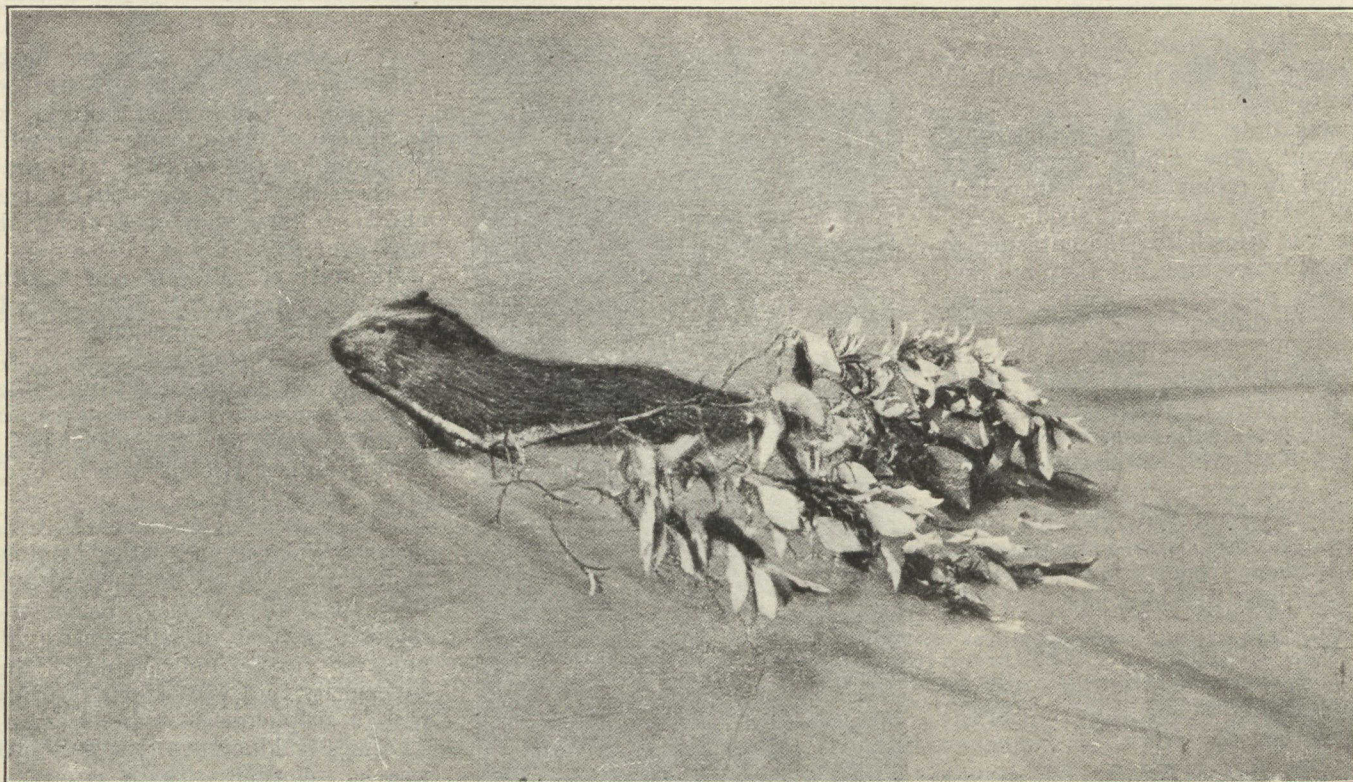




The "Busy Beaver" shown at one of his multifarious tasks of home-building.

per had once more narrowly escaped her doom and the colony was endeavoring to bring home their lesson of care as usual. It appears that while felling another tree, she had misjudged the direction in which it was to fall. The tree had twisted unexpectedly and it came crashing down upon her. Two large boughs had held it from falling to the ground and had therefore allowed her a little room. However, the limbs and trunk of the tree had left their marks about her body. She was badly bruised and had, for three days, remained under cover. Her mother had nursed her wounds and they had begun to heal, although it was necessary that she remain out of the water as much as possible, that the sores might have a chance to heal more quickly. She took her misfortune light-heartedly, although longing for the comforting touch of the cool water and the cries of her woods companions.

The imprisonment had given her a chance to think over the episodes in her life and she was more than ever bent upon exploration. She had resolved that at the first moment of freedom she would go over the hill and explore the surrounding country which had always remained a mystery to her.

On Friday she was allowed a few hours liberty, provided she be accompanied by "Dab", her brother. She had taken Dab with her and after a

tour of the territory below the dam, had returned safely. The very next morning she would go over the hill; she promised herself that. This decision on her part was a wise one. For a week there had been no unwarranted excitement in the colony and the members were again in good humor, little suspecting that the next day was to bring disaster.

The following morning, after a brief argument with her elders, Flapper left the lodge. This was to be the longest trip she had ever undertaken. The sun was just beginning to rise over the tree tops and the early morning air suggested that the day would be warm. With a word of farewell to her neighbors as she passed, Flapper swam smoothly to the upper end of the stream, her tail guiding her efforts through the current which formed immediately below the dam. Never had she seemed so sure of herself. She had never before looked quite as handsome and fit as she did this morning. Her head, held erect, she was again about to enjoy life after a beastly week of confinement in her stuffy home.

She made her way leisurely through the water to the foot of the hill, pausing to view the curiosities of Nature, which in her time had not played a very important part. Crawling up the bank of the stream, she started her pilgrimage over the hill. Here indeed was a new country.

About 200 rods to her right could be seen a small lake, shimmering in the early morning sun. The croaking of frogs and chirping of crickets with an occasional call of a loon, gave to the scene an atmosphere of the primitive wilderness. The hillside was heavily timbered and thick with underbrush. Here and there could be seen a muskrat moving hastily back and forth through the water. On the farther side of the lake a small creek entered, winding its way from the distant slopes. Flapper stood motionless and viewed the scene. Close beside her was a small spring which seemed to gurgle happily out into the open. She stooped and drank, gnawed cautiously at the bark of a poplar tree and then made her way down the hill to the lake. A snowshoe rabbit jumped quickly aside and hid in the brush. Behind her came the sound of trampled brush as she turned to meet the attack of a wolf. In a second her agile body was flat on the ground with her tail switching furiously at the beast. She struck at him as he missed his aim and lost his balance. In another second she was in the water mocking back at the animal as he stood knee deep in the lake challenging her. His efforts unsuccessful, he turned and slouched away down the shore.

The Flapper swam easily, close to the shore, watching for other members of her kind. The muskrats made