

ON A PAIR OF ABNORMAL ANTLERS OF THE VIRGINIA DEER.

By FREDERICK W. TRUE.

The Museum received from Mr. John M. Forbes, some four months ago, a pair of antlers of the Virginia deer (*Cervus virginianus*), which present an interesting malformation. The animal to which the antlers belonged formed one of the herd kept in park on Naushon Island (Elizabeth Isles), Massachusetts.

The left antler is perfectly normal. It has the usual tynes, four in number, in the normal positions, and not peculiar either in length or shape. The right antler, on the contrary, bears only the brow-tyne, which, although of the usual length, occupies a position on the anterior side of the beam, so that the outlines of tyne and beam are best seen when the skull is viewed in profile. From the base of the tyne the beam rises parallel to the latter for about one-third its length, and then bends backward, forming an obtuse angle. Its outline is undulatory, and throughout the superior third the surface is smooth; the tip is as acute as that of the brow-tyne.

The entire length of the antler is 13.6 inches; from the burr to the base of the brow-tyne, 4.5 inches; length of the brow-tyne 5.2 inches; greatest width of beam and tyne at the base of the latter, 2.9 inches.

There is nothing in the form or structure of this antler to suggest injury by accident or disease.

The investigations of Professor Baird and Mr. Caton upon the Cervidæ of North America show that similar cases are not rare. Of the Virginia deer, Professor Baird writes: "Sometimes a perfectly adult, fullgrown male will have but a single slender spike, thus resembling a buck of the second year."* Mr. Caton's allusion is to deer antlers in general. "Usually," he states, "the first antler grown on the young buck is not branched, but consists of beam only, and is called a *dag* or *spike* antler, and the latter term applies to the antlers of the adults when they are not branched, which is sometimes the case." †

Conditions exactly opposed to those which I have reported above, have been very recently noted by J. S. Cockburn as occurring in a specimen of the Porcine deer (*Hylaphus porcinus*). ‡

I am indebted to Mr. F. A. Lucas for the drawing accompanying this note.



* BAIRD: Mammals of North America, 1859, p. 647.

† CATON: The Antelope and Deer of America, 1877, p. 193.

‡ Journal Asiatic Society of Bengal, LI, 1882, p. 44.