

**Beavers and Their Dwellings.**

During the last days of September, 1886, the writer was making a solitary excursion eastward of Fraser's Lake, British Columbia, he pitched a small cotton tent near a shallow lake, at the end of the first day's journey, in order to protect himself from mosquitoes, and not to shield himself from the weather. Early in the frosty morning he was awakened by a strange series of sharp, snapping reports, somewhat like the cracking of an ox-whip, which arose in the air from the immediate vicinity. Crawling, rifle in hand, cautiously out, he quickly located the origin of the noises and then suspected the cause; the rifle was laid aside, the note book substituted and the expectant writer carefully and silently approached the little arm of the lake over which the old noises sprang from; peering through the thick tall fringe of flag-rushes which lined the water's edge, he saw in the misty, hoary morning light a colony of beavers in full and animated bustle over the erection of a winter house, while their fat, scaly tails cheerfully smote the earth and water's surface ever and anon.

Four beavers were engaged; they had selected a tiny peninsula of the lake; eight feet back from the water's nearest edge the foundations of their circular hut were solidly laid, they were piling up their sticks, tree trunks, mud and stones, and treading all together when they fell under the writer's eye, and they worked thus for more than half an hour longer until the rising sun shimmered upon them full and fair; then they suddenly plunged into the water to reappear no more that day. They had, with true beaver sagacity, sought the privacy and safety of their "bank washes" elsewhere until night should again welcome them out to safe feeding and to finish their happy house-building.

The beaver selects a point, according to the character of the ground, between five and fifteen feet from water which never freezes to the bottom during severe winters, or else it raises a dome from the submerged flats which it inundates by damming small streams at judicious intervals, so as to have a free water-way all through the coldest weather.

The beavers have, during the summer and early fall, cut a large number of poplar and birch tree-trunks and branches into sections of some two or three feet in length each; their sharp teeth work very much like the grinding strokes made by the unpracticed hand of a boy or woman when they essay chopping. These pieces of timber are towed and carried by the giant rodents to the selected site of their proposed residence.

The beavers begin work by a common impulse, and lay this timber of their own cutting in a circular, "criss-cross" and horizontal fashion, piling mud, smaller sticks, drift-wood and stones over, under and between these larger sections of wood, until they have reared a conical dome some five to seven feet in height from the building level, and the walls varying in thickness from two to four feet, according to the instinctive understanding which these animals always have as to the ensuing winter being warmer or colder. When they labor, these building parties are usually made up of four old beavers (two male and two females), and the inclosed dome is just large enough to accommodate them together with their six or eight young ones.

As they work they place most of their timber horizontally, save the outside slabs and pieces; they preserve no other order than that of leaving the cavity in the middle; the branches which happen to have been gnawed smoothly off, and the clipped ends, chips, etc., are thrown up and out upon the rising structure. All the materials, sticks, mud, etc., are mixed up together in the composition of the dome from the foundation to the summit.

The constant pattering of the beavers' feet settle and cement the work as it rises; there is no troweling of the mass by their queer paddle-shaped tails; but occasionally, the castor seems to be so hilarious or self-delighted that it pauses for a moment in its busy labor to hump its back and bring the tail down with a sharp ringing slap upon the mud, or sticks, or water, as the case may be. The amusing stories told of the use made of the beaver's caudal extremity as a sort of stone and mud drag or cart are not founded on fact. Castor carries all the ooze, pebbles, etc., which he uses in building his walls by holding these materials between his throat and fore-paws.

When the hut has been reared to the desired altitude and arched over, the exterior roughness is somewhat smoothed down by the addition of numerous and repeated thin coatings of mud, which serve as a dampener, keeping the entire mass wet and moist until the cold weather sets in and congeals the dome into a structure almost invulnerable even to a pickaxe or blasting powder.

The door, and it is the only opening or means of entrance or exit, is a submarine passage or tunnel from the lake bottom to the center of the floor of the hut; near the mouth of this watery hall these Venetian architects usually have a large pile of green timber cut, as before specified, during the summer and fall, which they sink by stones and mud, so as to rest upon the bottom, and be accessible at any and all times during the winter as a source of food supply. The floor of the domicile is sometimes covered with a carpet of pine stipples, leaves, etc., and then again is not softened in its earthy hardness whatever.

This cottage of the beaver, if not disturbed by enemies, will be kept in repair and used by many generations of the *Castor*, and thus the simple details of its construction, as we set them forth, undoubtedly raise in the furry architect's mind the same pleasurable anticipations which we ourselves indulge when we plan and build a home with abundant means for so doing. — *Prof. Elliott, in Our Continent.*

—A telephone company met and conquered unforseen difficulties in laying an underground cable on a recent Sunday between Attleboro and Mansfield, Mass. The wires were to be buried along the line of a railroad; but the farmers of the region refused to loan their horses or oxen for Sunday toil, and the plow was accordingly attached by a beam to a locomotive which did the work with a rush. — *N. Y. Sun.*

**MISCELLANEOUS.**

—Ice lying in the crevices or rocks will explode them as effectually as dynamite.

—By a new process very handsome meerschaum pipes are now made from potatoes. — *N. O. Picayune.*

—A western circus man offers the mother of the late Jesse James a large salary to travel and exhibit herself. — *Courier-Journal.*

—Jarius Fisher, aged twenty-six, a theological student at Leesport, Pa., has become violently insane from a six years' effort to memorize the entire Bible. — *Philadelphia Record.*

—The New York Court of Appeals has required a husband to assume the expense of the maintenance of his insane wife by the pauper authorities, although she had long ago abandoned him.

—Oscar Wilde felt ill upon his arrival in Leadville, the change from a low to a high altitude being too much for him. Mr. Wilde says that he doesn't like Denver, because the young men in the streets called out to him as he was riding by: "Oscar! Oscar, dear! put out your head and let us see you." — *Denver Tribune.*

—Captain Bertram, of Salem, Mass., lately deceased left \$100 to each person in his employ for every year that they had served him. James Riley, his ship and boat keeper, would receive \$3,700; Michael McCue, his gardener, \$2,700; and Daniel Foley, his coachman and man-of-all-work \$1,800.

—When General McGee was riding along near Corning, N. Y., in his special palace car, recently, he was surprised at the sudden entrance of a man who came crashing through the plate glass door, the intruder having been cast in by a special train which had struck him, and thrown him from the track into the presence of General McGee, dead. — *Detroit Post.*

—An example of stern military discipline is reported from Dresden. At a late final examination of the Saxon corps of Cadets it was discovered that several candidates for commissions had availed themselves of prohibited assistance in doing their natural philosophy papers. The delinquents were instantly sent back and ordered to enter the army as privates.

—Recently a woman called at a savings bank in Boston and deposited \$400 in gold, saying she had kept it in her house for ten years, fearing to deposit it in any savings bank. Had she sold the gold in 1872, and deposited its proceeds in currency in a savings bank, and let it accumulate, her \$400 would by this time have increased to about \$700. — *Boston Journal.*

—An association has been organized in New York, one object of which is to provide houses of reception for female immigrants, where they will not be exposed to temptation or subjected to injustice, to help them to employment and by correspondence between societies here and in Europe, to regulate their coming by the conditions of supply and demand. — *N. Y. Star.*

—Garibaldi showed, on his recent visit to Sicily to attend the celebration of the Vespers, how weak and infirm he has become. He was placed in a carriage to be taken to the villa prepared for his reception, and rode doubled up, with his head on the knees of his wife who sat opposite. There were 60,000 people in the crowd gathered to welcome him, but in sympathy with his sufferings they stood in silence with uncovered heads, as their illustrious guest passed among them.

—When Sir Charles Lyell, the eminent geologist, was in America, he seems to have had some curious advice given to him about traveling on the Mississippi steamboats. "Never pay your fare until you are compelled to," was the first piece of wisdom thrown at him. "And, pray, why not?" he asked. "Because your chances are better in case of trouble." "Will you kindly explain yourself, sir?" said Lyell. "Well," answered the American, "when I was traveling up the river last March, somebody cried out, 'Passenger overboard!' The captain hurried to the office and asked, 'Has the man overboard paid his fare?' On being answered in the affirmative, he turned to the pilot and said, indifferently, 'Go ahead, it's all right.' " — *Chicago Herald.*

—Three Trinity College seniors, acting as a committee of the students who recently branded and "paddled" three sophomores, have sent a letter to the Springfield (Mass.) *Republican* defending their conduct. They say that the sophomores issued "a low, profane and obscene publication," and that thirteen seniors, "considering that their position entitled them to protect the dignity of the college, undertook to inflict upon the sophomores a punishment which their offense merited. "All this was done," they add, "by the grand tribunal, an organization which has existed for a number of years among the upper-class men of Trinity College for the purpose of checking any reprehensible conduct on the part of the members of the lower classes."

**FARM AND FIRESIDE.**

—One pound of green copperas dissolved in one quart of boiling water will destroy foul smells. Powdered borax scattered in their haunts will disperse cockroaches. — *German town Telegraph.*

—Pigs fattened in May will do better than those that come in earlier, unless the early pigs are carefully sheltered and kept warm. When once a pig is stunted by cold and neglect it is apt to remain backward. Young pigs should never be weaned until moderate weather has well set in. — *Denver Tribune.*

—The following recipe furnishes a cheap sealing wax, useful for many purposes: Mix together 2 pounds of common beeswax, six ounces of turpentine and 2 ounces of olive oil; add six ounces of red lead, boil a little and stir until it is almost cold, then cast it into cold water and make it into rolls or cakes.

—The value of pure short-horn cattle is still far beyond that of any other breed. At a recent sale in Chicago, the fourth Duchess of Airdrie brought \$7,100; the second Marchioness of Kirkcubright, \$3,525; the ninth Duchess of Hilhurst, \$8,500; the tenth Duchess of Hilhurst, \$7,100; the eleventh Duchess of Hilhurst, \$4,700; the eighth Duke of Hilhurst, \$3,025. — *N. Y. Sun.*

—A believer in counter-irritants, and possibly one who does not "believe," will find relief from toothache and its accompanying neuralgia by using the liniment made from the following formula: Take half an ounce each of the oil of saffras and oil of origanum, one ounce and a half of tincture of capsicum, and half a pint of alcohol. Wet a flannel cloth with it and apply to the face. — *N. Y. Post.*

—Peanut Soup with Oysters.—Prepare three pounds of nuts as directed in the preceding receipt; mix with them two tablespoonfuls of flour; smoothly blended with half a pint of cold water; place this mixture in a saucepan over the fire, gradually stir into a pint and a half of boiling water, or milk and water, add a small red pepper and a palatable seasoning of salt, and boil for fifteen minutes, taking care that the soup does not burn; then put in one pint of oysters, from which all bits of shell have been carefully removed; let the soup boil once, and serve immediately. — *N. Y. Times.*

—There is considerable room for the expansion of the poultry business in this country. We have imported within the past three months nearly half a million dollars worth of eggs alone. The official figures are: 3,396,246 dozen of eggs, valued at \$465,554. But then we exported all of 19,986 dozen, valued at \$4,321, which still places \$461,244 to the credit of foreign hens. At that rate, the year round, we sell out nearly two millions per annum for a commodity that almost produces itself. — *American Poultry Yard.*

**Destroying the Cabbage-Worm.**

My method of meeting this enemy has been to begin in time, capturing the white-winged butterfly that lays the eggs. If the cabbage-grower is remote from other plantations of cabbage, considerable may be done in this way. But as a rule the butterfly will lay its eggs, and the enemy must be met in its next stage. Water heated to about 135 or 145 degrees will destroy the worm without injuring the plants; but this requires more care and labor than will generally be given. With a little more heat the plants may be injured, with less the enemy may escape. I have found white hellebore, such as is used for the currant-worm, equally destructive to the cabbage-deprelator. My method is to boil a gallon of water and dissolve in it one heaping tablespoonful of the powdered hellebore. A very little sprinkled on the plants will speedily finish the worms. The use of Paris Green or the equally poisonous London Purple for this purpose cannot be too severely discountenanced. The white hellebore, it is true, is slightly poisonous; but not all as Paris Green is. I only use the hellebore in early stages of growth. After the plants begin to head, I use no more hellebore, but content myself with promoting vigorous growth by frequent hoeing, and if need be, watering the plants. A pinch of common salt thrown on a cabbage plant in August will destroy the worm almost as well as the hellebore, and will besides, promote the tendency to form a solid, heavy head. Salt is in fact one of the best special manures for cabbage. My reason for not using it from the first is because, while very young, the leaves of the cabbage are tender and might be injured. Besides, if I used salt from the first, the ground might be oversalted and the crop injured rather than benefited. Bran, lime and other substances have been recommended to destroy or drive away the worm after the head is forming, but I am satisfied that salt is the best at that season. — *W. T. Fowler, in N. Y. Examiner.*

**Soaking Seed Against Smut.**

Most good farmers have reported their experience in favor of soaking seed corn in weak brine before planting, as a preventive of smut, though not always with the sanction of what are known as advanced agriculturists. They have not been able to understand how anything that can be done to a seed will have any effect on what is to happen to the grain that is produced months afterwards. However, those farmers who have tried it have adhered to the practice, and we suppose there is nothing more certain than that these brine steepings do prevent the smut. Lately, however, Professor Brewer, of Yale college, not only admits that it is good practice, but shows us the process by which the smut progresses from its first establishment on the grain to its final maturity in the head or ear. It appears that the seeds or spores of the fungus adhere by a sticky coat to the grain. As soon as the grain sprouts, the fungus spore sprouts also, and sends its filaments into the plant, growing as the plant grows, and continuing to grow until the grain is about to reproduce itself, when the fungus plant is also ready to reproduce itself, which it does in the form of smut as we see it; the smut being a nest of spores ready for reproduction. The process is made very clear. We see how brine is useful. It destroys the fungus spores, but not the grain. As corn planting is now upon us it is the easiest thing for farmers to give this a trial. At times the damage done by smut is very serious. — *German town Telegraph.*

**Vegetable or Mineral.**

A physician writing to a journal of medicine, not long ago, proclaimed against the use of mineral poisons in curing diseases, on the ground that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred more mischief than benefit was the result. In his practice he dispensed entirely with the use of mercury, etc., and attributed his success mostly to his prescribing vegetable and herb medicines only. In the face of these facts, every invalid should take warning. Tune up the system and give strength to the various organs of life by using such a remedy as Dr. Guyot's Yellow Dock and Sarsaparilla. Its soothing and refreshing influence will drive away all physical and mental distress. It is especially strengthening to the urinary and digestive organs. A single bottle will prove its merit. It is very pleasant to take.

Miss DICKINSON is a noble-hearted woman, say what they will. She is always ready to take a man's part. — *Boston Transcript.*

A young man signing himself J. L. D. writes as follows: "Six months ago I felt all right, I was very nervous. The least breeze would upset my heart. I was running an engine, at other times it seemed to creak beating altogether. I also had dyspepsia bad, and at night I was very restless, and had disturbing dreams. My whole system seemed out of order, and pimples and sores troubled me greatly. I was led by a druggist to Dr. Guyot's Yellow Dock and Sarsaparilla. It has restored me to perfect health."

A foolish old woman, being one evening at a party was greatly at a loss for something to say. At length she ventured to inquire of a gentleman who sat next her whether his mother had any children. The gentleman politely pointed out the absurdity of her inquiry. "I beg pardon," exclaimed the old lady, perceiving her mistake, "don't you understand me. I wish to inquire whether your grandmother had any children."

**Shrewdness and Ability.**

Hop Bitters, so freely advertised in all the papers, secures its being so cheaply sold in a large sale, and are supplanting all other medicines. There is no denying the virtues of the Hop plants, and the proprietors of these Bitters have shown great shrewdness and ability in compounding a Bitters whose virtues are so palpable to every one's observation. — *Baltimore and Chronicle.*

"CAN you flirt a fan?" asked a coquette of her partner in the city. "I can not," he replied, "but I can fan a flirt."

**"Dragging Pains."**

Dr. R. V. Pierce, Buffalo, N. Y., writes: "My wife had suffered with 'female weaknesses' for nearly three years. At times she could hardly move, she had such dragging pains. We often saw your 'Favorite Prescription' advertised, but supposed like most patent medicines it did not amount to anything, but at last concluded to try a bottle, which she did. It made her sick at first, but it began to show its effects in a marked improvement, and two bottles cured her. Yours, etc., A. J. HUYOR, Deposit, N. Y."

**Why is smoke like straw? Because it shows which way the wind blows.**

DR. PIERCE'S "Pellets" or sugar-coated granules—the original "little liver pills"—the best cure for Biliousness, Headache, Stomach and Bowels, and purify the blood. To get genuine, see Dr. Pierce's signature and portrait on Government stamp, 25 cents per vial, by druggists.

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A GENTLEMAN who was asked for his marriage certificate quietly took off his hat and pointed to a bald spot. The evidence was conclusive.

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CUSTOMER—"Give me some fish" Waiter—"What will you take, sir, bluefish?" Customer—"It makes no difference; I am color blind." — *Puck.*

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WHEN a murderer is reprieved twenty minutes before the performance is to take place, a playful way to put it is, that he "skipped the rope." — *Texas Siftings.*

The fairest faces are sometimes marred by myriads of pimples, and markings of tetter or freckles, which are readily removed by a popular toilet dressing, known as Dr. Benson's Skin Cure. Even scrofulous ulcers yield to it. Dr. Benson's Celery and Chamomile Pills have a wide reputation as the best, safest and cheapest remedy extant, for all nervous diseases and headaches.

WHY would coal dealers make good lawyers? Because they know all about coke and little ton. — *Cambridge Tribune.*

IN the Diamond Dyes more coloring is given for 10 cents than in any 15 or 25-cent dyes, and they give faster and more brilliant colors.

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IT is a sad astronomical fact that during the terrible thunder storm the other night the milky way became sour. — *N. Y. Herald.*

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