

and depth of water for all their purposes. In winter, he said, these sagacious creatures nearly closed the opening, and kept up the water at the highest level, to prevent the possibility of the pond becoming frozen to the bottom, and the communication with their lodges under the ice being thereby cut off.

I was greatly struck with the ingenious manner in which the opening or waste-gate was placed and secured, so as to guard against the danger of its becoming too large by a sudden rush of water, in which case the end of the dam would be swept away, and the whole of the work, in all probability, destroyed; and I noticed, with admiration, the extraordinary and wonderful instinct of the beaver, which had directed the building of the dam, not straight across the stream, but curving considerably upward, and offering the convex side to oppose the accumulated weight of water, thus giving increased strength, firmness, and solidity to the work.

Some time was spent in examining the various labours of the former dwellers in this extinct colony of beavers, all of which gave unerring proof of the unwearied labour and prudent foresight of the numerous body of sagacious animals which, judging from the great number of ruined lodges, must, at some former period, have sported and gambolled fearlessly and freely in the undisturbed waters of their pond, now almost stagnant from long neglect, and nearly choked with aquatic plants in endless variety.

Tomah lifted the canoe over the dam, and then we floated out upon a piece of water, more extensive than we at first conceived, for the larger portion had been concealed from our view by a sudden bend in the stream; on turning which, we opened a long narrow lake, which seemed to terminate abruptly at the base of a steep and lofty hill, wooded to the very summit. Our attention was, however, attracted by certain indications among the water lilies and other aquatic productions, which were so abundant that the surface of the water was nearly covered, that wild fowl had

been lately on the feed; leaves and flowers were broken and floating; roots and water-grasses had been torn up from the bottom, and, half eaten, were strewn in quantities on the broad leaves of the white lily, affording proof that the birds were numerous and long undisturbed. We crept cautiously and noiselessly along, and soon discovered, at some distance, a large flock of black ducks, much scattered over the surface; but as these delicious birds are very shy and difficult of approach by daylight, it was agreed that Tomah should land, and, making a long *detour*, endeavour to get beyond the flock, and turn them down the water, while I remained in the canoe, in such a position as would enable me to blaze into them as they passed. The time occupied by Tomah in reaching the point indicated, appeared so long, that, growing impatient, and forgetting the strict caution I had received to keep perfectly quiet until the birds were on the wing, and sufficiently near for a shot, I gradually edged the canoe from among the tall rushes and flags which concealed it, toward the flock; but the instant they had view of my suspicious proceedings, the alarm was given, and the whole body went off instantly, far out of reach. Shortly after the Indian appeared on the bank, and I paddled up for him; he stood leaning on his gun, lost in thought, and, although he strove to conceal it, evidently vexed. On my inquiring what had happened, he asked if I had heard what the ducks said, to which I answered, that I had not been so fortunate.—He then told me, very gravely, that, as he was creeping down upon the flock, and very nearly within range, a duckling, who was on the outskirts, first noticed my movements, and cried out to the father of the flock: "*Meta-hassim!*" (black duck!) "who is that coming?" The old duck looked attentively for an instant, and replied, "It is *Potosuin!*" (the lawyer). "He is a very dangerous man! Always beware of a *Potosuin!* Let us be off, my children!" And away they all flew.

"Now, in future, remember," con-