

forage. The other is his sleeping apartment, which is clean and cosy. He forms his bed of fine shavings gnawed from the wood of the trees he feeds upon.

When the water in a brook is not sufficiently deep, he constructs one or more dams across it with the utmost skill, thus raising it to the required depth. In the construction of both his house and dam the Beaver exhibits an astonishing amount of engineering skill. He will rarely build the latter straight across a stream, nor yet with a curve downwards, but almost invariably with its convex side facing up stream. This is to prevent its being carried away during freshets. Of course when the pressure of the water comes against the dam, its effect is to tighten the mass, and thereby enable it the better to resist the strain, which otherwise would carry away the structure.

The Indians, who are such close observers of nature, tell some extraordinary tales of the beaver's ingenuity. They say that in constructing the dam the animal first carries a number of sticks or branches of trees, to the spot, and forces them endwise into the mud at the bottom. They have watched them dive with a stick and prod it down in the mud as we stick peas. They next accumulate a number of other sticks, lay them along, and weigh them down with sods and stones. When the dam begins to show above water, they have been observed starding up at one end and surveying their work, or casting their eyes along the surface as if to see whether it possessed the requisite curvature.

In felling a large tree in the forest they display remarkable foresight. Invariably they manage to fell the tree so that it will clear the other standing timber, in coming down to the ground. Even our most experienced woodsmen cannot always do this successfully. When the tree is down, they gnaw off all the