

was excited; and, as I proceeded, he stood, with open eyes and mouth, looking over my shoulder. For, as much as I laughed during the goose chase, when I observed John, I felt inclined to laugh a little more. The confined Beer-Spirit in the bottle began to hiss, a thought crossed me, when away went the cork, with a pistol report, missing John's face by about an inch; but the beer, it went right in. Poor John, was as frightened as the geese were a few minutes before, blinded and roaring, attempted, with wide-spread fingers, to stop the current; and, not much accustomed to handling the bottle, either of beer or else, by the time I got my hand on its mouth, the contents were gone. John would not venture to the canoe, where the remaining bottles were, until he saw them carefully covered; and ever after avoided their corks presented, as he would the muzzle of a loaded rifle.

As I have said before, the face of the country hereabouts is hilly, covered with marsh, and here and there, with low evergreens. This is the dominion of the rein-deer.

Here begins an extensive beaver settlement. It continues up this river for about sixty miles. When travelling with a row-boat, the noise frightens the beaver, and they dive under water; but, as we had a light canoe, we saw them at evening and at day-break, going to and returning from their work on shore. They sleep during day, and chop, or gnaw during night. They cut from wands up to poles four inches through, and from one to two fathoms long. A large beaver will carry a stick I would not like to shoulder, for two or three hundred yards to the water, and then float it off to where he wants to take it. The kinds of tree used are willow and poplar; the long leaf and the round leaf, preferring the latter. The Canada beavers, where the poplar is larger, lumber on a larger scale. They cut trees over a foot through; but, in that case, only the limbs are used. About two cords of wood serve Mr. Beaver and his family for the winter; but it is closer piled than the wood I have seen sold to some of our citizens at five dollars a cord. A beaver's house is large enough to allow two men a comfortable sleeping room, and is very clean. It is built of sticks, stones, and mud; and is well plastered outside and in. The trowel the beaver uses in plastering is his tail; at the table it is considered a great delicacy. Their beds are made of chips, split as fine as the brush of a wooden broom, and is put in one corner, and kept clean and dry. After the bark is stripped—the only part the beaver uses as food—the stick is carried off a distance from the house. Many of our good housewives might be nothing the worse of reading a little about the beaver.

The beaver in large rivers and lakes make no dams; they have water enough without; but in small creeks they dam up, and make a better stop water than is done by many of our millers. The place where they build their dams is the most labour-saving spot in the valley, and where the work will stand best. The dam finished—not a drop of water escapes. This country abounds with beaver, and an Indian will kill upwards of three hundred in a season. The skin of the beaver is not worth as much now as it used to be, but their flesh is one of the main articles of food. We shot three in this settlement; and, as every voyager knows their flesh is good to eat, with the geese and the beaver we fared well.

A few evenings after we left the "Rock," while the men were on before me "tracking," that is, towing the canoe as before described, I observed behind a rock in the river that which I took to be a black fox. I stole upon it as quietly as possible, hoping to get a shot, but the animal saw me, and wading to the shore, it turned out to be a bear, who had been a fishing. The bear is a great fisherman. His mode of fishing is rather curious. He wades into a current, and seating himself on his hams upright, the water coming up to about his shoulders, he patiently waits until the little fishes come along, and, mistaking his black shaggy sides for a stone, rub themselves against him. He immediately seizes them, gives them a nip, and with his left paw tosses them over his left shoulder on to the shore. His left paw is the one always used for the tossing-ashore part of his fishing. It is feeling he uses, not sight. The Indians say he catches sturgeon when spawning in shoal water—sometimes so shoal that their tails stick out; but the only fish I know of his being in the habit of catching are suckers: these in April and May, their spawning seasons, the bear make his daily food; breakfasting about eight, a.m., and making dinner and supper of one meal, about four, p.m. About thirty or forty suckers serve him. In the spawning months he can catch that number in a few minutes. As soon as he has caught a sufficient number, he retires to the beach, and regales himself on the most delicate part of the fish, that part immediately behind the gills, throwing the rest away. The Indians frequently shoot him when engaged in fishing.

We now "made" as many portages as possible; that is, got over them with all speed. The portages on this route, are from a quarter of a mile to a mile, and over. Crossing a portage is a serious affair. Some of my readers may not know what a portage is. A portage is the land that divides lakes from lakes, and rivers from rivers, or the neck of a peninsula formed by the bend of

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