

is stored. Then selecting a nice, fresh poplar or beech log, he pushes the end down into the mud, leaving the upper end just below the surface of the water. He then sets one of his large double-spring traps, fastened to a light pole, on the bottom about eighteen inches from the log. Trappers always use a dry tamarack pole to which to fasten the end of the trap-chain. The end of the pole is placed through the ring, and a wedge driven in to prevent the chain from coming off. A dry pole is used because a beaver would soon cut to pieces a green one, and so escape with the trap. But even a beaver cannot cut a dry tamarack stick. This pole is called the "tally pole." The sharp frost of a Canadian winter soon covers this hole with a sheet of clear ice. When night comes on the beaver goes out for supper. He soon discovers this fresh log, which is a great deal better eating than those that have been some time in the water. But alas! no sooner does he rise on his hind feet to commence his supper, than the poor fellow is caught in the trap which holds him fast till he drowns. The hunter comes in the morning, and looking down through the clear ice sees the victim, cuts a hole, draws up the tally pole and then the trap with the dead beaver. He re-sets the trap, and the operation is repeated until, perhaps, nearly the whole colony is taken.

While the beaver shows a wonderful instinct and a surprising skill in his engineering operations, yet it is very often a foolish and blind instinct. On this same stream where I saw this dam, evincing so much skill and foresight, there were four or five other small dams which were mere abortions, and which served no useful purpose that I could discover. They were evidently built merely to satisfy this strange propensity for building dams and for cutting down trees which distinguishes the beaver. Growing not far from the dam were several large sugar maples. The beavers had commenced on two of these the utterly hopeless task of cutting them down. One of them was certainly two feet through, and yet they had made a circle of cutting round the entire tree, though they had not succeeded in getting through even the bark, and had to leave off in disgust. Then I saw several trees cut down but not severed from the stump, and of which no use had been made. What that wonderful thing which we call instinct is we do not know; but between it and Human Reason there is a great gulf fixed, and this our Evolutionist friends have not yet begun to span!

*Waterford.*

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