

## YOUNG CANADA.

### BIG BOY AND LITTLE MAMMA.

"Mamma, my dear, if a robber should come,  
A terrible robber—one might, you see—  
I'd frighten him off with my sword and drum,  
And you would be perfectly safe with me.

"And if you and I in a gloomy wood  
Should meet a bear as we walked some day,  
With my bow and arrows, like Robin Hood,  
I would drive the fierce old bear away.

"But now I am tired, and sleepy too,  
And I wish my mamma would lift me down."  
There's a laughing look in her eyes of blue,  
As they answer her boy's, so big and brown.

She feels on her lips his coaxing touch,  
She clasps him fast in her loving hold,  
And she murmurs, "I'll never fear robber much,  
Unless he should steal this heart of gold."

—Harper's Young People.

## THE BEAVER.

As beavers do not hibernate, they are compelled to provide a store of subsistence for the long Canadian winters during which their ponds are frozen over, and the danger of venturing upon the land is so largely increased as to shut them up, for the most part, in their habitations. In preparing for the winter their greatest efforts in tree-cutting are made. They commence generally in the latter part of September, and continue through October and into November the several employments of cutting and storing their winter wood, and of repairing their lodges and dams. (Our illustration shows the industrious animals at work). These months are the season of their active labours, which

are only arrested by the early snows and the formation of ice on their ponds. It is a feature of the climate of the Lake Superior region, as also that around Hudson's Bay, that the snows begin to fall before the frost has entered the ground, whence it is that throughout the winter the earth remains unfrozen under a deep covering of snow. In this we recognize a beneficent provision of the Creator for the welfare of the burrowing animals, without which many of them would perish.

It is a singular fact that these animals perform most of their work at night; but they come out early in the evening, and continue at work during the early morning hours. For the remainder of the day they are rarely seen, except in regions where they are very numerous, or are entirely undisturbed by trappers. By making a breach in their dams, you can compel them to come out, but it will be late in the night before they show themselves, and they are so wary that it is extremely difficult to conceal yourself in their immediate vicinity so as to see them work.

After ice has formed in their ponds, they

retire to their lodges and burrows for the winter, and they are not seen again either by day or night, except in rare instances, until a thaw comes, of which they take advantage to come out after fresh cuttings.

In establishing their lodges so as to adapt them to winter occupation, and in the manner of providing their winter subsistence, the beavers display remarkable forethought and intelligence. The severity of the climate in these northern latitudes lays upon them the necessity of so locating their lodges as to be assured of water deep enough in their entrances, and also so protected in other respects as not to freeze to the bottom; otherwise they would perish with hunger, locked up in ice-bound habitations. When these preparations are commenced at an unusually early date, it is a sure indication of an early, abrupt and severe winter; while, on the other hand, when these animals display leisure in their movements after the beginning of October, an open autumn invariably ensues.

During the autumn of 1876, two old



beavers were observed preparing their winter house with great leisure toward the end of October, not far from Buckingham village, on the Levis river. This was not finished by the 15th of November, and the weather still continued open and beautiful. In general, however, the winter quarters of the beaver are ready for his reception early in November. There are marked differences in the habits of the Canadian and European beavers, although it is doubtful whether the species are distinct. The European beaver is said to lead a solitary life in burrows, rarely constructing lodges or dams; whilst the Canadian beaver is pre-eminently a builder of both dams and lodges.

A very interesting fact with reference to the beaver is that of his great antiquity upon earth. A presumption to this effect would arise from his coarse subsistence and his aquatic habits; but it is confirmed by decisive evidence. Both the European and American beavers are found in a fossil state, and under conditions which establish for each of them a very ancient epoch for the first among living animals. Remains of the beaver have been found associated with those of the

mammoth, hippopotamus, rhinoceros, hyena, and other extinct mammals in the pleistocene fresh water or drift formation of the Val d'Arno; and remains were found fossil by Dr. Schmerling in the ossiferous caverns in the neighbourhood of Liege.

But the most common situation in which the remains of the beaver are found is the peat bog or moss pit. Remains of the European beaver have been found at the depth of eight feet and a half beneath peat, resting upon a stratum of clay, with much decayed and seemingly charred wood, associated with the remains of the great Irish deer, at Higby, Norfolk. Beaver-gnawed wood was found in the same cavity with, and five feet above, the skeleton of the mastodon discovered at Cohoes, near Albany, New York. It appears from the description of Professor James Hall, who personally superintended the removal of the principal bones, that this mastodon was found in a pot hole excavated in the shale rock (Hudson River group), and more than forty feet below the surface. The remains

were imbedded in clay and river ooze, resting upon gravel, and covered with an accumulation of peat. In the presence of this beaver-gnawed wood so near the mastodon, some evidence is furnished that the beaver and the mastodon were contemporaneous.

"WHY don't you hurry along?" said a teamster to a stranger who was passing him. That teamster had very kindly driven his team to one side of the street, and waited for the other to pass. This act of kindness had excited in the bosom of the

stranger emotions of gratitude, which would soon have been expressed in thanks; but just then the man of the kind act cried out in a cross tone, "Why don't you hurry along?" Ah! that spoiled it all. It swept away in an instant all grateful emotions from the bosom of the stranger, and created dislike. Thanks were no longer felt, and were never expressed. What a pity that kind acts should sometimes be spoiled by cross words!

DR. HAHN, the eminent geologist, seems to have solved the question whether celestial bodies are inhabited by animate beings, and whether the meteoric stones are emanations from incandescent or volcanic planets. In the examination of these bodies they are found to contain coralline and spongy formations, and traces of the lower forms of vegetation. All the organisms discovered by Dr. Hahn indicate that the parent world of these meteors belongs to the primary formation. The existence of water in these worlds is proved by the fact that the tiny petrified creatures revealed by the microscope in the meteors are of the subaqueous classes of animals.