

procured. They are mostly obtained from the neighboring woods, where they are cut with a dexterity truly astonishing. A beaver, according to Cartwright, will lop off with its teeth at a single effort a stem of the thickness of a common walking-stick as cleanly as if it had been done by a gardener's pruning-knife. When compelled to have recourse to the larger trunks, they gnaw them round and round, always taking care that they shall fall in the direction of the water, in order as much as possible to save themselves carriage. Judging from the number of large trees sometimes cut down in a season, it would appear that the performance of this operation cannot occupy a very considerable time. As soon as the tree is felled they commence lopping off its branches, which, as well as the smaller trunks, they cut into lengths, according to their weight and thickness. These are dragged in their mouths, and sometimes on their shoulders, to the water side, where they are thrown into the stream, and towed with the current to their destination.

Exactly the same materials are employed in the construction of their habitations. These are built either immediately beneath the bank, or, if the pool be shallow, at some little distance from it. They begin by hollowing out the bottom, throwing up the mud and stones around it, and intermingling them with such sticks as they can procure. The walls having been thus raised to a sufficient height, the house is covered in with a roof in the shape of a dome, generally emerging about four feet, but sometimes as much as six or seven, from the water. The entrance is made beneath a projection which advances several feet into the stream with a regular descent, terminating at least three feet below the surface, to guard against its being frozen up. This is called by the hunters the angle, and a single dwelling is sometimes furnished with two or more. Near the entrance, and on the outside of their houses, the beavers store up the branches of trees, the bark of which forms their chief subsistence during the winter; and these magazines are sometimes so large as to rise above the surface of the water, and to contain more than a cart-load of provisions.

In all these operations there appears to be no other concert or combination among the beavers than that which results from a common instinct impelling them to the performance of a common task. The assertion that they are superintended in their labors