

and already it had shown signs of weakening and was bowing toward the opposite shoreline.

It was June. The sun shone strongly down. The adults were busily engaged in repairing the dam which fronted their places of abode. Another was remodeling the entrance to its home, smoothing out the mud and clearing away the brush. These houses, or bank holes as they are commonly called, are found above the dam and slightly above the water level. A beaver lives in one of three types of home commonly termed by woodsmen as the cabin, cottage and apartment. The cabin serves as the home of one enjoying solitary bliss; the cottage accommodates a family, and an apartment houses a number of families—just like humanity.

The Inquisitive "Flapper"

The tree on which the three beaver were working twisted and fell headlong across the creek, its branches splashing in the water. The sound had hardly died away when the sharp echo of a gun rang through the air, quickly followed by the warning of the Flapper's mother, a decisive slap of her heavy tail on the surface of the water. The signal, well known to all, was quickly heeded by all except the Flapper. Small air bubbles marked the spots where the adults had previously been at work. Quick plunges, by the Flapper's companions, left only the tell-tale ripples where they had entered. All but the Flapper sought safety under the drooping limbs of a weeping willow which seemed to be bathing itself in the water. Here they could wait and watch until the danger had passed.

The Flapper's inquisitive disposition and longing for excitement had prompted her to remain for a glimpse of this monster that so frightened her companions. Another shot rang out, this time indicating that the danger was near at hand. The hidden members of the colony kept a breathless silence, broken only when the mother risked remarking that the monster must have gotten Flapper that time. "Too bad," she said woefully, "but the child just wouldn't listen to reason."

The wide, inquiring and sympathetic eyes of the others, indicated that they were convinced that Flapper had met her fate.

The bullet had buried itself in the stump of the tree by which the Flapper still stood, close to her body. A quick glance convinced her that she was the target of some ill-meaning human and with a quick lunge she threw herself headfirst down the



"The Flapper" on the alert

bank into the water, remaining completely submerged until she had joined the others under the weeping willow. Her first greeting was a slap across the face from her mother's tail, followed by a growl and scolding from her father. She cowered and remained in perfect silence, aware that perhaps her folly had disclosed their hiding place. After a brief time her mother ventured out and announced that the "coast was clear" and that evidently it was only a farmer boy testing a new rifle.

For the next few days the Flapper showed signs of recognizing her parents' pleadings. Her carefree, romantic nature was strangely silent. The parents and neighbors even remarked that she had at last been convinced of the dangers found in being careless. No doubt the lesson left quite an impression on her. She went about her duties as a model child, seldom uttering a word. But the lesson had not changed her liking for excitement. It soon wore off and she again roamed carelessly about the woods in search of amusement. Her parents, however, had not forgotten the episode. They lost little time reminding her of it at each meeting. "Surely you will now believe our entreaties," her mother would say at every opportunity. "There is no use behaving as you do for it will only be your undoing." The continual pleas had hardened

her to the words. She no longer listened or attempted to hear their remarks. "The idea of thinking me incapable of taking care of myself," she would say to herself. "I'll prove to them that I am more than a mere child; I have wandered about this way ever since I was old enough to walk and am still safe and healthy. Why not enjoy life? Why should I stay practically imprisoned with a constant fear confronting me? No! I am going to live; let the others do as they wish, but I want to *live*; I want to see all of the wonders of Nature and be friends with all of the other woods folk."

The Beaver has few enemies beside man. Wolves and other animals seldom get close enough to the Beaver to do it bodily harm. The water is its safe retreat at all times. The muskrat does not contest their superiority and goes about its duties with a suspicious look in its eye, at all times making sure that it is in no way a nuisance. There is perhaps only one animal which could fairly and justly engage in a feud with them. This is the Otter. Generally the Otter and the Beaver are good friends and are often found living in close proximity to one another. But sometimes even the best of friends can disagree. However, it is a well known fact that of all the animals inhabiting the woodlands, the Beaver is the best liked. And so the Flapper fares well with the majority of the woods folk.

But the human settlers of the community had met to decide the various issues and improvements which the country needed. Among the topics discussed was the need of destroying the beaver lodge which had dammed the settlers' best clear water creek and was seriously menacing their water supply. A prominent member of the community had communicated with the proper authorities on the legal method to be followed in ridding the vicinity of this nuisance and had been informed that the law held and could not be over-stepped. The animals were to be protected at all costs, but the settlers could, if so desired, destroy their dams and houses and compel them to move. A committee was appointed to dynamite the dam on the following Saturday afternoon and every settler was warned that the water would not be usable for a few hours following the appointed time.

The Flapper's Mishap.

On Monday we find our friends engaged in their various pursuits, unaware of the impending disaster. The colony was once again buzzing with life and excitement. The Flap-