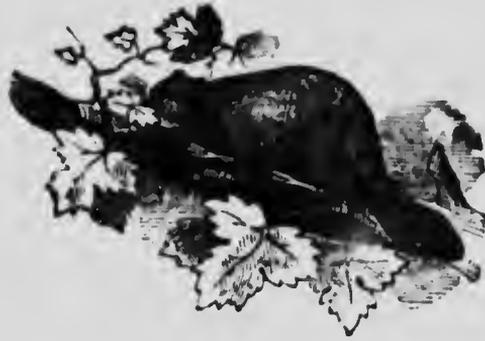


leaving the two or three inches of ice hung up on the alder trees of which there were thousands in the lake, that was originally only a swamp. Necessarily a space was left between



the bottom of the ice and the top of the water underneath. It, of course, never froze over again, so the beaver and our rat family could swim round under this vast tent of ice in a temperature little colder than the water, though it might be forty below zero outside. The covering of snow also helped to keep out the intense cold. In swimming round looking for the cause of this SNAPPER came to the beaver's dam and found a big black beaver just putting the finishing touches to a sluice he and his mates had made to lower the water, after the ice was thick enough to suit them, and just to the depth that SNAPPER had found it. Thus our rat family found that, though the beavers had destroyed their house, they were now able to swim round on the surface of the water below the ice in comfort and as near approaching summer conditions as was possible, for had they not now got a heavy coat of waterproof fur which made up for the summer warmth.

So the winter wore on, the snow getting deeper and the cold getting colder, but with the deepening of the snow the home of SNAPPER and his wife grew warmer