dash across the face, which also spreads round the eyes; the tail has four or five dusky-black rings; the length is about two feet, of which the tail is eight or nine inches. Left to itself the raccoon sleeps in its retreat during the day, rolled up in the form of a ball, with the head placed between the thighs. As evening sets in, he begins to prowl for food; roots, succulent vegetables, insects, worms, birds and their eggs constitute its diet. In captivity, it is easily

tamed and even appears susceptible of some degree of attachment. It can climb with the greatest skill in the manner of a bear—ascending or descending a pole with the utmost freedom. With much caprice there is no little cunning in the character of the raccoon, mixed with malice and a fondness for destruction.

FOR FIELD AND CAMPING GROUND.—We call the attention of our readers to *Lyman's Concentrated Extract of Coffee*. We have tasted this delicious coffee and heartily recommend it. Read the advertisement.

Correspondence.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN SPORTSMAN AND NATURALIST :

DEAR SIR,—In your issue of June 15th there is an article on the cultivation of wild rice, in which it is implied that the plant will grow in lat. 46.60 or south of that. We have in this Province, between 45 and 46, on the St. John River, hundreds of acres of swampy ponds, in which the wild duck oat will grow freely, and in which sportsmen have frequently talked of planting the wild rice, but have dropped the idea for want of information. The article in your interesting little journal has revived the interest in the subject, and we would like to procure information on the following points:—

1st. Will it grow in dead water ponds as well as in ponds in which there is more or less current?

2nd. How is it to be planted and at what season, and what average summer depth of water is best adapted to its growth?

3rd. How and to whom should application be made for seed, and what is the price per bushel?

Although we are north of 54 here, our climate on the lower St. John is not nearly so severe as in the Province of Quebec—as a rule—the influence of the fog, &c., from the Bay of Fundy having an effect to produce a warmer temperature. Any information you can furnish either in the columns of the SPORTSMAN or by letter to the undersigned, will be thankfully received by the Sportsmen of this Province.

I remain, Sir, yours very truly,

CHAS. W. BECKWITH.

NOTE.—The swampy ponds referred to by our correspondent, are just the localities where wild rice will grow, and it makes little difference whether it is placed in dead water, or where there is an easy current. The fact that wild oat occurs in ponds in the St. John River, is proof sufficient that the rice plant will grow there; and moreover the oat will ultimately succumb, as the rice is more prolific, and the strongest aquatic cereal. We would suggest September as a good season to cast the seed into the water; but prior to that it should be mixed with marsh mud for two days. In Ontario, it grows from a depth of eight feet. Wild rice seed is sometimes advertised in *Forest and Stream*, but we are not prepared to say what it costs per bushel. It is abundant in Rice Lake and Lake Skugog, Ont. Perhaps a subscriber residing near one of these lakes will answer Mr. Beckwith's third question.—ED.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN SPORTSMAN AND NATURALIST:—

DEAR SIR,—A strong feeling is aroused here in the maritime provinces, against the system pursued by the Dominion Government, in leasing out Salmon rivers to single individuals and clubs, thus closing them to the great mass of sportsmen. This partakes too much of the old feudal times, when a few favored ones were allowed privileges that were forbidden fruits to the general public. In these provinces both parties Liberal and Conservative, are working together to bring an overwhelming pressure to bear on our representatives in Ottawa to do away with this despotic law. Make those rivers open waters, then charge say \$1.00 each rod used a day, and the Government would receive a revenue fifty times in amount to that it now derives from this source. Several thousand sportsmen would visit us each year from other countries, and when we consider that these sportsmen while here would spend from \$50 to \$200 each, we can readily see the benefits that this country would receive, and at the same time resident sportsmen who are found among our best citizens, would be able to enjoy the pleasure of Salmon fishing, which is now denied them. Until the New York Club bought the Restigouche River, near Matepedia; Camp

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, Matepédia, 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 spiklets 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.

It may be taken then, that a "Royal head," is a very vague idea, and simply means a magnificent head of horns. There is a foolish notion afloat, that a deer produces one spike for every year of its age, but what I have already stated is pretty nearly correct. You may also often see one horn with a spike less than the other. But there is no accounting for irregularities of this sort. All we can do is to accept facts. Again, the size of a deer has very little to do with the size of the horns. The largest deer I ever shot was a two year old, a spike buck, that weighed 212 lbs., and the largest and finest antlers were on a buck of 157 lbs., both clean meat, *i. e.*, skin, &c., removed. I cannot account for it but it is true, that spike bucks are generally very much larger than other deer. For my own part I think it a pity to shoot deer in the rutting season, but the custom seems to obtain all over America. I would rather have a venison steak in the end of July, or beginning of August, than at any other season. The flesh is then very juicy and tender, and the full richness of the game is there. The animal has fully recovered from its winter's starvation, is plump and solid, with the new flesh well made, but it has not yet begun to lay on its autumnal layers of fat.

In Europe deer stalking begins on the 5th of July, and formerly it commenced in Ontario on the first of August. What practical use is there in putting it back to the first of September. The idea of destroying or "slaughtering" fawns in August is silly. Fawns are then quite able to take care of themselves; besides they are difficult to see and shoot on account of their colour and the thick foliage. Would it not be really more for the benefit of sportsmen to drop hunting on the first November, to allow the deer to rut in peace, and to commence stalking on the first of August. All other game are protected in the breeding season: why not deer? Another mode of hunting, I never practiced, was using hounds. This I look on as miserable pot-hunting, and the deer, when so driven by these brutes, are either exterminated on their run-ways, or chased from the section of country so hunted. How different a sport is stalking or still-hunting, which requires all the skill of the true sportsman to come on the deer, and then fairly bag his game by his own exertions. I have always been opposed to hounding and see no "sport" in hiding behind a cover and shooting down the poor animals that are bounding away for dear life. I mention a fact, that at the last revision of the Ontario Game Act, using hounds in hunting deer was nearly pro-

hibited, and I wish it was. In Michigan, hunting deer with hounds has been totally prohibited, and not one pound of venison can be taken out of the State. Some American butchers came to Muskoka last year and killed and sent a large number of deer to their markets. Canadian Sportsmen should rise and protest against such destruction and unmanly slaughter. Will some other brothers of the gentle craft give us their opinions of these matters, not excluding "carpet" sportsmen. In conclusion, I may remark, that a "Royal head" was a term applied to the full-grown antlers of the Red deer of Scotland, which may yet be found in both England and in the wilds of Connemara, in Ireland, and it had twelve tines or spikes on both horns. Sir Walter Scott often mentions them, and in the "Fortunes of Nigel," a characteristic description may be found. King James the First, said he could die happy when he killed a buck with "twelve tines." I do not see how our common deer can have their horns compared at all to those of the majestic Red Deer of the Highlands. The Wapiti, or American stag, *Cervus Canadensis*, approaches very nearly to the Red Deer, and there is a great comparison between stag's horns and a common deer's. I cannot see how the term "Royal" can be applied to the Virginian deer's antlers, with any propriety.

J. H. GARNIER, M.D.,

Lucknow, June 23rd, 1881.

P.S.—One of your Correspondents, "Hammerless Greener," in your late issue amused me very much by a sly fling in a P. S., about my shooting robins. I do not retract one word I said about robins, otherwise, American Fieldfares, being a very dainty dish. Now, if "Hammerless Greener" is man enough to put his name to it, and write sensible remarks against a dish so much esteemed in the neighboring republic, I shall be glad to read gentlemanlike reasons of dissent, which would be preferable to a boyish sneer.

J. H. G.

NOTE.—We publish Dr. Garnier's opinions on deer's heads, although we cannot exactly agree with him. Doctors will differ, and it is possible that there are sportsmen who are not doctors who will disagree with his conclusions as to what constitutes a "Royal or King Buck." We have made the growth of deer horns a study for years; so did the late

Frank Buckland, who fully illustrated the Royal heads of European deer. We have had many opportunities of seeing and handling the heads of what are termed "King Bucks," belonging to the common deer (*C. Virginianus*). Instance the illustration at the head of Mr. Scriven's advertisement—that we take to be a "King or Royal Buck" head of *C. Virginianus*. We agree with our correspondent that the horns of all species of deer are variously produced, but independent of this fact, we can show a series of heads with horns of unusual or "King" typical form, and these heads are from different parts of the Dominion. We have on this continent three forms of *C. Virginianus*, all of which produce Royal heads, and when we compare these horns with the genus *CERVUS* of Europe, then it is that we arrive at the conclusion that such are produced and they are termed here "Royal Bucks." Age has nothing to do with the growth. For instance, say that the nails on the doctor's fingers are not clipped for one year, they may probably grow the length of his fingers, and moreover take a spiral form. The argument that the growth is retarded by frost, is not natural, because the horns are fully grown, and there are not many bucks in the velvet by the end of September.

Since a portion of this note was in type, we received an addenda to the above letter from the doctor, in which he says that there is a great difference between the deer (*Genus Cervus*) of Scotland, and the common deer (*Genus Cariacus*) of America. We are perfectly aware of this, but the fact that they belong to two distinct genera does not disturb our theory that they are both liable to attain horns known as "King or Royal Bucks." A "Royal Head," although rare, is not typical but an abnormal form, occurring in all species of deer, and having said this much, we ask the opinions of others on the matter.—Ed.

J. H. G.—"The Canadian Naturalist and Geologist" is published by Dawson Brothers, 159 St. James Street, Montreal. The price of the vol., covering two years, is \$3 in advance.

We do not know the Montreal journalist referred to; we have no time to enquire if he is a "scamp" or not. You had better address Detective Cullen of this city, who will ferret him out and send the required information.

OUR FOREST TREES.

WHITE BIRCH; *B. alba*.—This is the smallest of the birch trees, seldom attaining a height of over 30 feet. It grows with the pitch pine in the poorest sandy soils, and is fit to cut for fuel in ten years from the seed. Its wood is of no other value, as it is soft and decays rapidly.

COMMON ALDER; *Alnus serrulata*.—A shrub or small tree, seldom growing more than 12 or 14 feet high and 2 or 3 inches in diameter. It abounds along water courses and in swamps, where its flowers are among the earliest harbingers of spring, sometimes displaying their tassels in the closing days of March. The wood, which is at first white and soon acquires a buff color, is chiefly used as fuel, and for making charcoal, to be employed in the manufacture of gunpowder. It is also taken for the hoops of small casks. Alder leaves are thought to have some medicinal value as an application to ulcers and to sore throats.

BUTTONWOOD; *Platanus Occidentalis*.—Next to the white pine, the buttonwood or plane tree is the loftiest and grandest tree of New England. One which grew a few miles from Newport forty years ago, measured over 24 feet in circumference at one foot above the ground. On the Ohio river the buttonwood acquires gigantic proportions. In 1820 the younger Michaux measured a stock which at four feet above the ground, was 47 feet in circumference. When standing near water this species is noted for the rapidity of its growth, and has been known to attain the height of 80 feet in 20 years. For some years the buttonwood of the Eastern States have been subject to a malady, not yet satisfactorily accounted for, which has destroyed many of the finest trees and has affected the branches and leaves of many others. In the South-western States the buttonwood, known there as the sycamore, is still vigorous and healthy. Very little use in the arts is made of the wood of this tree, for although firm and of pleasing grain, it is very perishable and liable to warp. As fuel it has been pronounced of fair value.