

nishes a large part of the winter's feed for cattle in some of the less thickly settled parts of eastern Ontario.

A beaver dam is one of the most interesting and instructive objects in nature. Solomon says, "Go to the ant": he said that because he never saw a beaver dam! One of the best I ever saw is built on a small stream running into a lake which forms the head waters of Rainy River in the Nipissing district. The stream runs through a hardwood forest, beech, maple, and yellow birch. At the point selected for the dam the ravine through which the stream flowed is about sixty feet across. This is the narrowest place for some distance either way; and in the middle of the hollow grew a tamarack tree about a foot in diameter. That tree had a good deal to do with the selection of this particular spot at which to build the dam. Both banks are high; and that on the south side is steep, moss-grown rock. The dam was nearly eight feet in height, and the centre rested on this tree as a support; thus adding materially to the resisting power of the structure. The dam was constructed of sticks and mud; fully six feet through at the bottom, and three or four at the top. On the down stream side no pains had been taken to make a finished job; the sticks projected in all directions. But on the upper side the wall was nicely smoothed off, and plastered with clay. The top was as level as a floor, finished off with what seemed to be blocks of hard clay. The structure was, and I suppose still is, perfectly solid and substantial; and the men from the shanty used it as a convenient bridge in crossing the stream.

The most wonderful thing about the dam was the slide over which the water flowed when the pond was full. This was directly over the original bed of the stream. It ran at an angle of about forty-five degrees from the top of the dam to the stream below. It was two feet wide, and the sides six inches high. The angles were as true as if they had been made with a mason's square and trowel. The whole thing was a work of art; and in some way the beavers know how to mix and temper the clay with which they line their slides, so that the water in its swift rush has no effect whatever upon it. The water, when I saw it, was rushing down the slide four inches deep, and had been so doing for months; and yet the clay was perfectly intact, and smooth as a piece of asphalt!