

open. The laborious nature of such an undertaking may easily be conceived, when it is known that the tops of the houses are generally from four to six feet thick at the apex of the cone."

The tail of the beaver when swimming, serves for a rudder to aid the animal in its changing and often rapid movement in the water. Near their habitations, beavers establish magazines of green bark and soft wood for food, keeping them well replenished; and never do the members of one family plunder from the larder of another. A community of beavers, although it may consist of several hundred members, is seldom disturbed by domestic difficulties; peace and harmony being the bond which cements their union. If an individual is threatened with danger, it immediately takes measures to forewarn the whole village; which is done by striking the water furiously with its tail. Thus apprised of an enemy's proximity, the animals take shelter either in the water or their strong dwellings, which are very tidily kept in order. The entrance to a beaver's dwelling is by a small open door towards the water. The legs of a beaver are short, the foot has four toes, and what is remarkable, the hind feet have membranes between the toes to aid the animal in swimming.

The Otter, which is also hunted for its valuable fur, resembles the beaver somewhat in size, but very little in its general habits. It lives a more solitary life, often changing its habitation, especially in the winter,