

# THE SUNBEAM

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## THE BEAVER.

EVERY Canadian boy and girl should know all about the beaver—the emblem of their country—and a very good emblem it is, and a very good motto is “Busy as Beavers” for all Canadians, old or young. Certainly the beaver is a very industrious fellow, and we need not be ashamed of him upon our country’s crest. For so small an animal he accomplishes very remarkable works.

The average beaver is about two feet six inches long, and its tail is about a foot longer. It will weigh from thirty to sixty pounds. Its fore legs are small, but the hind legs are large and strong, and its feet are webbed to the very claws. It is an awkward animal on land, but just let it dive into the water, and it is as active, as graceful, and as much at home as a bird in the air or a fish in the sea.

The most remarkable part of the beaver is its broad, flat, scale-covered tail. It is used as a paddle in swimming, as a trowel and hammer for building, as a support when its owner sits up, and it can strike such a violent blow as to be heard half a mile off. In this way the old sentinel beaver, who is on guard, gives warning of the approach of an enemy, when splash! every tail disappears, and solitude reigns again. The tail is a great favourite with the Indians and hunters, and, when it



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can be obtained, occupies an important place in their feasts. The most remarkable constructions of the beaver are the dams and lodges which they build. They are made in order to secure a sufficient depth of water to be secure against freezing in winter. Having selected a spot for their village, or cluster

of houses, they proceed to cut down the trees with which to build their dam. They always cut down those up the stream, so that they may float down with the current. They have no cutting instruments but their broad, flat, sharp teeth; but with these they will bite off great chips, and in a very short time cut down a tree, eight or even ten inches through. They select trees that lean over the water, and having felled them, they trim off the branches, and cut them into lengths eight or ten feet long. These are floated to the site of the proposed dam, where they are built into their place with mud and stones, till a broad and solid wall is made. Where the current is gentle, the dam is carried straight across, where it is swift, the dam is built with an angle or curve up the stream. The little fellows exhibit as much science in their construction as could the most skilful engineer.

## A NARROW ESCAPE.

THERE was a hole in the ice, that Edith did not see until she fell into it. Grace was the only one near enough to see her fall. So she laid down on the ice, and held her tight until others heard her scream, and came to help her out. All the time she laid there she prayed “Dear Lord, give me strength. Let me hold her until they come” God heard her prayer, just as he hears all the prayers of his children.