

elliptical figure, and rises from three to four feet above the surface of the water; it is always entirely surrounded by water, but, in the banks adjacent, the animal provides holes or *washes*, of which the entrance is below the surface, and to which it retreats on the first alarm.

"The female beaver usually produces two young ones at a time, but not unfrequently more. During the first year, the young remain with their parents. In the second, they occupy an adjoining apartment, and assist in building, and procuring food. At two years old, they part, and build houses of their own; but often rove about for a considerable time, before they fix upon a spot. There are beavers, called, by the Indians, *old bachelors*; who live by themselves, build no houses, and work at no dams, but shelter themselves in holes. The usual method of taking these is by traps, formed of iron, or logs, and baited with branches of poplar.

"According to the Indians, the beaver is much given to jealousy. If a strange male approaches the cabin, a battle immediately ensues. Of this, the female remains an unconcerned spectator, careless to which party the law of conquest may assign her. Among the beaver which we killed, those who were with me pretended to show demonstrations of this fact; some of the skins of the males, and almost all the older ones bearing marks of violence, while none were ever to be seen on the skins of the females.

"The Indians add, that the male is as constant as he is jealous, never attaching himself to more than one female; while the female, on her side, is always fond of strangers.

"The most common way of taking the beaver is that of breaking up his house, which is done with trenching-tools, during the winter, when the ice is strong enough to allow of approaching them; and when, also, the fur is in its most valuable state.

"Breaking up the house, however, is only a preparatory step.—During this operation, the family make their escape to one or more of their *washes*. These are to be discovered by striking the ice along the bank, and where the holes are, a hollow sound is returned. After discovering and searching many of these in vain, we often found the whole family together, in the same wash. I was taught occasionally to distinguish a full wash from an empty one, by the motion of the water above its entrance, occasioned by the breathing of the animals concealed in it. From the washes, they must be taken out with the hands; and in doing this, the hunter sometimes receives severe wounds from their teeth. While a hunter, I thought with the Indians, that the beaver-flesh was very good; but after that of the ox was again within my reach, I could not relish it. The tail is accounted a luxurious morsel.

"Beavers, say the Indians, were formerly a people endowed with speech, not less than with the other noble faculties they possess; but, the Great Spirit has taken this away from them, lest they should grow superior to mankind in understanding.

"The Racoon was another object of our chase. It was my practice to go out in the evening, with dogs, accompanied by the youngest son of my guardian, to hunt this animal. The racoon never leaves his hiding-place till after sun-set.