

wolves. But with the advent of the more provident, more enlightened and intelligent pale face, a sudden change took place. The white hunter seemed imbued with the idea that what he failed to take in one season might fall into the hands of some one else—the next, and that rather than let another share in the annual harvest, it were better to do wanton destruction of the game. And the Indian, as a matter of course, seeing the reaping-hook of another at work in his harvest-field, and ever ready to imitate his white brother in evil, imitated him in this work, with the consequence that, where less than twenty years ago, scarce a creek was to be met with without its beaver dam, pond, and one or more families of beaver, one may now travel for days without falling in with a single fresh sign of that most valuable and interesting animal.

Our Government acted wisely a few years ago when they enacted a law prohibiting the killing of the beaver for a term of years. If that act is strictly enforced, our backwoods will be almost as quickly re-stocked with it, as they were depleted. For the beaver is one of the most prolific of creatures, and has few enemies which prey upon it. Here is an illustration of how quickly beavers increase in numbers, if left to themselves :

A Hudson's Bay post was located near a small pond, in which there were two beavers, a male and female. For four years in succession the officer in charge of the post caught four young ones, and in the fifth year three,—nineteen in all, and yet the old couple had eluded his vigilance, and were still alive and free. They had intelligence enough to keep out of danger themselves, but lacked the ability to impart their knowledge to their young. Had none of them been taken, the natural increase of that one couple would, at the end of five years, have amounted to nearly fifty individuals.

It was only after the most thorough and careful enquiry that the legisla-

ture passed the Fish and Game law of 1892. And, no doubt, some weighty reasons must have been impressed upon them before they enacted the clause allowing trapping, up till the 1st of April. That section should certainly be amended. All the fur-bearing animals bring forth their young between the middle of April and the middle of May, and to kill a female for at least two months before that date, simply means the wanton destruction of from two to six kittens in each case. This clause seems to be almost universally condemned by trappers and all acquainted with the habits of the animals. The only reason I have ever heard urged in its favor is, that the fur of the muskrat is then at its best, and the animal is full-grown. But even if such be the case, the taking of the old females at that time, will more than counterbalance the enhanced value of the fur, which, at best, never exceeds 25 cents per skin. It is an admitted fact that the fur of the mink is at its best during the coldest winter months, and begins to fade as soon as the mild weather of spring sets in ; and it is also admitted that the fur of a mink taken before it has begun to fade on the live animal, will last longer, before showing signs of changing color, than that of one taken later on in the season. If that section were remodelled, and the 1st of February substituted for the 1st of April, it would undoubtedly lead to a vast increase both in the number and quality of these animals annually taken.

The taking of the fisher is also prohibited for a term of years. The exemption of this animal was undoubtedly a mistake. Although yielding a valuable fur, it is a question whether or not the number of other fur-bearing animals annually destroyed by him, does not much more than make up for the saving effected by the preservation of his own skin. It might not be out of place to change his name altogether, and, instead of fisher, call him the pirate of the woods, for all is