

Cartwright, who resided for nearly sixteen years on the coast of Labrador for the sole purpose of procuring furs. From the journals of these two plain-dealing and matter-of-fact men we shall proceed to give the principal facts with which they furnish us relative to the habits of the beaver in its native state, and to the various modes adopted by the hunters for possessing themselves of its valuable skin.

The situations in which the beavers build are very various. Sometimes they take their abode in a pond or a lake, in which the water is tolerably uniform in height and pretty deep immediately under the bank; but they generally make choice of a running stream as more convenient for the conveyance of their materials. They are also said to select in preference the northern side for the advantage of the sun, and the bank of an island rather than that of the mainland, as affording them greater security from the attacks of their enemies. In this selection, however, their instinct frequently misleads them, for they have been known to build in situations where they have been unable to procure food, and where they have consequently perished from starvation, or to have fixed upon a stream which has been so swelled by the effects of a heavy thaw as to sweep away not only their magazine of provisions, but sometimes even their habitations.

When the water in the stream is not sufficiently deep for their purpose, or is liable to be diminished by the failure of the supply from above in consequence of frost, they commence their operations by throwing a dam across it below the part which they intend to occupy. In slow rivulets this is made nearly straight; but where the current is strong, it is formed with a curve of greater or less extent, the convexity of which is turned toward the stream. The materials of which this dam is constructed consist of drift-wood, and the branches of willows, birch, and poplars, compacted together by mud and stones. The work is raised in the form of a mound, of considerable thickness at the base, and gradually narrowing toward the summit, which is made perfectly level, and of the exact height of the body of water which it is intended to keep up. Cartwright adds that he has frequently crossed the rivers and creeks upon these dams with only slightly wetting his shoes. The sticks which are used in their construction vary in size from the thickness of a man's finger to that of his ankle, but are seldom larger unless where no others are to be