

*befyr*.\* It had its name *beofer*, or *befor*, among our Anglo-Saxon ancestors also, centuries before the European discovery of this continent; and a designation more or less closely resembling this, is found in the classic Latin, the Slavonic, the Lithuanic, the Scandinavian, and Germanic, and in the Romance Languages. The solitary exception to this uniformity of name appears to be the Greek *χάστωρ*; but the reference to it, and to the special object of the hunter's chase, in the Fable of the Beaver, ascribed to Æsop, points to the recognition of some of its most highly esteemed virtues at a period of remote antiquity.

Sir Thomas Browne in his "Enquiries into Vulgar Errors," discusses the Greek etymology, along with the popular idea involved in the Apologue of Æsop, and he remarks of it as "a tenet very ancient. For the same we find in the hieroglyphics of the Egyptians. The same is touched by Aristotle in his Ethics; but seriously delivered by Ælian, Pliny, and Solinus; the same we meet with in Juvenal:

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imitatus castora, qui se  
Eupuchum ipse facit, cupiens evadere damno  
Testiculorum, adeo medicatum intelligit inguen.

It hath been propagated by emblems; and some have been so bad grammarians as to be deceived by the name, deriving *castor* à *cast-rando*; whereas the proper Latin word is *fiber*, and *castor* but borrowed from the Greek, so called *quasi γάστωρ*, that is *animal ventricosum*, from his swaggy and prominent belly."

The discovery of America with its prolific beaver-dams only multiplied the means for meeting demands already partially supplied by the resources of the old world; nor is the use of the beaver as a heraldic bearing, a novelty of American or Canadian origin.

Beverley, or Before-leag, *i. e.* beaver place, is the ancient Anglo-Saxon designation of the capital of the East Riding of York; situated in a country abounding with mere and forest in olden time, before the beaver colonists of Befor-leag were transferred from their dams to the borough arms. The oldest armorial bearings of Beverley emblazon Saint John of Beverley, seated on the fridstol, and trampling on the ancient emblem of the town: the beaver. The present seal of the corporation is: *Argent*, three waves, *sable*; On a chief, *sable*, a beaver statant regardant, *argent*.

The ancient history, and present distribution of the beaver

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\* Ancient Laws of Wales, published by the Record Commissioners. B. XIV. iii. 16; iv. 5.