

the earth remains unfrozen under a deep covering of snow. In this we recognize a beneficent provision of the Creator for the welfare of the burrowing animals, without which many of them would perish.

It is a singular fact that these animals perform most of their work at night; but they come out early in the evening and continue at work during the early morning hours. For the remainder of the day they are rarely seen, except in regions where they are very numerous, or are entirely undisturbed by trappers. By making a breach in their dams you can compel them to come out, but it will be late in the night before they show themselves, and they are so wary that it is extremely difficult to conceal yourself in their immediate vicinity so as to see them work.

After ice has formed in their ponds, they retire to their lodges and burrows for the winter, and they are not seen again, either by day or night, except in rare instances, until a thaw comes, of which they take advantage to come out after fresh cuttings.

In establishing their lodges so as to adapt them to winter occupation, and in the manner of providing their winter subsistence, the beavers display remarkable forethought and intelligence. The severity of the climate in these northern latitudes lays upon them the necessity of so locating their lodges as to be assured of water deep enough in their entrances, and also so protected in other respects as not to freeze to the bottom; otherwise they would perish with hunger, locked up in ice-bound habitations. When these preparations are commenced at an unusually early date, it is a sure indication of an early, abrupt and severe winter, while on the other hand, when these animals display leisure in their movements after the beginning of October, an open autumn invariably ensues.

During the autumn of 1876, two old beavers were observed preparing their winter house with great leisure towards the end of October, not far from Buckingham village, on the Levis river. This was not finished by the 15th of November, and the weather still continued open and beautiful. In general, however, the winter quarters of the beaver are ready for his reception early in November. There are marked differences in the habits of the Canadian and European beavers, although it is doubtful whether the species are distinct. The European beaver is said to lead a solitary life in burrows, rarely constructing lodges or dams; whilst the Canadian beaver is pre-eminently a builder of both dams and lodges.

A very interesting fact with reference to the beaver is that of his great antiquity upon the earth. A presumption to this effect would arise from his coarse subsistence, and his aquatic habits; but it is confirmed by decisive evidence. Both the European and American beavers are found in a fossil state, and under conditions which establish for each of them a very ancient epoch for their first existence among living animals. Remains of the beaver have been found associated with those of the mammoth, hippopotamus, rhinoceros, hyena, and other extinct mammals in the pleistocene fresh water or drift formations of the Val d'Arno; and remains were found fossil by Dr. Schmerling in the ossiferous caverns in the neighborhood of Liege.