

The Philatelic Advocate.

A MONTHLY FOR STAMP COLLECTORS.

VOL. 8. NO. 2.

BERLIN, ONT., FEBRUARY, 1900.

WHOLE NO. 42.



American Beaver.

(*Castor Canadensis*).

BY APEMANTUS.

With the advance of civilization, our beautiful "forests primeval," the red man, and the animals that claim this zone as their natural habitat, are fast disappearing. Left to itself for thousands of years, this continent, like no other developed naturally.

The Indians roamed at will "Monarch of all he surveyed." The forests swayed in the angry blasts or gently sheltered the birds that rested in their branches, and the tiny flower that grew beneath its shade. The animals came and went at will, preyed upon their natural enemies or yielded their lives for the food and clothing of the natives. Among the latter class was the intelligent little *Castor Canadensis*. He never dreamed then of tall hats, perfumery or hysterical women. Endowed with a wonderful sagacity, he went on building his dams and houses, using for his own benefit and that of his little ones, the God-given instinct he possessed. When he found a stream too shallow to answer his purpose he constructed a dam across it, that was strong enough to resist the spring freshets.

If the stream was sluggish, he built the

dam straight, but if its current was swift the dam was curved with its convexity toward the current. His home had no compartments, the partitions supposed by some to be the dividing line between the rooms, were merely supports. Hearne says of their architecture, "In places which have been long frequented by beavers, undisturbed, their dams by frequent repairing became a solid bank, capable of resisting a great force both of ice and water; and as the willow, poplar and birch generally take root and shoot up they by degrees form a kind of regular planted hedge which I have seen in some places so that birds have built their nests among the branches.

The beavers carry the mud and stones for their houses and dams with their fore paws and the timber in their teeth, using the hind feet, which are webbed, and the tail to swim with,

He always travels under water when "possible, and never puts the last coat of mud plaster on his house until the severe cold weather sets in. In one family there are never more than four old ones and about six young ones. There is frequently found only one beaver in a locality, he is called an idler or bachelor, and has been left after his family have departed for new quarters or for some reason, best known to himself, been banished from his fellows. They live chiefly on a cabbage like plant found at the bottom of lakes