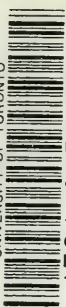


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THEIR WAYS



““ AND ““

““ OTHER SKETCHES ““

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BEAVER HOUSE AND SLIDE.

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BEAVERS

Zoology.

THEIR WAYS

--- AND ---

OTHER SKETCHES

.. BY ..

JOSEPH HENRY TAYLOR

Author of "Frontier and Indian Life,"

"Kaleidoscopic Lives," Etc.



Illustrated



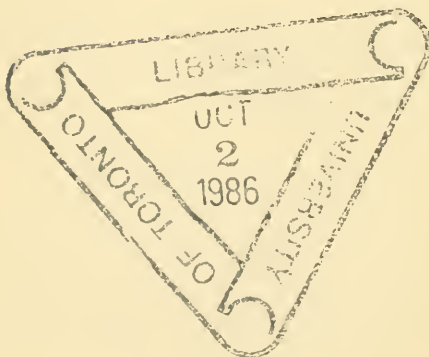
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PREFACE.

IN the middle of the last century, and when people were not so plentiful in America as they now are, book publishers and authors were comparatively few and easily named by intelligent and observant persons. More especially was this the case with school book publishers and authors. In those days every little girl and boy of school age throughout the Middle States was familiar with Comly's Spelling Book, which opened its pages with big A B C etc., of the English alphabet and the simplest form of words but became more complex in both spelling and reading as page succeeded page to the end of the book. At the age of six years on his first entry into the school room, as the writer well remembers, it was Comly's spelling book that was placed in his hands for a first lesson. It was in straw or yellow colored board binding and contained a few primitive looking pictures that entranced the childish mind. Among the latter were the cuts of two beavers—both looking alike and placed one in front of the other. From the first sight of them they were an object of intense interest, and the impressions thus early awakened remained throughout a long life. While it was the impulse for adventure rather than a desire to trap and destroy fur bearing animals, that caused the writer at the age of twenty to begin a trapper's life, yet to succeed meant to de-

stroy. From my beginning in that manner of life beavers became of special interest. First curiosity, then wonder, followed by sympathy and pity for them and regret for the part I had taken in their ruin and destruction.

In this little book I have endeavored through incidents herein recorded to show culmination to a state of mind that caused the abandonment of beaver trapping over twenty years ago, and soon after, ceasing that manner of life altogether. In this latter move my only regret is that it did not come sooner, and my earnest hope is that every boy with an inclination to hunt and trap may find a little time to peruse a copy of "Beavers—their Ways," before he embarks on such an ill omened career as that of a trapper's life.

In the sketches that accompany the chapters about beaver, the author has drawn freely from his former work "Twenty Years on the Trap Line," a little book concerning a trapper's life, printed from original notes, and published by the author at Avondale, Pennsylvania, in 1891. The book being now out of print, with no expectation of its republication, much of its subject matter is absorbed in the various incidents relating to a hunter's and trapper's life as herein presented under the sub-title "Other Sketches."

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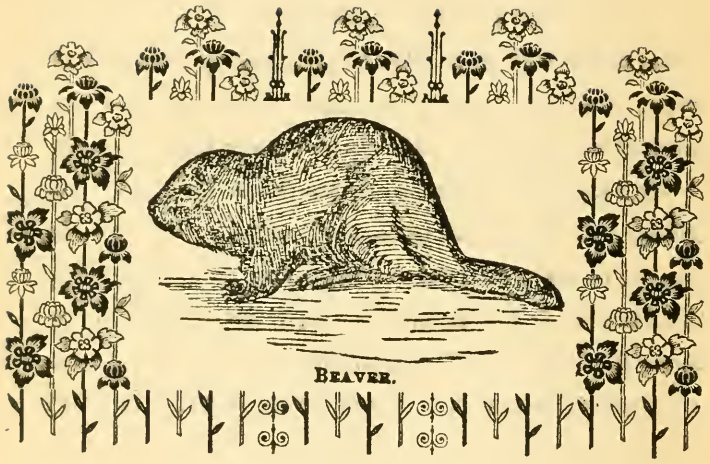
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BEAVER.

BEAVERS---THEIR WAYS.

CHAPTER I.

THE AMERICAN BEAVER—THEIR DESCRIPTION AND HABITS AS TOLD BY CAPTAIN JONATHAN CARVER OVER ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

THE American beaver the *Castor Canidensis*, of the family *Castoride*, as classified by the naturalist and zoologist to distinguish them from the European or Asiatic variety, have characteristics at variance but undoubtedly the graduating changes were made by their environment. This *Canidensis* variety to which these pages will be devoted, once dwelt in great numbers in every brook, creek, lake and river on the North American continent as noted by the discoverers of the Columbian epoch and their progenitors and successors in the conquest and acclimation of this vast continental domain. The prehistoric Mound Builders have left earth monuments of effigies or totems to commemorate the beaver that have stood the test of centuries, and nearly every tribe or nation of the red Indian have some legend in which their association with this intelligent rodent has been deified or placed in an honored and conspicuous position in the lodge of mysteries or rites of the medicine men of the various Indian tribes. Bancroft the historian in his article on the Indian at the time of the discovery of America says that in cleanliness, thrift, industry and architectural skill the beaver was the superior of the red man.

In a general description of the beaver with some brief remarks as to its habits and characteristics, the following article on these most interesting of animals is from the pen of that noted wilderness traveler, Captain Jonathan Carver, of the "Provincial Troops of America." The book from which this extract is taken was published in 1802, being then in its fourth edition: the first edition being first published before the Revolutionary War for American Independence. Captain Carver's description is correct for the most part and so plain, that its insertion is in proper order and will serve as a general text to the subjects that will be taken up in the succeeding chapters of this work. In treating on the beaver, Captain Carver writes as follows:

"This creature has been so often treated off, and his uncommon abilities so minutely described, that any further account of it will appear unnecessary; however, for the benefit of those of my readers who are not so well acquainted with the form and properties of this sagacious and useful animal. I shall give a concise description of it. The beaver is an amphibious quadruped, which cannot live for any long time in the water, and it is said is even able to exist entirely without it, provided it has the convenience of sometimes bathing itself.

The largest beavers are nearly four feet in length, and about fourteen or fifteen inches in breadth over the haunches; they weigh about sixty pounds.

Its head is like that of the otter, but larger; its snout is pretty long, the eyes small, the ears short, round, hairy on the outside, and smooth within, and its teeth very long; the under teeth stand out of their mouths about the breadth of three fingers, and the upper half a finger,

all of which are broad, crooked, strong, and sharp; besides those teeth called incisors, which grow double, are set very deep in their jaws, and bend like the edge of an axe, they have sixteen grinders, eight on each side, four above and four below, directly opposite to each other.

With the former they are able to cut down trees of a considerable size, with the latter to break the hardest substances. Its legs are short, particularly the fore legs which are only four or five inches long, and not unlike those of a badger; the toes of the fore feet are separate, the nails placed obliquely, and are hollow like quills; but the hind feet are quite different, and furnished with membranes between the toes. By this means it can walk, though but slowly, and is able to swim with as much ease as any other aquatic animal. The tail of this animal somewhat resembles a fish, and seems to have no manner of relation to the rest of the body, except the hind feet, all the other parts being similar to those of land animals. The tail is covered with a skin furnished with scales, that are joined together by a pellicle; these scales are about the thickness of parchment, nearly a line and a half in length, and generally of a hexagonal figure, having six corners; it is about eleven or twelve inches in length and broader in the middle, where it is four inches over, than either at the root or the extremity.

It is about two inches thick near the body, where it is almost round, and grows gradually thinner and flatter to the end. The color of the beaver differs according to the different climates in which it is found.

In the most northern parts they are generally quite black; in more temperate, brown; their color becoming lighter and lighter as they approach towards the south.

The fur is of two sorts all over the body, except at the feet, where it is very short; that which is the longest, is generally in length about an inch, but on the back it sometimes extends to two inches, gradually diminishing towards the head and tail. This part of the fur is harsh, coarse and shining, and of little use; the other part consists of a very thick and fine down, so soft that it feels almost like silk, about three quarters of an inch in length, and is what is commonly manufactured.

Castor, which is useful in medicine, is produced from the body of this creature; it was formerly believed to be its testicles, but later discoveries have shown that it is contained in four bags, situated in the lower belly.

Two of which, that are called the superior, from their being more elevated than the others, are filled with a soft, resinous, adhesive matter, mixed with small fibres, greyish without, and yellow within, of a strong, disagreeable, and penetrating scent, and very inflammable.

This is the true castoreum; it hardens in the air, and becomes brown, brittle, and friable. The inferior bags contain an unctuous liquor like honey; the color of which is a pale yellow, and its odor somewhat different from the other, being rather weaker and more disagreeable; it however thickens as it grows older, and at length becomes about the consistence of tallow. This has also its particular use in medicine; but it is not so valuable as the true castoreum.

The ingenuity of these creatures in building their cabins and providing for their subsistence, is truly wonderful. When they are about to choose themselves a habitation, they assemble in companies sometimes two or three hundred and after mature deliberation fix on a

place where plenty of provisions and all necessaries are to be found. Their houses are always situated in the water, and when they can find neither lake nor pond adjacent, they endeavour to supply the defect by stopping the current of some brook or small river, by means of a causeway or dam. For this purpose they set about felling of trees, and they take care to choose out those that grow above the place where they intend to build, that they may swim down with the current. Having fixed on those that are proper, three or four beavers placing themselves round a large one, find means with their strong teeth to bring it down. They also prudently contrive that it shall fall towards the water, that they may have the less way to carry it.

After they have, by a continuance of the same labor and industry, cut it into proper lengths, they roll these into the water, and navigate them towards the place where they are to be employed. Without entering more minutely into the measures they pursue in the construction of their dams, I shall only remark, that having prepared a kind of mortar with their feet, and laid it on with their tails, which they had before made use of to transport it to the place where it is requisite, they construct them with as much solidity and regularity as the most experienced workmen could do.

The formation of their cabins is no less amazing.

These are either built on poles in the middle of the small lakes they have thus formed, on the bank of a river, or at the extremity of some point of land that advances into a lake. Their figure is round or oval, and they are fashioned with an ingenuity equal to their dams. Two thirds of the edifice stands above the

water, and this part is sufficiently capacious to contain eight or ten inhabitants. Each beaver has his place assigned him, the floor of which he curiously strews with leaves, or small branches of the pine tree, so as to render it clean and comfortable; and their cabins are all situated so contiguous to each other, as to allow of an easy communication. The winter never surprises these animals before their buisness is completed; for by the latter end of September their houses are finished and their stock of provisions is generally laid in.

These consist of small pieces of wood whose texture is soft, such as the poplar, the aspin, or willow, etc. which they lay up in piles, and dispose of in such manner as to preserve their moisture. Was I to enumerate every instance of sagacity that is to be discovered in these animals, they would fill a volume, and prove not only entertaining but instructing."

CHAPTER II.

DESTRUCTION OF THE BEAVER FOR THEIR FUR COVERING—PRIMITIVE METHODS OF SLAUGHTER BY INDIANS AS TOLD BY CAPTAIN CARVER.

WHILE Beavers were killed occasionally for food and clothing by the primitive red people before the English settlements at Jamestown or Plymouth Rock, yet their great numbers on every considerable stream of water tributary to the Atlantic coast made it evident as we now understand the habits of these animals they were on the increase until confronted with a new and relentless enemy in the bearded race, from whom neither mercy or rest would be shown until the exterminating hand had glutted to its full.

It was near one hundred years after the Jamestown colony was located before the systematic destruction of the American beavers commenced. The finest grade of furred beavers' was found along the St. Laurence River and its tributaries, and this region was in possession of the French. These people scattered all along that artery of traffic and trade, soon found the value of a well furred beaver skin from the price set upon it and the general demand for its importation by the European nobility. Thus the beavers habits were studied by the French settlers that they could more easily destroy them, and the neighboring Indians were also induced to join in the hunt. In this way hundreds of thousands of these industrious and harmless animals were ruth-

lessly destroyed along the St. Lawrence River, and the country tributary to and east of the Great Lakes, during the zenith of the trapping and fur trading days of the eighteenth century.

The invention of the steel trap as we know it, was not patented and brought into use until several years after the advent of the Hudson Bay Company, an organization under the British crown with possession of all trading and fur rights to the northern half of the North American continent except the Alaskan region claimed by the Russian government. Previous to what was known as the "Hudson Bay Steel Trap" beavers were caught and destroyed with the primitive trap methods of the Aborigines. Captain Carver spent three winters with the wild northwestern tribes, and accompanied them on their hunts and closely observed their mode of procedure as to hunting and trapping. In describing the Indians general mode of destroying the beaver, Captain Carver writes thus:

"But the hunting in which the Indians, particularly those who inhabit the northern parts, chiefly employ themselves, and from which they reap the greatest advantage, is the beaver hunting. The season for this is throughout the whole of the winter, November to April; during which time the fur of those creatures is in the greatest perfection. A description of this extraordinary animal, the construction of their huts, and the regulations of their almost rational community, I shall give in another place. The hunters make use of several methods to destroy them. Those generally practised, are either that of taking them in snares, cutting through the ice, or opening their causeways.

As the eyes of these animals are very quick, and their hearing exceedingly acute, great precaution is necessary in approaching their body; for as they seldom go far from the water, and their houses are always built close to the side of some large river or lake, or dams of their own construction, upon the least alarm they hasten to the deepest part of water, and dive immediately to the bottom; as they do this they make a great noise by beating the water with their tails, on purpose to put the whole fraternity on their guard.

They take them with snares in the following manner: though the beaver usually lay up a sufficient store of provision to serve for their subsistence during the winter, they make from time to time excursions to the neighboring woods to procure further supplies of food. The hunters having found out their haunts, place a trap in their way, baited with small pieces of bark, or young shoots of trees, which the beaver has no sooner laid hold of, than a large log of wood falls upon him, and breaks his back; his enemies, who are upon the watch, soon appear, and instantly dispatch the helpless animal.

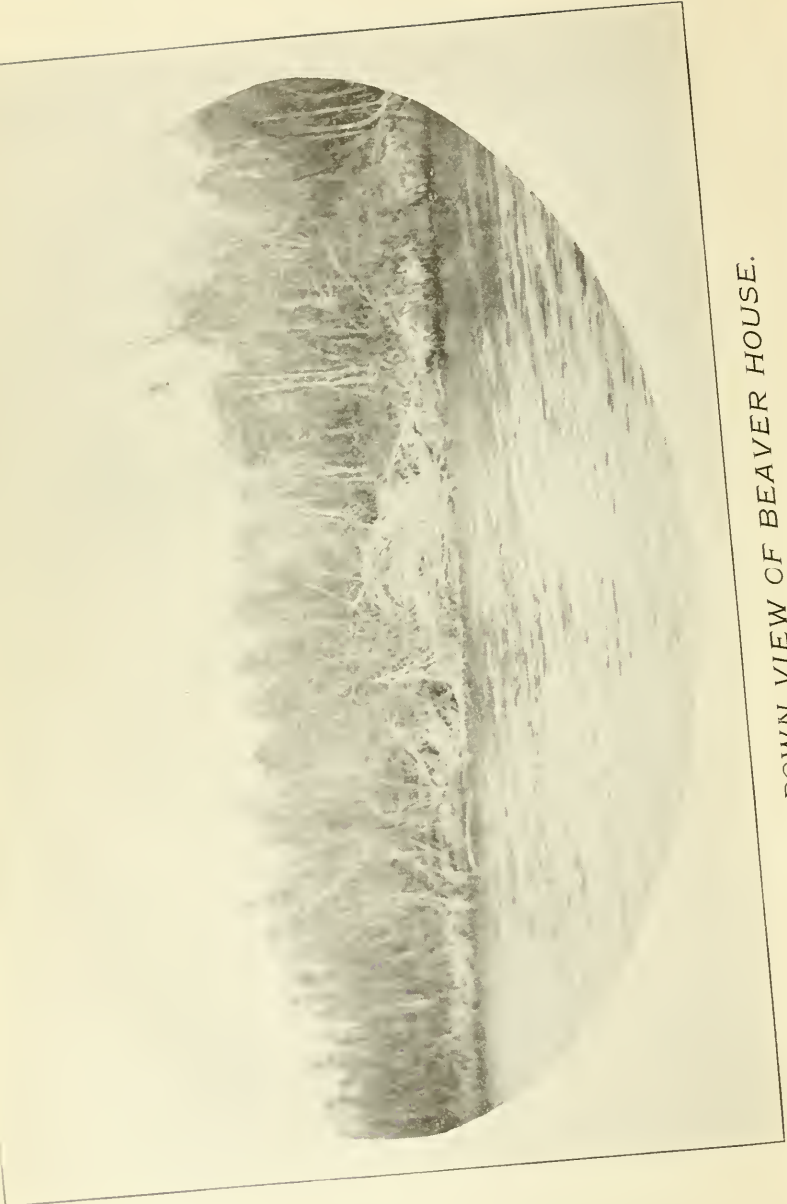
At other times, when the ice on the rivers and lakes is about half a foot thick, they make an opening through it with their hatchets, to which the beavers will soon hasten, on being disturbed at their houses, for a supply of fresh air. As their breath occasions a considerable motion in the water, the hunter has sufficient notice of their approach, and methods are easily taken for knocking them on the head the moment they appear above the surface. When the houses of the beavers happen to be near a rivulet, they are more easily destroyed: the hunters then cut the ice, and spreading a net under it, break



down the cabins of the beavers, who never fail to make towards the deepest part, where they are entangled and taken. But they must not be suffered to remain there long, as they would soon extricate themselves with their teeth, which are well known to be excessively sharp and strong.

The Indians take great care to hinder their dogs from touching the bones of the beavers. The reasons they give for these precautions, are, first, that the bones are so excessively hard, that they spoil the teeth of the dogs; and, secondly, that they are apprehensive they shall so exasperate the spirits of the beavers by this permission, as to render the next hunting season unsuccessful.

The skins of these animals, the hunters exchange with the Europeans for necessaries, and as they are more valued by the latter than any other kind of furs, they pay the greatest attention to this species of hunting."



SUN DOWN VIEW OF BEAVER HOUSE.

CHAPTER III.

AMATEUR TRAPPER AMONG THE BEAVERS AND SOME LATENT IMPRESSIONS THEREON—REINFORCED BY A VETERAN—RESULT—REFLECTIONS.

I N noting beaver sign my first indented impressions were received along Little Sioux River, Northwestern Iowa, in the autumn of 1863, while a member of Col. Jim Sawyer's Independent Cavalry Battalion. But few dams and no lodges were found on the main stream south from the settlement at Cherokee. This marked the much hunted and trapped era where the remaining beaver were unable to maintain family groups but were compelled to eke out a miserable existence in obscure holes along the banks of the stream. In such cases the "sign" could be observed only by the practised trapper or fur hunter. In places north of Cherokee, more especially the tributary streams, both dams and lodges were frequently met with. Two years later—being the autumn of 1865—in company with Trapper Comstock, we made autumn trap on Mill Creek, where we found elaborate beaver work, which I afterward carefully scrutinized and made note of. The first large dam nearly a mile long fronted the second basswood grove about four miles out from Cherokee, and the next dam was two miles above the first. Both showed evidence of the trapper's cruel art and of broken families. Eight miles further up at a bur oak grove was the beginning of a series of dams extending along the creek about five miles. There were six or seven families of beavers within this circuit which included three forks or

branches of the creek proper. The dams averaged about a mile each of backwater, and were from forty to one hundred yards in width. Besides the strong dam breasts that would resist the strongest current, they had a series of canals leading out from the dams that turned the neighboring parched land into meadows from which a heavy crop of slough grass spread luxuriantly around furnishing splendid nesting ground to thousands of waterfowl, the like of which I never after saw repeated, with its appointments so perfect for breeding places for these wild fowl. Minks and otters found convenient homes for rearing their young in abandoned beaver houses as well as skunks, muskrats and raccoons. All this felicity of wild animal life could be immediately traced to the beavers by whose industry and forethought happiness and joy were given to all those who shared in their elysium, and lives of their progeny made secure. In its plain interpretation these beavers were the farmers and artisans of wild animal life.

It being then about the middle of September the beavers were busy repairing any breaks that may have been made by spring and summer freshets or from other causes. They seemed methodical in their manner of work, and went about things in the building line much the same as intelligent artisans of the human kind would do. Tracks of small beavers would be found among the larger ones about the repairing places, but whether the "little folks" were among their elders as helpers or were merely satisfying their curiosity in "watching papa work," we could not then correctly determine, the writer being an amateur in his calling and not then well versed in wild animals' ways.

After my partner—Comstock—had selected our camp in the bur oak grove, he descried two other trappers with a team of oxen encamped further up the creek but, who, not expecting any rivalry in such an out-of-the-way place had neglected to put out their traps until the ground was occupied and beaver dams and runaways covered by their more active rivals for choice grounds. These young fellows were the Phipps brothers from the village at Cherokee. They took their disappointment good naturedly, and said they would return down to the lower dams where they could attend to the trapping from their home as they had often done before. Comstock, lately wedded, found more felicity in anticipation at his home down at Correctionville on the Sioux, than his net proceeds from the trap line,—“dug out” for his martial quarters, but not before signing up and setting out all the traps, and giving some practical instructions to the writer as to their attendance during his absence.

On the first evening of my lonely vigil, I could but note the teeming life around the dams about me, and all from the generosity of the peaceable proprietors who made room for their “summer boarders” or transients and felt happy that their accommodations were so ample and well arranged. There was no rent to pay or board bills to liquidate. No notice of ejection to serve.

There I sat in the doorway—representative of a superior animal—man—who looks to a just God for mercy and arrogates to himself as exclusively of God’s favor as to a future life. No place beyond our realm in place or preparation for the coming of those savants of the waterfall. These meek and lowly beasts are not even to be born again sayeth the pulpit teacher in human

mould—even though their strange and mysterious gifts of prophecy border the divine.

There I sat—a self satisfied Clovenfoot in sulphur fumes; a Nero fiddling while Rome was burning; a Chiv-
ington gloating over the sacrifice of babes and women!
For what?

A few paltry dollars that could have been much easier earned in any other legitimate way.

The excuse. If I did not kill them for their fur covering, somebody else would. This was true enough as far as the text governed the situation in the case, as we were the third party that had sought these grounds within a few days of each other.

Each morning after, I took regular trips along the line of traps. Some of the traps disappeared which I could not account for. Others were found sprung with a peeled stick in it. Others with muskrats or ducks in them. Some were turned bottom side up. I could not account for these things. A novice at his wits end.

By the time Comstock returned most of the beaver traps were out of action. I had spent three weeks laying siege to this thrifty settlement with a cordon of thirty Newhouse No. 4 traps, and took up the line in early December with seventeen traps “missing and unaccounted for.” The beavers had successfully parried these engines set for their destruction, and winter came upon them with their dams intact and feed bed well stored. But pitiful as its recital is, it was their last winter. Comstock had pledged himself “to get them beaver in the spring.” So when spring came a party was made up consisting of Comstock, a young German who afterward sailed under a non de plume in the big

bend country of the Missouri. The writer, unsatisfied, also returned with the party. Comstock again lacked staying qualities and made room for David Hawthorne, an expert in the art of trapping. Soon fresh peeled skins lay in hoops about the trappers' camp. Beaver tail soup—a dainty dish—was served up as regularly as the canned pea variety at a second class hotel. When the warm month of May came around—the gladness and joy that should have been—was not here. True the ducks, the geese and brants returned from the far south land in great numbers and settled about the old dams as of yore. But the kindly greeting from their good old friends came not. The houses, battered and dilapidated, seemed deserted. No more the sound of playful alarms on quiet evenings. No more the inspector making his tour about the dam breasts or the repairing force making jolly over their assigned work. In seeking for nesting places the fowls found the dams broken and but a narrow stream of swift water where the dams once furnished such fine swimming and feeding grounds. Rank grasses could no longer grow and protect themselves and young in their nesting, as the canals were as dry as those famed ones on the fiery orb of Mars. The birds must move on. Stagnant and fetid ponds made in the dams' ebb formed the home of croaking frogs, while the moulded chambers of the once happy beavers became the screeching place of the tree toad and its more hidden recesses the abode of big ugly green worms and chirping crickets and cockroaches.

Why all this horrible transformation?

Answer: That a trapper might get a few dollars with a blood stained curse on them.

CHAPTER IV.

BEAVERS NOURISHING STREAMS—SOME PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATIONS—WANTON DESTRUCTION.

WASTEFUL and unnecessary as was the destruction of the wild buffalo herds on the Upper Missouri and country tributary thereto by the hide hunters and wolfers, the destruction of the beavers along water courses of the same range was fully as inexcusable besides being positively detrimental to the water courses themselves by the destruction through neglect and disuse of the great chain of reservoirs established by the beavers and used so beneficially in the life of these long and narrow streams that wind their serpentine way across the face of great treeless plains.

While the writer had made note of the beautiful appearance of the "beaver streams" while crossing the great plains of Nebraska and eastern Colorado in 1864 and 1865, it was not until my arrival on such streams as Knife River and the upper White Earth River that opportunity came for a more careful observation and better acquaintance with the results of beaver occupancy vs. water supply.

The lower or Great Knife River will be a fair illustration to begin with. This stream heading near Tocscha Kute or Killdeer Mountain in what is now known as Mercer county, N. D., and is about seventy-five miles in length—separated into two principal forks about twenty miles up from the main stream's confluence with

the Missouri's waters.

As far back in the past as could be learned of Knife River it was always known for its numerous beaver habitations and dams, more especially the upper branches or tributaries. The bends of the stream were for the most part covered with groves of ash and boxelder that was protected from devastating fire by the dams backing up the water about the groves so that the soil thereabout was soft and spongy, and thus was saved from ignition by grass fires that annually swept down from the neighboring prairie.

From the proximity of Knife River to old forts Clark and Berthold, this stream was frequented by hostile bands who found good hiding places and a base from which to make forays on the Indian villages located at these points. This circumstance saved the beaver from molestation by trappers, who, while very reckless as to chances, considered the odds too great on Knife River from the red man's scalping knife. Jefferson Smith was one of the last of the old free trappers who bothered beaver on this waterway up to the building of the Northern Pacific railroad to the Missouri river. From that time forward they had but little rest until virtually exterminated some ten years later. In the autumn of 1874, "Buck" Raney accompanied the writer on an otter trapping trip up Knife River. It was during the month of November and a heavy freeze coming on at this time drove the otters to sleep, we departed without disturbing the beavers who had dams along the stream every few hundred yards for a distance of perhaps fifteen miles, from which point we returned with

out further investigation. I made an estimate at this time that there were fully three thousand beavers on Knife River and tributary streams. This estimate was fully corroborated by the noted hunter Reynolds who in addition claimed it was the "greatest beaver stream of its size in the western country." He reckoned the Cannon Ball River second on his list of beaver streams. Reynolds had traversed the Great Plains so many times that his judgment could be relied upon.

The few years following witnessed the almost total destruction of these animals on this stream without being of any perceptible benefit to their destroyers but certainly a great loss to the luxuriant vegetation that was everywhere in evidence along the entire length of Knife River Valley. The most wanton destruction of these beavers was committed by the "beaver shooters" a class of men with skiffs, rifles or shot guns and a plentiful supply of fixed ammunition, who would deploy to the head of the stream during the spring break-up. When the floating ice and rising waters from melting snows were at their greatest height these worthies would put their skiff in the water, load in their camp dunnage and then seat themselves, cut loose and descend with the rapid current. At this stage of the water, the beavers were mostly flooded out, and were either perched upon the roofs of their houses or swimming under the banks near shore, and therefore an easy mark to the riflemen in the skiff. In this way hundreds of beavers would be killed along the stream by a single skiff party, and the bad feature of the whole business was, that even with the best marksmen, but one body in ten of the beavers killed would be recovered, and with poor marks-

men and careless or slow "hookers" the rate of recovered bodies would be much less. The "hooker" was usually the steersman who in addition to guiding the boat, carried a long pole with an iron head made in the form of a shepherd's crook, with which he attempts to secure the dead beaver before sinking from sight in the turbulent waters, surfaced with running ice. The carcass of a sunken beaver was seldom recovered except as a putrefaction many days or weeks after the animal was killed.

Vic Smith one of the best game shots on the Upper Missouri country made a trip down the Knife River in a spring break-up—the exact year having escaped the writer's memory. He brought down about sixty beaver carcasses, and said that he only secured one in every ten that he killed. If the best shot could do no better than this what must have been the useless destruction from the multitude of poor shots that lined the banks of every considerable beaver stream during the ice break-ups in the early spring, continuing the same until the last of these animals disappeared? The destruction in many cases was purely wanton—no effort being made to secure the pelts after the slaughter. The writer is free to say that although a professional trapper many years he never took part in beaver shooting during the breaking up of ice in the spring or during high water floods at any time.

CHAPTER V.

UPPER WHITE EARTH RIVER—BEAVER DAMS BUILT OF STONE—EXAMPLES OF BEAVER SHREWDNESS.

THE Upper White Earth River, coming into the Missouri near the western border of what is now Ward County, North Dakota,—a stream varying from ten to twenty yards in width and about eighty miles in length heading near the boundary line of the British Possessions. The stream was named from the white chalk formations that are exposed from the bare, abrupt bluffs on the outer rim of the valley as the little river meandered through the high broken ridges that skirt the big river Missouri.

On account of the slight impregnation of alkali with the water there, the White Earth River was never much of a resort for water game in comparison with other streams in that section, yet beaver, muskrat and mink were found in considerable numbers when allowed a chance of recuperation from the ever persistent trapper. The Red River Half Breeds as a tribe, for many years laid tribute to this stream and kept the beavers well down in point of numbers. In the autumn of 1873, the writer, while having some years previous acquaintance with this stream—made my first entry as a trapper on White Earth River. The beavers were found few in numbers but were a wise colony as their actions proved after a little intimacy with them. The most noticeable beaver innovation was their construction of dam breasts by stone. The stones or rocks used for

dam construction were of all sizes some of them weighing all the way from fifty to one hundred pounds. How they moved these boulders was a debatable question and one not easily answered except by persons seeing the animals at work. These dams backed water fully as high as brush and mud breasts so commonly used by the beavers in the construction of dams for the safety of their winter sustenance. Pebbles and mud mixed with a kind of grass served as chinking and the regular form of runways used in the ordinary dam where communication is kept up between the scattered families in their visiting tours.

In spreading out a line of beaver traps around the stone dams, I entrusted the work to the two partners who were amateurs in that calling. The next morning we were convinced that steel traps were of no particular concern or curiosity to the beavers of White Earth River. No beings could have devised more grotesque ways of showing their contempt for their would be persecutors and destroyers than did these animals at the coarse work of the two amateur trappers. In nearly every case the traps were found sprung with a peeled white stick gripped in the closed iron jaws. Some of them were buried out of sight under a heavy plastering of mud, while other cases the traps were merely turned up side down with fresh beaver manure contemptuously deposited thereon. Everywhere along the trap line the beaver had evidently been in a sportive mood and gave a jocular turn to the crude attempts of the heartless and greedy humans to encompass their lives.

The beavers being thoroughly on their guard but little headway was made in trapping them so the camp

was moved to the headwaters of upper Knife River where their kindred was found not so well educated in the art of self defense.

Upon making inquiry concerning the astuteness of the beaver at the stone dams of White Earth River, we learned that the stream had been a thoroughfare for the Winterers or French Half Breeds on their going and coming from the buffalo range. The Winterers were successful trappers of the beaver, but seemed to have met with many reverses and were fairly outwitted by the beaver of the stone dams of the upper White Earth River.

That these beavers were finally destroyed, we learned many years after—but to the high water shooter rather than to the trapper must be given whatever discredit rests with their extermination.



BEAVER DAM AT MOUTH OF DOUGLASS RIVER,

[From a Photo by DeGraff, of Bismarck, Autumn of 1897.]

CHAPTER VI.

THE DOUGLASS RIVER COLONIES.

AS far back as 1867 when the military authorities took possession of the country about the mouth of the Douglass River, in the territory now known as northern McLean county, there were two widely diverse beaver colonies on that river. The larger of the two was located about the mouth of the stream and running back about three miles where the river enters the bluffs. These being "brush" beaver, they had fine dams and had every appearance of a thrifty colony as we view them through human eyes. They were also a happy community judging from their numerous playgrounds and industrious as their numerous works testified.

The military occupied the reservation about the mouth of Douglass River for a period of seventeen years—1867 to 1884. During all that time the beaver there clung to their homes. True mighty gorges of ice occasionally came down with the spring break-up on the big Missouri, driving them from their homes and destroying their dams. They would have to begin making homes anew when the desolating work of the elements were over. While an occasional poaching trapper lay around beyond the military environs and killed a few of them they colony were in a flourishing condition when



Fort Stevenson was turned over to the Interior Department at Washington for an Indian school. The school was abandoned in the year 1895, and from the beginning to the end of the school occupation the beavers enjoyed protection of the Indian children and made some substantial dam breasts near the mouth of the stream—the largest of them backing the water for a full mile.

The second colony was located about twelve miles up stream from the first named. They lived on what is known as the Middle Douglass. The valley thereabout is well protected by high ridges, and although without timber save a few sparse groves of choke-cherry in protected ravines, several fine springs gushed out here and there along this part of the creek. With no timber to draw on for their provender, these animals had substituted their natural feed for that of the common muskrat, and were known as were others of that class as "grass" beaver. These animals were never as large and sleek looking as the "bark" beaver, a fact naturally attributed to the inferiority of grass and roots as a diet for beavers.

This colony of grass beaver being located in what was known as a "dangerous neighborhood" during the Indian wars about old Fort Berthold, they enjoyed an immune for many years from human persecution.—Even the Red River Half Breeds—ventursome as they usually were—gave a wide birth to the Douglass River tributaries in those days.

While building many large houses much after the manner of muskrats, the greater part of them imitating the ancestors of the human race became cave dwell-

lers, pure and simple—or following the lines of the pioneer plainsmen made commodious dugouts for themselves in the side of the cut banks that marked a bend in the creek. The beaver dams at this point were wide several as much as fifty yards across the breast, but were so well plastered with mud and rushes that they withstood the wild fury of the spring and summer freshets year after year. In the autumn of 1892, when fears of hostile Indians no longer deterred him, a vagabond trapper from over in Mercer County, visited the Upper Douglass colony and although winter was just coming on, this man deliberately cut away the breasts of the principal dams and let the water out that he might profit thereby, in catching the beavers in their houses.

In this he suffered a disappointment—even though in the hard winter that followed, many of these animals perished from the freezing down of their feed caused by loss of the water in their dams.

Two years later while the Fort Stevenson reservation was in the care of a warden appointed through political influence—a visitor at the post was allowed the privilege of dynamiting the largest dam at the lower colony. The breast was blown asunder and the waters drained down, but the benefit to the man who did the cruel work was the same that had attended the vagabond who destroyed the upper dams—viz: nothing but the satisfaction to himself of knowing that some of the animals must perish by starvation. Some time later, the moonlight hunter got in his wicked work, and one after another of the oldest of the beavers were destroyed, so that by the time the reservation fell into private hands through purchase, but a small part of the original colony of the Indian School days, were left alive.

CHAPTER VII.

BEAVER FARMS—SOME FANCIFUL PICTURES OF THE BUSINESS AS PRESENTED BY AN OPTIMIST— RESULT OF PREMATURE ADVERTISING.

VIEWING the natural home and haunts of the beaver for many years and making some studies as to their habits, meantime, the writer of these pages felt called upon to express himself through the Washburn Leader during the spring of 1894 on the subject of his investigation as to the domestication of beavers brought forth from a successful attempt of two ranchmen in South Dakota, whose sole outlay in the premises was care and a guardianship that harm would not come to them from the murderous inclinations of some of their own race. The following is one of the articles referred to, as copied from the Washburn Leader issued Saturday, January 27, 1894:

“A Harding county, South Dakota paper says that Messrs. Baker & Smith have taken up sufficient land along Valley creek and have gone into beaver farming, or rather, they have been in the business for several years and now have a herd of over two hundred beavers.

The beaver ranch is situated along the creek, and around it they have erected a woven wire fence. The beavers have done the rest.

They have built their own dams and always prepare for winter just as though they were not prisoners. The firm will kill off some of the older males this winter and thus begin to realize something from the investment.

As first class beaver skins are worth at present on the eastern market about \$8 per pound, a big skin weighing about three pounds, Beavers are twice as prolific as sheep and one of the most docile and intelligent animals in the world. In their wild state they are becoming scarcer every year, and are almost extinct in North Dak.

As they need but little attention, and furnish their own feed summer and winter, and this climate is peculiarly fitted for their sustainance and propagation, there is no reason why certain places in McLean county,—natural homes for the beavers, such as the two Strawberry Lakes, Crooked Lakes, and also places on Douglass, Snake, Buffalo Paunch and Painted Woods creeks, could not be made profitable investments. As any trapper who understands the art of beaver trapping, can secure them alive and without special harm, we may yet see some successful experiments at beaver farming in these parts.”

The article above quoted received considerable attention from the Leader's exchanges, and from them to an outer circle until some enthusiastic scribe brought wheat from the chaff in the following which appeared in the Montreal News, during the same year:

“There are many kinds of stock farming in the world but perhaps the strangest of all is the farming of Canada's national animal in McLean county, North Dakota.

Indeed, the chief industry of this section is the beaver farming. The county couldn't be profitably put to other use. The soil is unproductive. In fact, it is the sterile

corners of Oliver, Mercer, Burleigh and Wells counties, and it is the largest county in its state.

It has but one town. Washburn, the county seat.

The Missouri river runs along the western border of the county, and innumerable streams flow into it from among the sterile hills to the north and east.

The banks of these streams are fringed with cottonwoods and a species of elm that has a warped and stunted growth. These small streams and the trees that grow along their banks are the valuable feature of the beaver farms. The former gives the shy animal concealment and the latter gives it an opportunity to demonstrate its woodchopping abilities.

While the wheat-grower in about every other county in the state is crying ruin and deploring the low price of wheat, the beaver farmer of McLean county is enjoying himself, and rolling up a bank account that is in no way threatened by dry seasons, hail storms or a demoralized market. There is always a demand for beaver fur, and for the good article the price is always satisfactory and unvarying.

With \$500 in his pocket when he reaches McLean Co. a man establishes a beaver farm that will in two years, pay him from \$500 to \$2,000 annually. He first purchases from ten to fifteen acres of land through which runs a stream. At a point where the stream is narrow and the banks steep, a dam is built. This is quickly done by felling a few trees across the bed of the stream and filling in with dirt and stones. In this way the water is held back so that two or three acres of land is overflowed.

Along the banks of the stream and around the "pond a fence of wire netting, from two to three feet high, is built, inclosing all the trees that can possibly be taken in." This is for the purpose of keeping the beaver on the farm of their owners. This plan is generally considered successful, but it is not invariably so. Now and then a farmer loses a portion of his colony that escapes up or down the stream by burrowing under the fence, but he has the chance of getting some of his neighbor's animals, in the same way, and he makes no complaint.

As a rule the beavers stay contentedly in the enclosure where they are placed.

To start with a colony of twelve females and four males is sufficiently large. The animals are purchased in the Saskatchewan valley, Manitoba, where they are trapped.

A colony of sixteen will cost \$160. They are placed in the ponds in the spring when the water is high, and all the farmer has to do is to keep his dam and fences up, and prevent hunters from killing the animals.

The farmer experiences but little trouble with poachers, however, as it is generally understood that a man caught in the act of beaver hunting on land that does not belong to him is more liable to get a bullet in his skin than he is to get a trial by jury.

It takes the animal but a short time to become accustomed to their new surroundings. In a few days they begin building their huts of mud and sticks. They work vigorously on the trees, and some of the smallest ones are gnawed off. The first year the farmer receives no income. The animals propagate rapidly, and by fall in the second year, the colony has largely increased in numbers.

The first two years on a beaver farm is a tedious existence. The farmer divides his time between caring for his colony and hunting.

Upon the latter he depends principally, for his food.

But little money is spent in the construction of dwellings. First an excavation of five or six feet deep is made in the ground, and around this stakes are driven closely together. When fixed in the ground they stand about six feet high.

The tall, strong posts are set in the center at each end, and running from one to the other is a ridge pole.

Long poles are slanted from this pole over the ends of the surrounding stakes, projecting several inches.

On the roof thus made, square cakes of sod are laid, dirt is then thrown over it, and the whole is covered with sod. Around the outside dirt is heaped until the ends of the roof poles are covered.

The whole affair, from a distance, looks like a tent shaped upheaval of the ground. The entrance is a square opening in one end. Although there is nothing attractive about the architecture of this abode, it is a very comfortable dwelling and protects the occupant against the winter blizzards perfectly. Bear skins and deer pelts scattered over the floor and pieces of rough furniture covered in the same way add to the comfort of the domicile. The best of feeling usually exist between the residents of this out of-the-way corner. The farmers are, for the most part, men whose lives have been passed on the western hunting grounds. They are hardy, slow going men, who take kindly to the hermit life that they live. But, when the time comes for selling the product of their farms, they go down to Washburn and engage

in a couple of weeks of high living that makes the good citizens tremble and the saloon-keepers smile. They spend their money like water and, not unfrequently, go back to their farms with empty pockets. Notwithstanding their rough ways, they are good-hearted and they extend the warmest hospitality to a person who happens to wander among them.

The butchering season begins the last of October or the first of November. If there are several farms on one stream, the farmer whose corral is nearest the mouth of the stream butchers first. When he has finished the next one above him begins, and so on to the last farmers.

The work begins by drawing off the ponds by the means of floodgates that are covered with wire netting to prevent the animals from passing through. When the mud houses of the beavers are exposed the farmer goes from one to the other and taps on them with a club. The noise frightens the animals out. From the formation of their legs they are naturally slow runners. They are knock-kneed, and their hind legs are wide apart.

When they leave the huts they are quickly dispatched with clubs. It requires but a short time to kill off the animals. When the colony is planted the animals are branded, and at butchering time these are preserved for breeding purposes. It is said of the beaver that it lives active and vigorous, to the age of 50 years.

As soon as the killing is finished, the gates are closed and the barn is flooded again. This is quickly done by the opening of the floodgates in the dam above. The pelts are taken off and stretched over forms made of bent elm strips. Saltpeter is rubbed into the flesh side of the skin, it is exposed to the atmosphere for two weeks, then

the pelts are packed in bales to be taken to market.

The pelts are classed according to their size and length of fur. The poorest brings \$15 and from that figure the price ranges upwards to \$25. The fur is used in the manufacture of coats, hats and garments for women.

A good deal of it is shipped to China, where it is made into expensive shoes for the aristocratic women."

The above article was copied in many of the leading newspapers in both the United States and Canada, and the result was a deluge of letters addressed to the postmaster of Washburn, the Leader and other citizens of McLean county making inquiry about the beaver farms, the price of live beaver for stocking similiar ranches in contemplation, &c. &c.

Washburn in those days having no all rail connection after the boating season was past, communication with the busy world was kept up by stage coach by way of Bismarck, North Dakota's capital city.

One evening in April, 1895, the coach drew up in front of the Merchants, the only hotel at the time in the little hamlet of Washburn. Only one passenger stepped from the coach—a stately appearing man of handsome physique—with all the bearing of a well-to-do. After supper he asked to be shown his bed—saying he had traveled far without rest and was weary.

After breakfast next morning he asked to be shown the Leader office where he found the scribe busy with "making up the forms."

"Is this Mr. T———" he inquired in a quiet tone.

"Yes sir," I replied—"have a seat."

"I am up here to see something of your beaver farms

I have read the account of them in my home newspaper—the Montreal News—and am much interested. I have been sent over to you by the hotel people as one most likely to give me all the information desired, and perhaps—if I can persuade you—show me around some—I want to know the methods of success in this beaver farming business. I think I will try it in my Canadian home if I can get a pair or so to begin with.”

The beaver propagating articles flashed across my mind, and I found myself in presence of a delicate proposition for solution.

“There are a few wild beavers about 40 miles to the northwest of here on Douglass River,”—I said.

“But your tame ones—your beaver farms” said the stranger.

“My dear sir,” I answered “I guess that is another case of three black crows. I have a pet beaver in an old cellar across the coulee over there, (pointing in the direction indicated) but he is a cripple.”

“Are you not joking.”

“No—I am not joking.”

“Fifteen hundred miles to see a three-legged beaver. Fifteen hundred miles,” he repeated in a broken tone.

At this the Bismarck stage passed by the office door.

“Hold, hold” he shouted as he rushed out the door.

“Take me away driver—take me out of this. Fifteen hundred miles—fifteen hundred miles—
—————

.”

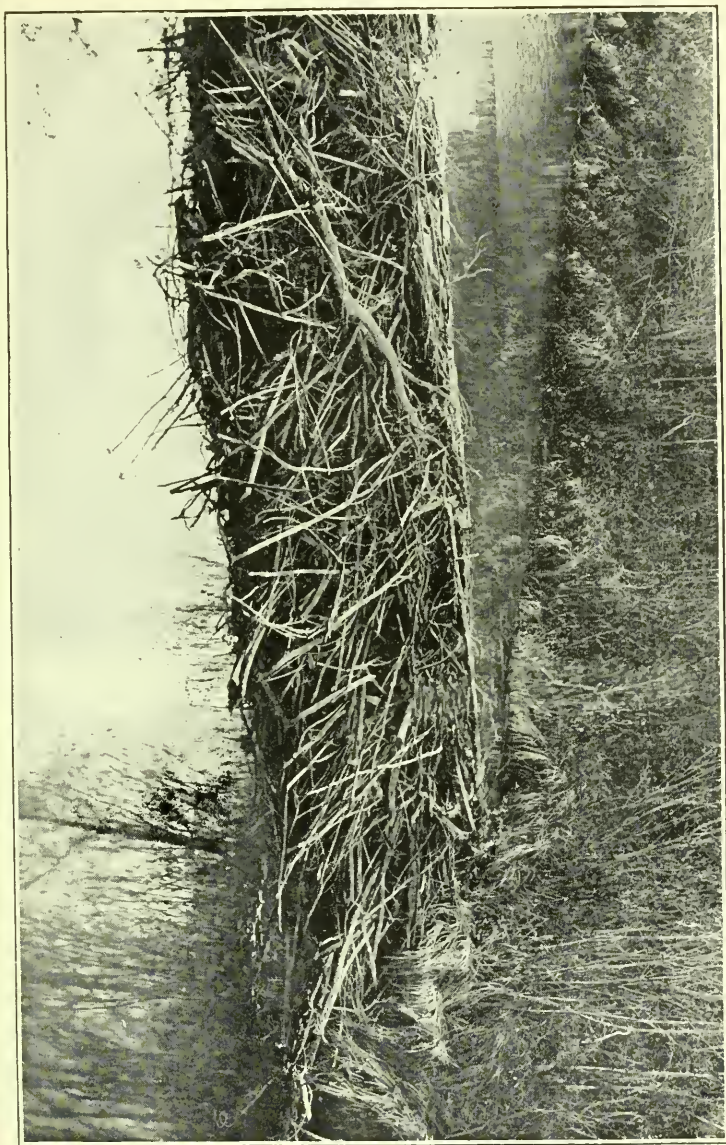
CHAPTER VIII.

NIBS.

LATE in the autumn of 1894, in company with T. R. Peterson, we left McLean's capital for an outing on Douglass River. Mr. Peterson seemed about entering a training course on his predestined later career as the only volunteer from his adopted county in the Spanish-American war, that made the Cubans a free people and engrafted the Asiatic Maley to the homogeneous mass of mankind now known to the world as the Great Yankee Nation.

In his camp fire talk "Tom," regretted that extreme youth prevented him from seeing military service in the war between the States, and an unforeseen accident barred him from taking a hand in the ghost dance troubles and Sioux uprising of 1890. Although in the civil war business he contented himself somewhat in his being the son of a veteran and a further consolation in the old biblical proverb "that all things comes to him who waites."

In our trip we had in view a hunt after the wolves and coyotes around Burton's sheep ranch and to catch a pair of young beavers for the purpose of experimental domestication. In our first camp near the upper beaver dams of the Douglass, we set two experimental traps on the breasts—first taking off one spring from





each of them and wrapping the trap jaws in cotton cloth. This to safeguard the beaver's leg in case of a fore foot catch instead of the hind feet to which they were set for. Being dark, an error in judgment as to depth of water and length of chain, and early the next morning we were mortified to find that our mistake had cost us two fine specimens of kitten beavers that had been caught and, although the water was very shallow, in their terror, found sufficient depth of water to drown themselves in the passage way. We then raised the traps and put them at the lower dam south of the old military trail, where we profited better by our previous experience and went about things in a more circumspect way—and took daylight to do our work. The result was a smooth and glossy-furred yearling. We bagged him quickly and started off on our homeward journey as a blizzard was whirling about our ears.

Reaching Washburn late the same night we went into quarters and upon examining the little beaver found the word "loose" three toes of one foot as the result of the trap and subsequent exposure to the elements. But

the fellow soon recovered his cheerfulness and health. Being a "bark" beaver, he readily peeled aspenwood and willow twigs set before him, and without further of consequence—grew fat and saucy.

The duly christened Nibs, he never seemed to have noticed his name but the word "beaver" usually drew his attention, probably because the word was used so much in his presence by visitors. His quarters was in the cellar of the abandoned Riverview Hotel, where a sunken tub filled with water served as a drink and play ground—the water being regularly changed—and

his daily allowance of feed being brought from a nearby grove. He ate two meals each day and a late luncheon at night. Sometimes he would talk to himself as he mauunched his provender, but at most of his meals nothing but the swish of brush and the grinding of teeth could be heard as he worked industriously to stay his hunger. He was playful at times but in a general way his moods were diversified. In this way he passed the second winter of his short but eventful life.

In the early spring he was given the freedom of a pond—and although chaperoned to and from his ebullitions—enjoyed his outings immensely. Indeed, so happy was he in his spurts of freedom that repressive measures had to be frequently used to induce his return to the gloomy celler.

Sometime in May a change of quarters was made for Nibs as more convenient for his caretakers though a less comfortable one for the captive beaver. This was an old root celler with hard gravel sides. Here it was he was snugly domiciled when the Canadian visitor came to Washburn, an account of which is given in a preceding chapter. Sometime after the passing of the aforementioned visitor, I came to the celler to find that the tub was empty of water, but a mixed lot of peeled sticks, mud and refuse in the bottom of the tub. The beaver, meantime was found quietly crouched in his corner and acted as though he did not want to be disturbed. It is a gentle hint—I thought—that he want's a clean tub and a fresh supply of water. His wishes were acseded to, and a cleaned-out tub filled to the brim with clear sparkling water. But to my astonishment on going to his quarters next morning, I found matters

about in the same condition as the previous morning, viz: the tub emptied of its water but filled with peeled sticks, mud and refuse. The beaver, as before, sat humped up in his corner apparently oblivious to all his surroundings. Not being a reader of animal's minds I were unable to divine what was revolving in the animal's modest looking think tank, but came to learn his thoughts later.

Nothing was left me to do but to humor his Nibs and again clean the tub of rubbish and fill the same with clear water and furnish him with an extra supply of fine cottonwood tops and a dish of his favorite wild garlic, the latter he readily ate without waiting to make it his desert during regular meals. On my way over the third morning I kept wondering what surprise his royal Nibs would treat me too, and found he was equal to any emergency in the furtherance of a sensation. The tub had been again emptied of its water and filled with the usual mud, sticks and debris, supplemented with a quantity of beaver manure conspicuously placed on the the top of it all.

"You scamp," I said aloud as I looked over in the beaver's corner, where a "dummy" of hay had been placed in his bed but the animal was nowhere to be seen. I looked around the dark corners and in his favorite play holes vainly for a sight of him and until I came to inspect a saturated corner, with an aperture leading upward, half filled with hay from the beaver's bed—as though to screen observation—I came to the uncomfortable conclusion that my charge had taken French leave—or in other words—had "vamoosed de ranche."

I then took up his trail which led to the river where he was found disporting himself in mid-channel of the shore shute, but he refused to recognize or heed my call and cut up all kind of antics to show his contempt for my efforts at his capture. I then returned to his late quarters in the celler to inspect his method of escape and after thorough investigation concluded to class Nibs with the Jack Shepperd's and Claude Duval's of mediæval England in his efforts at jail breaking.

As I have before mentioned, the celler had been dug through a gravel deposit with hard subsoil. The beaver had only one good paw to dig with having lost the use of the other from the twisting he gave it while being caught in the steel trap at the time of his capture. Thus hand-i-capped in the digging business, to effect his escape he had to do some thinking—some figuring—as it were. To make digging easy it was necessary to soften up the extremely hard ground and to do this he must make use of the water in the tub. Carrying the water in his mouth as he undoubtedly had done, he saturated the earth in the corner where from its darkness, would most likely escape observation during the progress of his plans of procedure in the manner of digging out. The dirt that he dug was partly thrown in the tub to make mud as a blind, but the greater part was left in a heap near the excavation, but so deftly covered with hay taken from his bed that his work would easily escape observation, to one not on to his movements. He was two nights before he effected his way out but so sure was he of liberty and the time to effect that he felt safe for spare time to make a last visit to the tub before his departure and so far give vent in his displeasure to his

enforced captivity, that—to borrow a judicial expression—made his “contempt of court.”

Of the after career of Nibs but little is known—and that little for the most part guess work. Evidence was noted of “beaver work” at Painted Woods Lake some weeks after his escape from his celler prison, although no sign of these animals had been noted there for many years previous. A well known poaching hunter had met a small beaver near where the lake empties its waters into the Missouri, and “regretted” that he did not have his gun with him.

Two years later a small family of beavers appeared in the lake and erected a house the first of its kind built there in twenty years. What part Nibs played as an emigration agent it is not for us to know—but certain it is he could have called the lake and its environs a beaver’s earthly paradise and told the truth.

Having an illustrated chapter especially devoted to the colony in another part of this work, we pass to an incident related to us by Frank Johnson a resident of Painted Woods Lake neighborhood, and a gentleman who professed considerable interest in this latter day beaver colony. A poaching trapper had been making camp about the lake in the spring of 1903, but his damage to the hunted colony was unknown to Mr. Johnson when, on taking a sundown stroll along the lake below where its feeders come in from the prairies, where he espied two beavers swimming breast and breast coming his way. He kept a little back from the shore and sat down to watch them. They came about opposite him and went ashore across the narrow shute. The beavers after casting their eyes about them selected a young

cottonwood sapling, and after applying their huge incisors vigorously, soon felled it to the ground. They then proceeded to cut up some twigs, and sitting up on their haunches squirrel or bear fashion proceeded to eat their supper with evident relish. The whole proceedings was very interesting to Mr. Johnson, but he finally concluded to see what effect his presence would have on them so advanced to where he could be plainly seen.

They did not get excited or in a hurry but moved to the water and leisurely swam around a neighboring bend of sluggish water and disappeared from view. A few minutes later a solitary rifle shot was heard by our informant and all was still as darkness came quietly over the lake surface, and only the distant echoes of the poacher's shot, in its reverberations, awakened the silence of the quiet evening.

Mr. Johnson had casually noted that one of the two beavers seemed absolutely fearless of his presence and did not want to leave his feed until he had a good ready. And as he saw one beaver near there occasionally after that evening—but only one—and he somewhat shy, it would seem not difficult to identify one of the two beavers—and the one that received the fatal shot from the poacher's ready rifle.



Beaver house with double feed bed on Katz quarter, Painted Woods Lake---From a photo by Diesen 1903.

CHAPTER IX.

SOME OTHER ATTEMPTS AT BEAVER DOMESTICATION.

NOTWITHSTANDING the outcome of my first attempt at beaver domestication, I did not consider the experiment a failure—rather the reverse taking the disadvantages I had labored under into consideration. The beaver had been kept in solitary confinement in a careless manner for a period of eight months and at the time of his escape was in fine physical condition and in high spirits as his humorous antics proved. He had been old enough at the time of his capture to well know his wants, and my long study of these animals' habits had given me a fair idea as to the selection of his feed. Only once or twice previous to this beaver-in-the-celler episode, had I made any experiments in this line, but nothing came of them, and ended as in this instance in the beaver evading the experimental tests by dodging his keeper.

The first move at beaver raising in North Dakota had its starting in the fall of 1874, when a kitten beaver was taken out of Mandan Lake by the writer and given to a little Indian girl who then lived with her guardians at Pretty Point near the present village of Sanger, Oliver county. As a family of wild beavers had a house nearby, an opportunity presented itself to escape from its kind little mistress, and take itself to the home of its own kind, where it remained—for all its mistress knew.

John Millet, a veteran trapper, with his headquarters in North Dakota's capital city, fell in with the beaver raising fad, and brought in a young specimen from one of his trapping expeditions, and being familiar with its needs, soon had it in a trifty condition, and it also became very tame. and was nursed and petted by Mr. Millet's children. He had kept it about a year and in summer days the young beaver sported occasionally in an artificial pond in the rear of his keeper's residence. While thus in play one day a deputy warden of the Bismarck penitentiary came along, and the sight of a live animal other than a horse, cow, pig, sheep or goat was too much for him. He knew that it was not one of the afore mentioned animals, and he could not see why any other animal should live, so walking up to the playful little creature, drew a revolver and put a bullet in its brain. Viewing the carcass for a moment the deputy warden picked it up, threw it in his phaeton and drove on down to the gloomy prison walls to show his trophy and exult over his deed.

Mr. Millet and family felt the loss of their pet keenly but avoided making any disturbance when the facts of its death became known. The Millet residence was in the heart of the town and the inexcusable and wanton act was witnessed by several neighbors. However, Mr. Millet once more sallied out to his old trapping grounds and succeeded in bringing to his home another small beaver and it was placed in the vacant quarters where it soon became very tame. The writer made two or three trips down to see the little animal and to make a give or take proposition to its keeper, having at this time a pet beaver, also, and willing that somebody should have a

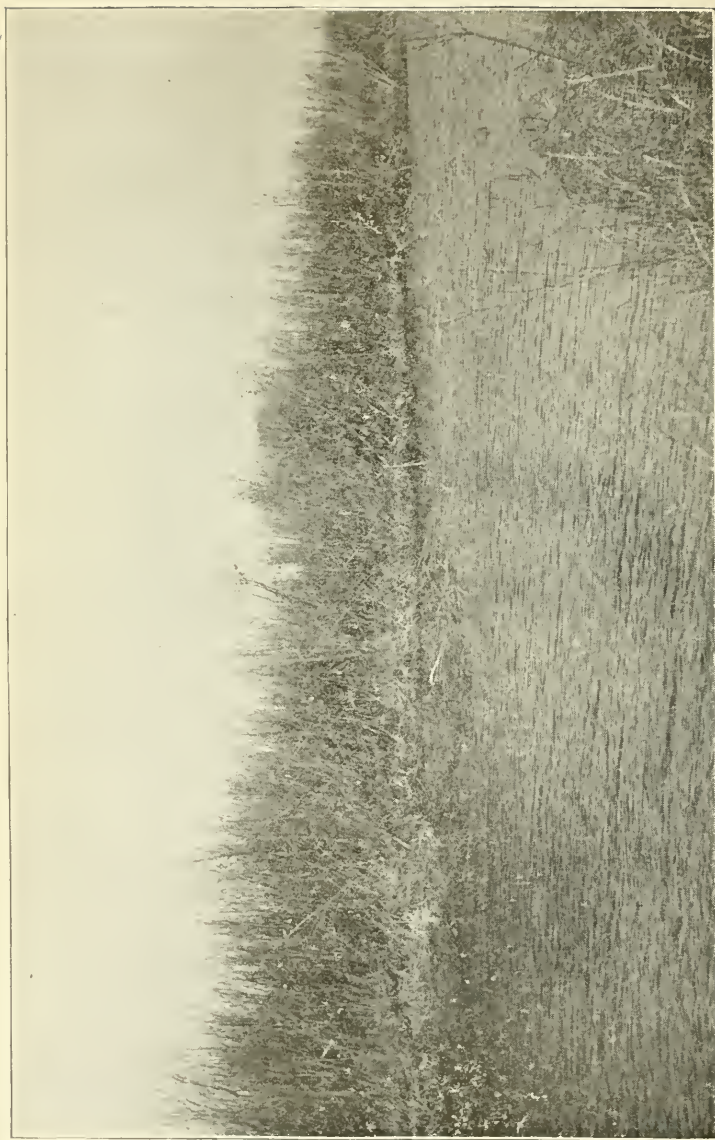
pair of them. The Millet beaver was fed principally upon raw potato diet to which he seemed very fond, but from lack of proportional bark diet or other cause the young beaver sickened and died after about a year of confinement, but Mr. Millet said the little fellow had never been so rugged as the one slain by the deputy warden.

From the experiences herein recorded it will be noted the want of care and mismanagement in general were the causes which led to these unsuccessful attempts at the domestication of wild beavers. A more painstaking knowledge as to their feed, plenty of water and more comfortable living quarters, could have been all that would have been necessary in each individual case to have kept these animals in perfect health, which might be added also a companionship of their own kind, although except for propagating purposes, this is not always necessary as "bachelor beavers" are quite common among the wild ones. Trappers frequently find old beaver living alone in a small house and a small feed pile of winter provender—a granddaddy beaver perhaps—with his wooden spoon.

One more attempt was made by the writer toward beaver domestication. A young female specimen of the grass kind was trapped at one of the upper dams of Douglass River in the autumn of 1896. It had been caught without injury to its feet, and in other ways was in the pink of condition. But being of the grass-root feed kind, and not knowing the particular roots on which they subsisted, I gave cottonwood, boxelder and willow twigs, with an occasional change to potatoes and ruta bagas. The animal was a yearling and never took kind-

ly to its change of feed, and started into the winter in poor condition, and lost flesh gradually the long winter through. On the night of the 24th of March, 1897—it will be remembered—mercury in North Dakota went down 40 degrees below zero. The beaver had been placed in the cellar under Dr. Forbes' drug store in the village of Washburn, and was by no means a comfortable place. but the early setting in of winter left but little choice, and it was hoped he would get through the winter there without serious injury. But in the evening of that cold night in question, the door leading down the stairway to the beaver's quarters had been thoughtlessly or carelessly left ajar, and the water froze down and while the beaver endeavored to excavate itself into warmer quarters into the hard wall, its weakened condition was a bar, and with the morning light, the beaver's tail was found to be partly frozen—and thereafter absolutely refusing to eat anything, a few days later it succumbed in death.

My experiment in this case was so unfortunate, I felt as guilty as an experimental vivisectionist should feel at the suffering wrung from the unfortunate victims by his experimental work horrors. I had remembered with regret at the beaver's many attempts to follow me up the stairway when I brought him food and water as though he would gladly flee from the miseries and terrors of his lonely vigil, and further the poor animal's detention could be of no especial import to the information desired. From that time henceforth I resolved to take no more harmless animals from good homes to try experiments upon, even though in the hope of bettering their future condition or hoping against hope in staying the exterminating hands of my fellows.



Beaver Fed Bed at Painted Woods Lake---From photo by DeGraff.

CHAPTER X.

BEAVERS AS WEATHER PROPHETS.

OF all the different animals accredited as weather prognosticators, beavers undoubtedly take first rank. People familiar with the ways of these animals and at all studious as to their work and sign, find the future autumn and winter weather so correctly forecasted that a family of beaver located near stock ranches is a highly prized acquisition to the intelligent stock raiser and to them must be given the credit for the existing "beaver laws" now in force in the two Dakotas and Montana.

While the writer had frequently heard trappers and weather wise Indians make mention of the beavers gifts as weather forecastors, it was not until the autumn of 1869, that I first had practical knowledge of these animals prophetic wisdom. On the 13th of October of that year a severe freezing spell covered the entire north-western country along the Upper Missouri and eastern base of the Rocky mountains. About this time I was with a party of frontiersmen traveling by team between Grand River Indian agency and the Painted Woods. The cold snap came on us while encamped on Beaver Creek, and on the evening of the next day we crossed our team over Apple Creek on solid ice. The Missouri

River was also clogged and bridged over in many places by ice, although it opened up again in the channel and did not freeze solid until about the 10th of the following month. The creeks and river shutes, however, for the most part remained frozen from October 13th until the middle of April, 1870. As a rule in ordinary years beaver do not commence hauling in their winter's feed until about the middle of October, but upon this occasion the beavers had their dams all repaired and their entire winter's grub collected in their feed beds when this extraordinary early cold snap and freeze down came. Although these were days before Hick's studied weather signs from revolving planets, and Foster absorbed weather forecasts from good guesses and luner's rays, yet the weather wise men of that day gave us no sign of the early winter, but all on the frontier could see that being forwarned, the beavers had been up and doing and were fully prepared for it. This I had proved to my entire satisfaction by a thorough examination at the time, of many beaver houses upon the banks of the Missouri, as well as some tributary streams.

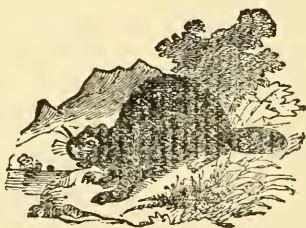
The case was noted as directly opposite in the autumn of 1871, when the hard freeze closing the ice did not come until near the end of the month of November. At this time I had a good opportunity of taking observation of beaver work, as I put in three consecutive fall months on the trap line on the streams and lakes entering the Missouri between old Forts Rice and Berthold. The beaver were noted that autumn for being very tardy with work on their feed beds, but the weather situation justified or rather harmonized with their dilatory action in the matter.

In all the years of my observation of the beavers and their ways I never knew of them being caught short on their winter's feed unless it was a case where the ruthless hand of man brought distress on them by cutting out their dams or destroying their houses in mid-winter.

With beavers in their natural state and as neighbors, a study of their every day habits, is both interesting and instructive to any one that has inclinations to be weatherwise or admiration for habits of industry with animal headwork as planner and animal muscle power as builder. The first work on their dams usually commence about the middle of September of each year in regions as far north as North Dakota. They first go to the dam breasts and do a little repairing with mud or twigs after which they dredge out or dig any canals the situation of the hour would warrant. By this time the old weather prognosticators had cast their horoscope for signs of the coming winter, and whatever the result, action followed. If severe cold snaps was expected early, work on the dams stopped for the time being that all hands could commence cutting down and drag in their willow brush and tree tops before ice formed in front of their water slides, which would bother and retard them in getting their feed in shape for winter storage. A winter without snow in the fore part of it, means water exposed to hard freezing weather and as a consequence thick ice that will freeze deep down in the beaver's feed bed and give them much trouble the balance of the winter, if the same cannot be avoided. This is the reason that from warnings of a snowless winter the beavers raise the breasts of their dams from one to two

feet higher than in winters that they expect a heavy snow fall in the earlier part. Long cold winters can be forecasted by an intelligent observer of beavers ways by noting an extra large feed bed, and the extreme care that they use in replastering their houses, the work on the latter being usually completed by the first days of October.

A careless indifference to house plastering and an apparent apathy in their feed bed work and its small size in comparison with other years,—if the family has not been lessened by death or the destructive trap—prognosticates a mild winter, and that forecast is an exceptional one in which the beaver astrologers register a mistake.



CHAPTER XI.

RETROSPECT—THE BEAVER HEGIRA OF 1888 AND 1889—NOTES ON THE WRECKED BEAVER FARM OF KILL DEER MOUNTAIN—THE HAZEN COLONY AND A PATHETIC STORY OF THE BEAVERS ATTEMPT TO HOLD THEIR OWN.

IT was near about the year 1890, that resident trappers announced that the beavers were "cleaned out along Big Knife River," the stream of which Charley Reynolds had spoken of but fifteen years before as the most prolific beaver stream in the west—and where greater natural advantages existed for the welfare of these animals than any other stream that he had noted in his wide range of the prairies of the west and northwest, that had remained uncultivated and unsettled at that date.

To be sure here and there a wandering beaver left its plain marked sign in his efforts to locate a family of his own kind that might have escaped the clutches of the inhuman humans that had made such desolation along these waterways that once teemed with busy animal life. But his vision beheld only the broken dams—the blind slides and the partly destroyed habitation or the unused hole-in-the-bank that had once sheltered the refugees.

It was in the years 1888 and 1889, that places down on the lower Missouri and lower Mississippi Rivers which had not been visited by "beaver sign" for full fifty years and without heralding their coming, gave evidence of their presence by the fresh waterway slide, the peeled sticks and the newly dug holes along cut banks of the swift moving waters. Even out on the Atlantic seaboard, around the coasts of Florida and the Carolinas, beaver voyagers from the far off Upper Missouri country had skirted the coasts, until the inlet to some fresh water river gave them a chance to satisfy their curiosity as well as use their judgment as to the proper place to rest from their long journey and build themselves a home—where, if they could not escape from their vicious enemy—man, they would at least escape his vengeance by his ignorance of their presence, or artlessness as to their ways. This would give them time to build homes and bring forth their young before their persecutors knew of their proximity, or finding out, became familiar with their habits. For in the poor beaver's case—familiarity breeds danger—not contempt.

Beavers naturally being attached to their homes—the stress as to their very existence on this earth must have impelled them forward seeking the unknown. The dangers had so multiplied by the persistence of their avaricious enemies who sought their lives for the fur covering their Creator had given them at birth. What guiding hand piloted the way from the base of the Rocky Mountains to Albemarle Sound? Yet unlike the hejira of the feathered Magpie about the same time from the same regions and for the same cause, viz: the preservation of their kind—they did not all move

in a body but many seemed to have "waiting orders" only, or word to move along the line of travel and hunt convenient winter quarters en route without regard as to the location of the advanced pioneers in their front. Beavers from the Milk River, Yellowstone and Big Horn regions followed the general hegira down stream; but here and there a broken family turned off from the main artery and followed a side stream until a convenient spot was reached. In some places a primitive wild was found—a place where their beaver predecessors had been destroyed years before. Hoping they had evaded or distanced the being with the steel trap or rifle ball, they put forth every energy to build new homes.— But the hope was a vain one as many newspaper readers knew, wherein some local scribe would relate in his home paper that after an absence of many years, "beaver have appeared here again," and then would state some specific stream in which a family was known to be located, by their building a house or dam or both, or by brush cuttings. Such items appeared in an irregular way in several newspapers about the years 1890-1-2-3 along the James, Sheyenne and other rivers in both of the Dakotas. These scattered beaver families were but stragglers of the great exodus, and for the most part paid the penalty of desertion with their lives. For the newspaper notice would reach some old trapper, who, true to the instincts bred in his calling, would sacrifice \$20 worth of time for a two dollar skin. In this way the beavers gradually lost their lives, as the owner of the lands did not seem interested enough in these hunted animals' fate or had compassion for their distress.

The Big Knife River had a case in point, and the



following taken from the columns of the Washburn Leader, of November 28, 1896, is a fair illustration of the merciless persecution that met these savants of the animal kind, turn what way they may.

I quote the Leader of the above mentioned date :

“The subject of beaver raising came up for discussion recently in the Merchants Hotel in Washburn, Herbert Bartron told the following incident coming from Mercer County, on the west side, the fact of which he is for the most part familiar :

At the HA stock ranch on the North Fork of Big Knife River, and within ten miles of Kill Deer Mountain, there is located a living spring. The ranch was built within a few hundred yard sof the spring. About five or six years ago a pair of beavers hunted out from the lower stream by merciless trappers appeared at this spring and finding themselves undisturbed by the resident stockman proceeded to build there and dredge out and dam up the spring. These animals with their great intelligence seemed to have divined the minds of their human neighbors and while naturally timid of man, in the presence of these stockmen they ignored fear and became industrious co-workers. In a few years the beaver family had increased to 15 or 20 members.

The business of the stock range demanded a change of headquarters. Mr. Arnot the manager while moving his location, posted notices at his vacated ranch and otherwise sent out notification to people not to disturb the beaver family. Last winter two strangers appeared at the ranch and in a few weeks they had sent a report to Mr. Arnot that the beavers had all been destroyed. They claimed that the bad work was done by some trap-

pers from the main stream who were located at a ranch with trapping for a winter profession. The animals had become so tame and confiding to man's better nature that they fell easy victims to another class of the human kind whose hearts were callous by greedy desires, and in whose breasts the emotion of pity found no vent."



The account of "Beavers as Fish Wardens" taken from the same journal, under date of September 18, 1897, tells of the trials of the last family of beavers on Big or Lower Knife River, and known as the Hazen colony. It is the "same old story" as far as beavers are concerned, but a pathetic one in the attempts the poor animals made to hold their own.

The Leader article read as follows:

"On the Leader scribe's recent visit to lonely Stanton, Editor Walker of the Pilot related the following as a recent event that happened on Knife River, and that its authenticity is well vouched for—and our previous knowledge of beaver habits, have found many cases where beavers have put their "wits to work" under similar provocation.

Somewhere near the Hazen neighborhood two or three beavers had escaped the general destruction of their kind in this beautiful stream—in fact of the very few left in the State—proceeded about a month ago to build a dam and prepare for winter quarters. Some of the settlers with no fear of the fish laws to deter them—tore a hole in the beavers' dam and put the unlawful set net therein. In the evening when the beavers went out to look at the mischief done their hard work, they fell upon the net and

cut holes large enough to let all the fish out. The net was patched up and replaced the next night but was served even more roughly than the previous night. Not to be outdone, the would-be fish catchers repaired the breaks in the net with wire, and also stretched wires across the water surface, but the beavers took up net, wire and all, and deposited them on the bank overlooking the dam and some distance away. By some strange gift—it might seem—the beaver had a mild interpretation of the fish laws of this State, which require of the Fish Warden to confiscate or destroy all nets found on any lake or stream other than the Missouri River. The State law also imposes a fine of \$100 for each and every beaver trapped or killed. It will be well if the fishermen are as considerate for the beavers' feelings, as were these animals at first contact with the fish poachers' net—simply fold and pack it upon the bank—with a gentle hint to be gone with their tangled up mess."

A few weeks after the incident above related, I received a call in Washburn from a young man who announced that he was a citizen of Mercer County and a candidate for a prominent county office, with a flattering prospect of an election. He said he had noted the Leader article in regard to beavers as fish wardens and could give more information than Editor Walker had given—and a more correct statement, as he owned the nets that the beavers had torn—owned the land that the dam was built on—and had claimed his rights thereon. He said he would give the beavers full credit for being gentlemen in every sense of the word. The beavers, he said had taken up the net twice, rolled it up neatly and on each occasion placed it upon the bank without

damage to it. This of itself had exasperated him and to spite them he tore away their dam in divers places. He then reset his net and the result was the beavers played tit for tat and placed the net out of business in great style. It was after this happening that he tried wire netting, and to put quietus on things and gain the support of two neighbors for his candidacy to the office he sought, and they being professional trappers, he had given them permission to trap the animals.

The candidate dropped his discussion on the beavers for a few minutes to announce his business. He had just bought Editor Walker's Stanton Pilot, and as that gentleman had said I had made him a handsome offer, and he had come to offer press, material, subscription list and good will at much fairer figures than my offer to Mr. Walker, providing I would assist him in his political aspirations.

"But the beavers," I said.

"Oh, they are all dead now—eleven of them."

"The trappers killed them?"

"Yes, cleaned them all out! What would the fine be according to law?" queried the office seeker with a show of innocent inquisitiveness.

"One hundred dollars each—or eleven hundred dollars in all," I answered, "and I cannot consider your newspaper proposition—for I could not advocate the claims of a boasted law breaker to a public office when I know it, and your statement is sufficient in this case."

It is some satisfaction to the friends of the Hazen beaver colony to know that the instigator of their destruction was so badly "snowed under" at the polls that no party thereafter would burden itself with even the consideration of his name—Dennis.

CHAPTER XII.

BEAVER REFUGEES REAPPEAR AT PAINTED WOODS LAKE—A RETROSPECTIVE TRIP—SWIFT STORM ILLUSTRATIONS AND EXPLANATIONS.—SOME HAPS AND MISHAPS OF THE COLONY.

IN a previous chapter I have made mention of the re-appearance of beavers at Painted Woods Lake, after an absence of many years—fifteen—since “Black” Belmore killed the remnants of the old colonies that had spent such happy days there when the wild Indian held the master hand around and among the painted trees.

Where the small colony had come from that appeared in the lake in the summer of 1901, no one outside of themselves could tell. It was surmised they came from the lower colony on Douglass River, and in what manner of call—telepathic or otherwise that the escaped prisoner Nibs then living in solitude at the lake could have to members of his own family fifty miles away. Perhaps in his solitary brooding, that summer he had floated out from his bachelor quarters on the lake to the muddy Missouri again, and breasting the swift current until he reached his old home on the Douglass, when after the first greeting was over, told the story of his abduction and escape, and of the beautiful clear lake he had taken refuge in. There he found neither



Reaver House on Wind quarter...Painted Woods Lake...Ice Round...From a photo by Dieson 1902.

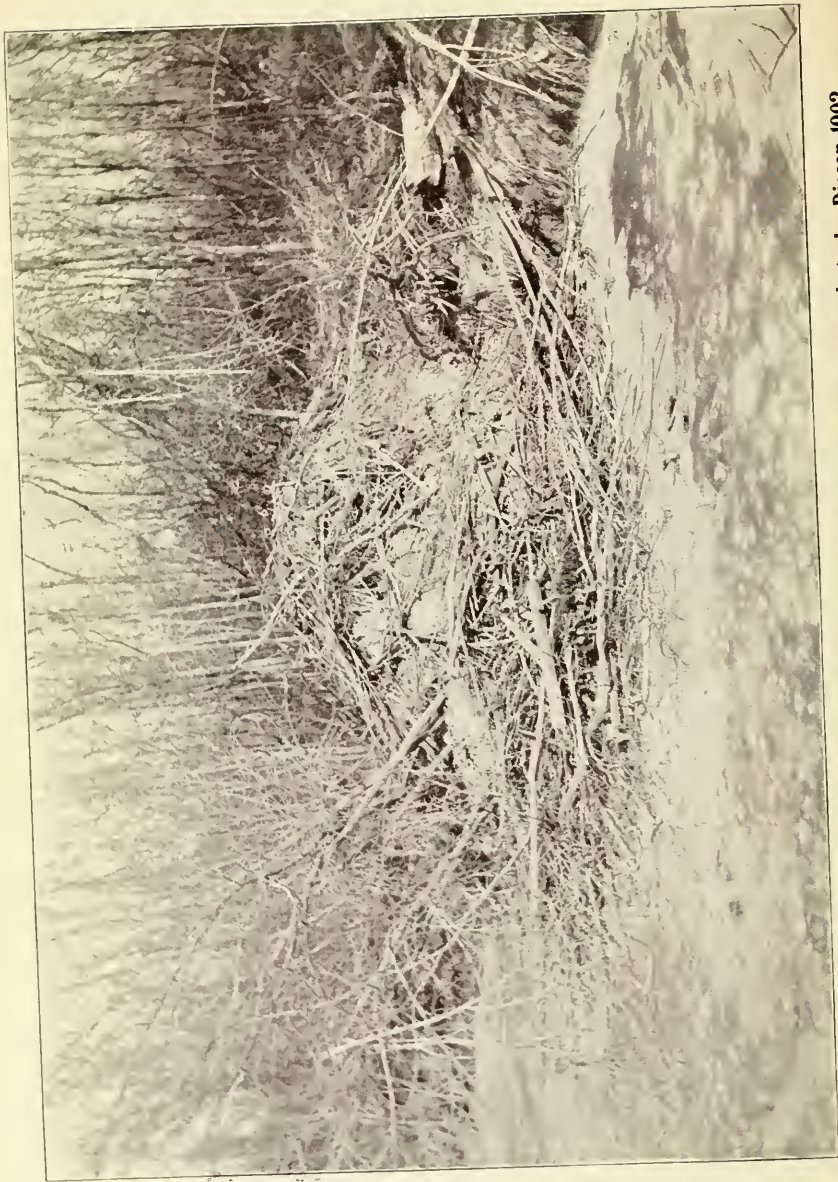
the monster man or his horrible torturing trap, and it was indeed pleasant to float along the shadows of the trees on a moonlit summer evening, and not be terrified by the loud report of a gun from ambush, or in coming or going up his well worn slide to cut off a twig or sapping for his evening meal, the fear of an injudicious step that would bring clasped iron jaws around his ankles, and if not killed, lose a foot and make after life a burden. No dynamite fiend to blow open their houses in midwinter, or ghoul with his spade to expose and murder them in their hiding places as had been their bitter experience in the past on their own beloved Douglass River. It was only a few moons back—that the granddaddy of their colony—old and feeble, who had lived securely as near neighbors to the soldiers through all the days of the military occupation—went out in the moonlight to bring home a young cottonwood for their suppers. But his absence went into days instead of hours—and when he did return it was as a log drifting by the force of the wind. Covetous man had heard him fall a tree and creeping up to where he was cutting up the top, poured into his vitals a load of buck shot ere he could reach water and escape. He had reached the water only to sink in death, but he had baffled his murderer and rendered profitless his crime in so doing. An end to all this would come when they reached the new and beautiful body of clear water that the Marco Polo of the Douglass River beaver colony had discovered. But alas for the too sanguine.

On the morning of the first Sunday in September, 1902, in company with Photographer Diesen and two young misses impatient for an outing on such a perfect

early autumn day, we drove down the trail from McLean's capital until we reached the junction of Turtle and Painted Woods Creeks, that form the northern boundary of the lake in which we had set out to float upon its waters in a Yankee made gondola. To the two misses it would be a visit of first impressions to the variegated groves and serpentine windings of that beautiful body of water—to the photographer it meant his first cruise there when the tree foliage was at its full and consequently an excellent time for good photo work, and to the scribe of these pages it would be a review of scenes and places of earlier days and to try and verify reports concerning a strange colony of beavers that was reported to have taken up their residence there.

With our teams placed in good care, and the party all well seated in the gondola, we glided down to the first beaver house where the photographer had taken his first photo view of the colony, the previous December, and therefore a winter scene. (See illustration facing page 66.) The photographer had taken the picture unconscious of the fact that the upright pole on the left marked the presence of the trap. There was no escape for the poor beavers after all—turn what way they may, and their Marco Polo's enthusiasm was but the emanations of a pleasant dream that was rudely shattered in the awakening. The trapping had been done by a brace of Minnesota outlaws—so we had been informed—who, upon leaving the neighborhood had admitted killing one of the beaver family. However, the house was vacated, and since that time is but a wayside resort for skunks and weasels.

Passing the abandoned house we came now and then



Deer House on Wind quarter---Painted Woods Lake---Ice Bound---From a photo by Diesen 1902.

to fresh cuttings and other beaver sign showing that some of these animals were yet among the living. After rowing about a mile we came in sight of a fine, large and freshly plastered beaver house, (see illustration opposite page 67.) We passed on down the timber lined, canal like waterway, until the expanding lake burst upon us like the sun's rays peering through a rent in the moving clouds. Turning the prow of our boat to the east, we skirted the shore until a slight projection of land or promotory was reached, when the party less the photographer lined the shore. It was the scribe's opportunity for a little reminiscence:

“Right there, 33 years ago,” I said—pointing to a clump of brush and young trees—“a party of three of us made our first permanent camp to trap the wild game out of this lake. The changes I can see since that time by casual glance is the lessening of the timber and disappearance of the wild fowl and the almost entire absence of land and water game sign.”

After the photographer covered the shore party with his camera, all came aboard and the course of the boat retraced to a kind of a bay once familiarly known as Duck Paradise. Here it was we discerned threatening clouds on the western horizon—the approach of a storm—an admonition of which had been given us by our office barometer early in the morning, but cloudless sky then, we had treated its warning with ridicule and must now suffer for want of faith and lack of judgment.

The sight was truly a grand one after the first spurt of wind struck the water, The foremost clouds rolled upward a black mass, while behind these came other clouds in variegated hue. A happy thought prompted

the photographer to raise his camera and take a view from our boat. (For result see illustration opposite page 68.) Another view was had of the narrow but deep outlet already described by its canal-like proportions. Here it was the principal part of the water game centered in the autumn of 1871, and within the radius our most successful trapping was done—especially for beaver and otter—four distinct houses of the former being located within the circle covered by the camera.

As we approached the new beaver house the wind evolved into a tempest. At this point one of the maids became hysterical, and in the confusion resulting therefrom our landing in the beaver cove was effected with much difficulty. However, after a subsidence of the tempest the photographer took an embellished view of the beaver house upon which the fair occupants had clambered to escape the breakers from the beach.

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One November evening, 1902, the principal of the Washburn school called on the writer in his office to announce, "that somebody is getting away with the beavers at Painted Woods Lake," and he would like to know "what was going to be done about it." After explaining to the gentleman, that, while I had some months before resigned the office of deputy game warden, there was a citizen's duty in this case and that I would exercise it. By sun-up a description of the culprits and their theatre of action was given to the sheriff of the county and by sun down they were safely behind the iron bars of the Washburn jail. While by some technicality in the tangled up network of the law, they found a rent large enough for egress from a heavy penalty for its infraction, and upon their release from



custody, they immediately thereafter "skipped the country." The circumstance of the case as presented in justice court while somewhat disappointing in the manner conducted—had its good result in giving peace and security to the beavers for the balance of the winter months.

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To refute or verify the rumors concerning the beavers of Painted Woods Lake, in company with a select party of picnickers, in which our special photographer—as usual on such trips—had a general superintendency of the same, we hied out of the county capital behind some spirited nags on a bright October Sunday, 1903, and within an hour from the time of starting drew up reins in front of the portico of Shulteen's Lakeside homestead, where we alighted as the point of general rendezvous. Accompanying the photographer with his tripod and camera, we passed along the lake shore for a distance of two hundred yards where a new beaver house was sighted. It was rebuilt from the small one used the previous year—the feed bed while much enlarged—occupying the same position. It was to this point the beavers had come after being scared away by would be trappers from the embellished beaver house on the Wing quarter about one mile east of the present site.

At their new quarters preparations were being made for some extreme cold the winter to follow judging by the arrangement of feed bed, and the double coat of mud with which they had replastered their house. The neglect of their feed bed—or rather their tardiness as to the storing of their winter provender, although then entering the last week in October—made it evident to

our minds after inspection that the animals therein had a weather tip and were expecting no severe freezing for some weeks to come. The photographer took two rear views of the house, (See photo view facing page 70) and then retraced to a beaver's wood trail where a view was taken of the animal's work of the previous night, and he had cut a heavy willow that was so tangled up that the chopper evidently had a fall out with it, and left it swinging from the upper branches. Whether the beaver said "by gum" or used cuss words at his failure to haul down his little tree it would be idle for us to speculate but were inclined to think he had taken his disappointment philosophically and lost no time in looking up another piece of timber just as suitable for his purpose and much easier handled. [See illustration from photo facing page 72.]

After our return to the rendezvous the photographer was again called into requisition with his tripod and camera by the fair picnickers who had so thoroughly enjoyed an Indian summer outing even though no "at home" cards were tendered them by their beaver friends of Painted Woods Lake, and who had picqued their guests still more ungraciously by refusing to be seen.

CHAPTER XIII.

DISCOVERING A MYSTERIOUS BEAVER COLONY IN THE LITTLE MISSOURI BAD LANDS.

THE ruthless destruction of the remaining beaver colonies by Canadian half breed trappers and other outlaws along Big Muddy, Milk River, Judith, the Musselshell, and other tributary streams of the Upper Missouri, above the mouth of the Yellowstone River in Montana—notwithstanding its beaver protection laws—caused another exodus of such of these that could escape their persecutors in the summer of 1901, similiar to that of 1898, although not so grand a move as the former owing to its disparity in numbers and that the distance being much shorter, as they commence to selecting new sites after passing White Earth River on their down stream course. As with the hegira of 1898, their presence became manifest through a small colony transplanted here and there in places where beavers had once resided before being destroyed or driven out by trappers.

In making their new homes the beavers endeavored to hide their sign as much as possible and they sometimes lived a year or two in their new quarters before their presence would be discovered by the much dreaded man. In such cases they ignored the building of houses and eked out their existance in holes in the banks. But they had to eat, and the peeled sticks floating along the stream or a bunch of them laying as give-a-ways in

some cove or nook where they had finished their repast in secret. The porcupine is the only other animal that uses bark similiar to the beaver on the Upper Missouri, but the latter only strip branches and cut up twigs, and their work is easily distinguished from that of the beaver by the practiced eye of one at all familiar with wild animals' ways.

One summer day in 1899, John Harold a contract surveyor was running out some sectional lines in the Little Missouri bad lands immediately west of the Killdeer mountains. The place was a particularly dreary and desolate one. He had seen but little of animated life all day—the summer's sun was pouring down its hot rays upon the nearly suffocated surveyor—and the baked sides of the bare and verdureless buttes seemed as an oven to him. His canteen of water had given out and he did not know where to replenish it except to go back to his morning camp which was miles away over a very difficult road of buttes, cut bluffs, alkaline sloughs and hidden fizes. While in this dilemma he wandered down a canyon like opening through serrated walls until he fronted a clear, deep and cool body of fresh water, the thirsty man was soon at the brink and with unbounded joy at his deliverance from distress proceed to quaff the water, after which he filled his canteen and then in the line of his duty looked for a crossing—as the stream was too wide to jump over without an even chance of falling backward—and too deep to wade without an immersion that would cover his head and ears. So he followed toward the source when lo, he heard the rippings of a waterfall, and after rounding a short bend he saw what appeared to him then as a



Tree cut by Beaver at Painted Woods Lake---From a photo by Diesen



wonderful sight—a beaver dam built entirely with coal. Upon inspection the breast was about six feet high and built up as if done with the assistance of a hammer and trowel. They had dug their coal from a nearby bluff but in what manner or method they used instead of blasting to get the coal in chunks that they could handle in their building of the dams, the surveyor could not determine from the situation as presented. He found three or four in succession, and all taking their water from a small volcanic appearing spring. The beavers had made a little oasis in the desert—for about the dams was the only vegetation in sight—and it was a beautiful contrast to the surrounding desolate looking mounds of fantastic shapes and variegated hues. The beavers in their flight from their former home had evidently sought for the most inaccessible place for a safe retreat that could be imagined, but even here man had spied them out. But the man in this case appreciated their kindness for the service they had rendered him, and pity for their helplessness in being forced to seek this out of the way refuge to save their lives from the harm of the wanton.

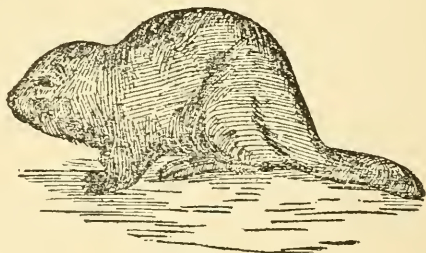
Surveyor Harold afterward wrote some account of this hermit colony to the editor of the Washburn Leader a part of which was published in the autumn of 1899. Shortly after its publication a trapper in Bismarck—a Canadian Frenchman—called on the surveyor for a description of the locality of the beaver. Mr. Harold asked the trapper why his inquisitiveness—as beavers were protected by law—and he was a friend of that law and a friend of the beavers.

“Law—what I care for law” replied the old smear

face, unabashed—"I go find the beaver—I catch him."

"Then I'll get after a rummy rascal and catch you," retorted the surveyor.

As Mr. Harold did not visit that section of the Bad Lands again, and no report of their re-discovery from any source, it is an even chance of the animals yet remaining and enjoying life in peace and quiet in their hidden dell or that some outlaw trapper or trappers has long since destroyed them and with a dim recollection only of a drunken debauch that they had from the proceeds of the poor beavers' hides.



BEAVER.

CHAPTER XIV.

SQUARE BUTTES CREEK AND ITS ENVIRONS—SOME ACCOUNT OF THE GAME THERE IN LEWIS AND CLARK'S TIME—THE BEAVER COLONY AND THEIR PROTECTORS.

FOR many years following the advance of the Northern Pacific Railroad to the west bank of the Missouri River,—Square Buttes Creek—the first tributary north of the west bank at this crossing was almost entirely denuded of its wild game that once abounded there in numerous flocks and herds.

Even in Lewis and Clark's day this stream, called by them Hunting Creek was noted for the great numbers of wild game animals that abounded there. In their journal the following entry was made while in winter quarters at Fort Mandan, which was situated at the extreme lower end of what is now known as Elm Point McLean County. We quote from their daily journal as follows:

“ February 13. The morning was cloudy; the thermometer at 2° below zero; the wind from the southeast.

Captain Clarke returned last evening with all his hunting party. During their excursion they had killed forty deer, three buffaloes and sixteen elk; but most of the game was too lean for use, and the wolves, which regard whatever lies out at night as their own, had appropriated a large part of it. When he left the fort on the 4th instant, he descended on the ice twenty-two miles to New Mandan Island, near some of their old villages,

and encamped forty-four miles from the fort, on a sand-point near the mouth of a creek on the southwest side, which they called Hunting Creek, and during this and the following day hunted through all the adjoining plains with much success, having killed a number of deer and elk. On the 8th, the best of the meat was sent with the horses to the fort; and such parts of the remainder as were fit for use were brought to a point of the river three miles below, and, after the bones were taken out, secured in pens built of logs, so as to keep off the wolves, ravens, and magpies, which are very numerous, and constantly disappoint the hunter of his prey. They then went to the low grounds near the Chisshetaw River* where they encamped, but saw nothing except some wolves on the hills, and a number of buffalo too poor to be worth hunting. The next morning, the 9th, as there was no game, and it would have been inconvenient to send it back sixty miles to the fort, they returned up the river, and for three days hunted along the banks and plains, and reached the fort in the evening of the 12th, much fatigued, having walked thirty miles that day on the ice and through the snow, in many places knee deep, their moccasins, too, being nearly worn out. The only game which they saw, besides what is mentioned, were some grouse on the sand-bars in the river."

The Indians have many stories and legends about the game of Square Buttes Creek and its principal tributary the White Buffalo Butte Creek. The latter was named from the killing of a white buffalo by Mandan hunters on the highest butte in that immediate section. This event took place many long years ago and the success-

*Heart River.

ful hunter was honored and feted to the end of his days. In commercial value a white buffalo robe was worth one hundred ponies in those days and its possessor rated as high in his tribe as a Vanderbilt or Hetty Green does to Yankee land, in these days of fast pace and high pressure way of showing distance from the less fortunate.

The early French traders claimed another wonder near the White Buffalo Butte. This was a petrified buffalo said to be in a quagmire and now invisible but its location was well known to the early traders and trappers who had lived with the Mandan Indians. In the writer's trapping days he frequently visited this creek for its otter but found no sign as to the petrified buff. The principal stream that meandered through the square topped buttes that have been the wonder to the successive peoples who have claimed them as their own. Hereabout, besides the wandering bands of buffalo that formerly found shelter here, it was a congenial home for the elk, antelope and black tail deer. The stream, also, was noted as the playground of a peculiar family of otters with their fur coats interspersed with black and white and known as the "spotted otter."

However, in or about the year 1880 nearly all the wild game had disappeared save a straggling deer now and then coming up from the Missouri bottoms or an occasional grouse that had emigrated from other parts.

The first permanent settlers found that the game had been destroyed but wished it were not so. Measures were taken to discourage the hunter and trapper beginning with the owners of land in warning off the wanton trespasser. Some time during the summer of 1900 an old beaver seer—judging from his sign—came

up the creek on a general tour of inspection. His impression seemed to be favorable for during the next summer two or three small beaver families appeared and took possession of choice sites and builded themselves homes. This was too much for a lunkhead trapper who hearing of the new beaver colonies on Square Buttes Creek sallied out from the town of Mandan with a sorry looking pony attached to a dog cart, followed by the usual give-away as to character—half dozen so-called wolf dogs. He made camp on the creek and and put himself down to business. The settlers had been advised of the man's intention and before he had done much harm he was confronted by the sheriff of Morton County and landed in the Mandan jail.

The vigilance of the citizens of Square Buttes Creek is to be commended for their interference on behalf of the beaver colony there, and also for their promptness in nipping the evil intent of a boasted transgressor of the law. A clean cut contrast to the indifference so often displayed in many other neighborhoods in sustaining just laws from transgression, or even in pronounced sympathy with the acts of the transgressor.

All honor to the leading citizens of Square Buttes Creek in their methods of curbing and suppressing out-lawry in its incipiency and thereby holding the whip hand over the cowardly and heartless braggarts who so continually find some excuse to defy laws made to protect the helpless and within the province of the humane.



UPPER BEAVER DAMS OF DOUGLASS RIVER—From a Photo by C. M. Diesen.

CHAPTER XV.

HABITS OF THE BEAVERS—THEIR SKILL AS ARTIZANS AND ENGINEERS WITH SOME INCIDENTAL ACCOUNT OF THEIR WORK.

IT is a well known fact that among our kind for the most part, the greatest admirers of the beavers are those who know them best. A trapper of these animals who has spent a large part of his life in that uncanny and profitless calling, in nearly every case retires from that manner of life with the greatest admiration for the sagacity and intelligence of these innocent creatures that he had ruthlessly pursued and slain.

With all the writer's experience among beavers and of his active fellowship among the trapper class for many years, he has no instance to record of a single wild beaver that ever attempted to fight or injure his pursuer and murderer although in the unguarded moments of its enemy there were frequent opportunities for doing so. Instead, when the cold, blunt end of hatchet or axe was uplifted by its cruel slayer, the poor animal would only raise its tiny paws to try and ward the descending bludgeon from crashing into its brain. I doubt if anything is more real pathetic than the patient resignation of a beaver to the unmerciful beating and pounding of his head by the inexperienced amateur trapper in his excitement. With one paw fastened in the trap and the other one vainly trying to parry the wicked blows, no sound



would escape the helpless little beast except some long drawn groans after the brain had lapsed into unconsciousness.

As far as the writer could learn from personal observation or from observation of others who have studied their habits, beavers follow close to the line of the ten commandments. They neither kill, steal or covet the property of another. They are generous with the product of their labor and share with all who accept their simple offers of comfort. The wild fowl will always hover around the beaver homes as does the tame fowl about the barn yard of a farmer.

Like the human kind, male beavers will occasionally take a fall out with each other through jealousy over some female or other cause, and cut and slash at each others tails. But there is no record of fatal encounters even between two colonies that are strangers to each other. Male beavers with mutilated tails are common enough as the trapper finds them, showing that their pride and usefulness is largely of the tail. This is certainly true as to manner of locomotion and their distant signaling, and also as to trowling and plastering in the matter of dam and house construction.

Their feats of engineering are many and puzzling to us who do not understand, but the best construction engineers of our own race, when their attention is called to beaver engineering work, say it is simply miraculous in the approved methods of the highest attained art in dam construction, and the best of our engineers can learn the beaver's angle work in its successful resistance to the floods and torrents that frequently bear down on

dams in summer months. While we frequently hear of the giving away or breaking of mill dams by floods, but the breaking away of a live beaver dam is seldom ever known. The writer in his varied experience in the wild west days from New Mexico to the British Possessions, has no recollection of a single instance in which a dam within which beaver were living, ever gave way to the force of flood or torrent, no odds how great the strain, the rush of waters made against the intricate web of sticks, mud, grass and stones that composed these enduring dam breasts.

Ex-Deputy Game Warden Neal, of the Bowers regime of North Dakota game protection, who, in residing in the Douglass River district, noted a curious piece of engineering work executed by the beaver family that made their home on the middle branch of that stream. This was the digging of a canal to divert the water to the edge of a cut bluff from which issued several clear water springs. The ground was thoroughly saturated and boggy from the bluffs to the main stream, a distance of a hundred yards or more. They first rebuilt an old dam and raised the water bank full. They ran a straight line from the upper side of the dam in line to tap the upper spring at the bluffs. The work was never completed, however, and remained in the order of unfinished business with the beaver. Whether they were killed or driven away or had relinquished the job as a poor investment for the labor required, Mr. Neal could not determine. The work in its unfinished state can yet be seen. There was nothing unusual in turning the courses of streams by the beavers, as any one who has opportunity of observing them closely in

their wild state, can testify.

At the Painted Woods Lake there is another case of the beavers reasoning powers and of their skill and forethought. Mention in a former chapter has already been made of the last colony of beavers there and of their status up to the closing days of October, 1903. Before the ice had frozen the lake down in November, another family of beavers had appeared with those on the Shulteen homestead and became very close neighbors of those beavers already located there. Although ice had formed, they built up a house and heavily plastered it with dredgings from the lake. Where this family had come from, no one of the lake dwellers seem to know, and in truth—few cared. Three miles below the Shulteen place the lake narrows to a small creek, the outlet from the lake to the Missouri. Here three small but strong dams were found, that, on observation would raise the entire lake level at least eighteen inches. The work was done late in the season and in so doing prevented their work being undone by the evil disposed. Ice once formed they could defy the evil machinations of the dynamiting dam breaker. They would have by the raise of water thus secured—many unused holes made habitable and fit for refuge in case their winter dwellings were desecrated or destroyed and they had escaped those awful clasps of iron. In these holes in the banks they could remain unnoticed for a long time, though hunger might appall them in their enforced retreat. Nor were the beavers alone benefitted by the damming of the lake's waters. Owners of lands adjoining the lake, whether grass lands or cultivated fields would benefit much from the irrigation works of these

industrious and unselfish animals. The hot sun rays in July and August would be counteracted in its blighting and withering effect upon vegetation within a reasonable radius of the lake by a "bank full" of stored moisture which would insure a crop of hay or grain, other conditions being favorable.



CHAPTER XVI.

MOUND BUILDERS AND THE BEAVERS—TRAPPER AND HIS CONSCIENCE—THE DESCHAMPES FAMILY—LAWS FOR PROTECTION OF BEAVERS—SOME DIVINE PENALTIES FOR TRANSGRESSION.

THE appeal for the protection of the few remaining beavers in the Western States and Territories came none too soon. The lessening in the destruction of these animals from the days of the big fur companies, the voyager and the wild Indian, was only because there were fewer to destroy. The arc of compression of the human leming was complete as far as the beavers were concerned. Nothing in the older States of the middle West or of those to the east of them, was left to tell of their prior existence there save the name of rivulet, creek or river that bore the name by which they were known—beaver. These streams so named had betokened their residence there. In the days of the Mound Builder the beavers must have been taken at their true worth as their mighty mounds in beaver effigy shows. With these people the beavers received respectful worship for their weather-wise forecasts to which the Mound Builders undoubtedly gave heed. For this the sagacious animals remained undisturbed, and went on with their good and unselfish work and the multiplication of its kind.

In these modern days the greatest admirers of the beavers are those who know them best. Until within the last few years this knowledge was confined to the trapper class who had many reasons to admire the bea-

vers' gifts, if he had any powers of observation or that his was not a perverted mind or had a heart contracted within an outward crust of adamantine.

That a trapper could look back in memory on the beaver he had slain and find in no instance that the distressed animal ever attempted to harm him, suffering as they did from the clasps of the steel trap, or the pounding of its head into a jelly mass by the merciless and often awkwardly directed hatchet—with eyes rolling from their sockets—blood and brains matting their fine furs—all this and worse—and not feel a qualm of conscience—then he himself was an animal merely, and of the round head, feline order and with instincts of an insane torturer.

In following the fortunes of a professional beaver hunter or trapper, as with the Upper Missouri wood-yard proprietor or saw mill man—there is—in following that vocation, but little relief from a checkered, haphazard life. The trapper in his profession is nearly always in unconventional garb, has an unkempt appearance and proverbially hard up and scanty with this world's material belongings. If he succeeds in getting a few peltries together and makes a cash sale, like all blood money thus accumulated, it goes him them so easily, the trapper even loses the trail of its disappearing shadow. He is a believer in luck but more prone to expect the bad kind than hope for the good.

The stories of disasters to the beaver trappers are many as told in the records of the old fur companies of half a century ago, or as described by such fluent writers as Washington Irving, or of the many isolated cases that are not generally known. When the writer looks

back at the beaver trappers' record of the stream from whence came his first practical experience as a beaver trapper—Little Sioux River in the State of Iowa—the after fate of many of these trappers would be a wonder to the tracer even though he was searching for the grinning skeletons of human action; murder, insanity, ill fate and the law of transgression as forecasted by divine law that “the way of the transgressor is hard,” or that the “iniquities of the fathers shall be visited unto the children of the third and fourth generation,” is fully verified as time grows apace.

One of the most noted families of beaver trappers on the Upper Missouri were the DesChampes, who were of French-Indian stock and originally from the Selkirk settlement of Red River, but their latter field of operations were about the mouth of Yellowstone River. They made headquarters at old Fort William near which site the military fort of Buford was afterwards constructed. This family consisted of ten persons. They trapped beavers on all tributary streams along the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers within a hundred miles of their fort. White Earth River was one of their favorite resorts and the beavers of the stone dams suffered much and often from their incursions. This whole family was destroyed by enemies their bad conduct had made, in June 1836. The head of the family was killed in the same manner that he had killed his hundreds of beavers, viz, pounded on the head until his brains oozed out through broken pieces of skull until life was extinct. He had also been trapped much the same as he had trapped the beavers. The family all met horrible deaths. The son of Gardepee, slayer of old DesChampes was trapped and slain,

his body thrown in the Round Lake, below Strawberry, by Flopping Bill and party during the summer of 1884.

The first bill for the protection of beavers in the Dakotas was introduced by Representative Green of Mandan during the legislative session setting at Bismarck, in 1886. But little attention was paid to the law at first by the trappers, and fur buyers dealt in the open mart for these pelts the same as in the days before the lawmakers attempted to stretch a hand in succor of the remnant of our wild animals and birds.

In connection with these times I will relate an incident: Among others who came to the Missouri slope country with the boom of '83 was a young man from Red Wing, Minnesota. He was intelligent and a good linguist in German, English, Sioux and other tongues. He made headquarters in the Painted Woods for a number of years and by his diligence accumulated quite a herd of ponies. One of his weak points, however, was his desire for a continuance of a trapper's life and to this end he moved his effects to the upper White Earth River, where he destroyed many beavers and accumulated other furs. In the spring of 1886 he drove down to Bismarck, the State capital to dispose of his peltries. On his way down the trail, the trapper was accosted by the writer, who was an acquaintance of some years.

After salutation and some conversation as to his long absence, and at the same time noting a bundle of beaver pelts among his effects in the open wagon box, I reminded him of the new law as to beaver protection, and cautioned him that on his return to the White Earth River he should cut out beaver trapping from his line of work. His reply was:

“There is beaver on the White Earth yet and I am going back to trap them. I would like to see the color of the man’s hair that will bother me or try to prevent me from getting their hides.”

He returned to the White Earth River in a positive but not penitent mood. Within a year he was sent to the Jamestown, N. D. asylum for the insane and within two years he was dead. This is a sequel to the destruction of the beavers of the stone dams of upper White Earth River, which had commenced with the outlaw DesChampes family already cited.





Beaver house in Painted Woods Lake 1902---From photo by DeGraff.

CHAPTER XVII

APPLE CREEK A NORTH DAKOTA HISTORIC STREAM —SOME ACCOUNT OF THE BEAVER THERE— AN OLD CITIZEN'S STATEMENT— A TRAPPER'S STORY.

APPLE CREEK, although but a small North Dakota stream is a historic one, accepting as we must many of the Indian traditions concerning events whose corroboration we find from statements left by the first traders among the Mandans who claimed the valley as their own for a hundred years or more. It was in the days of the spear, bow, arrow and war club, and with these in their hands a large body of Sioux invaders massacred the Mandan inhabitants of the two villages, the ruins of which are plainly marked on a raise of ground a mile south of the creek and about three miles from the present site of the Bismarck penitentiary. The writer visited the Mandan ruins there in the summer of 1872, for the first and last time, and its location is a matter of memory only. More specimens of Mandan Indian relics such as pottery were found there than at any other of the abandoned Mandan villages on either side of the Missouri. The cause of which is easy to understand after the history of the same is known. In these two ill fated villages all were massacred except a few comely women and some infants. Their conquerors being a nomadic people, did not bother themselves about carting away property they had little use for—hence what was not destroyed at once was abandoned.

Near where the present site of the new military post of Fort Lincoln, near Apple Creek, is located another historical relic, namely—Sibley's breastworks—a reminder of that officer's Indian campaign of 1863.

In first signing up Apple Creek for fur bearers in the autumn of 1871, I had noted that the beavers used buck brush for feed bed purposes, and which was quite plentiful. While their dams were many, they were not large. As my leading fur was otter I did not bother the beavers much. In 1874, "Big" Proctor, a trapper, made a systematic trap of the stream and in three years had the principal fur bearers, which included the beaver, destroyed along Apple Creek. Proctor was afterward killed in Idaho by falling from a precipice.

John Yegan, ex-legislator, and an old and worthy citizen of Bismarck, N. D., being a land owner along Apple Creek Valley and a believer in water storage as a preventive of drouth, said the following a few years ago to a representative of the Bismarck Tribune:

"When I came here twenty-five years ago Apple Creek from source to mouth was one succession of beaver dams. Throughout the country till very late in the season a goodly supply of water lay in the various sloughs and lake beds that are now dry and uncultivable. In the spring of the year and well through the summer season considerable water stood in the bottom lands south of the city. Eventually these beaver dams in the creeks about the country were cut out, the beaver killed and the numerous creeks and lakes drained. It is my firm conviction that if more dams were put in creeks and sloughs and the spring thaws caught and held that the farmer would have less cause to deplore

the lack of rain, as moisture will attract moisture and in a few years the rainfall would increase wonderfully."

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One of Burleigh County's officials—once a trapper—narrated the following incident to the writer a few years ago, concerning the fate of the last of the Apple Creek beavers that had escaped from the traps of "Big" Proctor. During the month of August, 1889, found he himself on the headwaters of Apple Creek, with rifle in hand. He was surprised to find a half finished dam bracing the current which he at first took to be the work of muskrats, that frequently make small dams to give themselves plenty of water in case of a freeze down.

But the practiced eye of the trapper had detected superior work in the angles of the dam and he made a closer inspection, when lo and behold, the imprint of beaver feet were found in the soft mud. The sun was slowly sinking behind the jagged breaks of the Missouri River, and the intervening bluffs were casting their lengthening shadow. A cool breeze raised ripples on the water and the flags, fox tails and wild rice were nodding to the motion of the gentle zephyrs. How beautiful it all appeared to the trapper—but not to him alone.

At the upper end of the dam two small beavers were at work among the willows. They had much to do and had commenced their work early, for times and tide do not wait for man neither do they for beavers. These two kittens had somehow escaped the general slaughter of the spring trapper down the creek and had wandered here where instinct—we may call it—bade them prepare for the coming cold. They had lost fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers by the hands of wicked trappers

but that was months ago and far down the creek where these terrible bipeds were frequently loafing along the creek pursuing young ducks or killing frogs.

The trapper stood upon the dam breast rifle in hand. He saw two objects swimming toward him. "Beaver" he whispered to himself as the objects came fearlessly on. Beavers they proved to be. Each of them had a bunch of willow sticks in its mouth and were silently swimming with an even front. The sticks were for their dam and a fine evening it was to do their work well. How cheerful and happy they seemed—these last of the beaver kind on Apple Creek.

The trapper had rested low. His rifle to shoulder was pointed toward the beavers. One loud report followed by another. A few kicks—some blood colored water—and the beavers had disappeared. Sank to their death like lead. The bunches of sticks now scattered and drifting with the widening ripples found lodgment here and there among the flags. The dam would remain unfinished and the hours of the night would bring no more happiness to playful little beavers about its falling waters.

The man on the bank was satisfied. He had killed something.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SOME FURTHER NOTES ON THE PRESERVATION AND DOMESTICATION OF THE BEAVERS.

IN the face of all discouragements to the friends of the beaver kind, the laws enacted for their protection by the legislature of North Dakota are bearing good results. They are increasing in numbers and their reappearance here no longer creates the wonder that they did a few years ago. During the few months occupied in the preliminary work on the preceding pages, the author received information from various quarters on the west side of the Missouri River of the reappearance of families of beavers or of their noticeable work along the small water courses and ponds. Upper Knife River has a flourishing colony, the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation contains a few families, while some streams west of Strawberry Island shelter a few families. There are also some bank beavers on branches of the Little Missouri River that are protected by resident stockmen.

As has already been noted in a former chapter, the stockmen were the first promoters of the laws for the protection of beavers, and therefore have a kindly interest in its successful working. They had noted how these animals had nourished the streams they were living in, and after their destruction, the stagnant ponds and rivulets of red alkaline that followed the devious bed of what was once a succession of damed up waters clarified by sieves and falls.

From a careful study of the habits of the beavers for almost a lifetime, the writer is thoroughly convinced that these rodents can—in a manner—be domesticated and will breed and multiply as in their wild state, if they are given an inclosure not too cramped and in which there is a stream of running water, or if a lake, some living spring therein. While they seem to adapt themselves to a wide range of feed, there are certain earth ingredients and herbs they must have for medicinal or other purposes, without which they would languish and die.

The beaver's feed varies as to their surroundings but the largest and thriftiest colonies of these animals are found where the cottonwood and common red willow grow luxuriously. Boxelder bark and bud are a favorite feed, while oak, ash and elm are cut and dragged to the feed bed when their choicer provender is scarce or non est. The beavers living in water holes out of the reach of timber are content to live on grass and flag roots in much the same manner as muskrats, but mixing it with buck brush, when found.

There is nothing lazy about the average beaver as they will be found ameliorating or improving their condition wherever placed. Dig and dredge passageways and open up and clear away the debris from spring indications, is the first work of the beavers in selecting sites for new homes. They are contented with a hole in the bank for headquarters until after the dam is finished—if in a stream. In a lake the outlet dam is the only one that needs looking after—it regulating the rise and fall of water as does the creek dams but less perceptible to the ordinary observer.

The author of this work has received many communications from persons residing in divers sections of the country stretching from far east New England to the Pacific coast and also the British Possessions making inquiry as to where live beaver could be obtained, the price, etc., etc. One gentleman, a resident of New York state stated he would be glad to give from \$50 to \$100 for a young and healthy pair—male and female—for breeding purposes. And it is remembered well, that the two pair purchased for Itasca Park by Governor VanSant and Ex-Governor Lind cost these gentlemen about \$500 before they were safely delivered to the Park authorities. It will be seen that for breeding purposes alone, beaver raising is a profitable investment at the present time.

CHAPTER XIX.

BEAVER AS WEATHER PROPHETS—SOME OF THEIR VERIFIED PROGNOSTICATIONS.

IN giving credit to the beaver for their wonderful gift as to future weather conditions within the yearly circle of the earth's journey around the sun, it is proper that a verified statement of the same should be made record of. For this the author quotes from his own writing to the Washburn Leader during his connection with that newspaper which was between the years 1893 1901. While the beavers were not visited every year during this time, yet a record of the observations so made were inserted and published in the Leader upon my return, and I cannot recall a single instance where these animals were mistaken in their prognostications as interpreted. To make these things more clear to the reader I copy the following from the Leader under date of March 13, 1897, concerning the beavers' prophecy as interpreted in the Leader the previous October.

While much of the article is in line with impressions already noted in the preceding pages of this book, to thoroughly understand its purport the entire article, minus its heading is herewith reprinted as it appeared in the Leader:

“If one will take the time and opportunity to study animals and animal life, they will find among certain

species special gifts of merit and of brain endowment in points in which even the human kind are lacking—great in intellectual superiority as we imagine ourselves to be. We speak of animal instinct and drop our inquiry on reaching that line. But this “instinct” in some animals often soar into mysterious space and bring us portents from the zodiacal realm, and thus impart to us in sign by which we shall know the future at least within a given compass of time of the season that is to come.

Animals that live by the storing of provender for their winter feed are often or always guided in their supply limit by expected weather change preparations that show unerring judgment in calculation outcome.

This being verified, and a careful watch placed on these animals, will give answer to the inquirer, what the coming season would bring forth in the way of weather?

By a careful study of their habits in this way the seeker after information will learn weather-wise wisdom cannot be despised.

Early last autumn the writer made a trip to the Douglass river, beyond Fort Stevenson. The object was to secure a pair of live beavers, if such could be found that had run the gauntlet of exterminating hands.

These industrious animals were becoming so scarce that their very presence in that region had drifted our inquiring mind into the conjectural concerning their present existence there at all. However, some beaver signs was found.

Having had, at odd spells, some 30 years experience in noting the habit of the beavers, after finding their sign and marking their work, the writer returned to Washburn with the impressions made, and with the add-

endum of a Pawnee Indian weather prophet made many years ago, printed in a late September number of the Leader the forewarnings for a hard winter. How well it has been verified, we all now know. The Bismarck Tribune at that time made a note of the Leader article, saying that "Editor Taylor of the Washburn Leader with twenty-five years experience in this section, prophesies the coming winter will be a very severe one," or words to that effect. But the credit to Taylor should have been but secondary. Merely a prognostical interpretation of weather-wise beavers' signs, in their extraordinary preparation to meet an impending climax.

On another trip to Douglass river later in the season, we were fortunate enough to secure a large male beaver alive and brought him to Washburn for winter quarters.

His place of confinement has been a cheerless and cold cellar. Though plenty to eat and drink, intense cold has nipped a bit of his trowel tail off. But lately, in unerring line of the strange gift—or instinct we may call it—of his kind, he has given forth another sign that is well to heed. He has commenced to build a platform bed—a sure sign as every old beaver trapper or student of beaver habits know—will mean an unusual raise of flooded waters on streams where beaver were or are living. It makes no difference whether the beaver lives in a cellar or in his house by the frozen stream he has unveiled to us the true beaver sign of preparation for the coming of unusual spring time floods."

While having had considerable snow along the Upper Missouri River that winter, it melted off gradually so that an ice gorge or very high water was not ex-

pected. But it is the unexpected that happens—sometimes—and proved so at that time. The water reached the flood point at the break-up. The ice had broken up and moved down in front of Washburn, April 4, being 22 days after the publication of the article concerning the pet beaver's prophecy of high water and a coming flood. On April 10, six days after, the Leader made the following note from its up-river correspondence concerning the ice break-up at Fort Stevenson and beyond. The Leader item—word for word—is as follows:

“Mail carriers and others from up the river report big gorges at Fort Stevenson and above. The water and ice being fifteen to twenty feet on the low bottoms. Contractor McGinley finds the bridges all out on his route between Snake creek and Fort Berthold.”

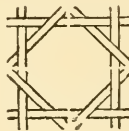
Douglass Creek mouth from where the pet beaver had been taken was the midst of the ice gorge and the house where it was born and where its parents resided, was fully 20 feet under water and ice for several days.

The beaver although a captive from home had prognosticated the flood correctly.

We can study and wonder at the beavers superior gift but that is all. We can neither divine or analyze it.

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TRAPPING IN IOWA 1865-6.

THE beginning of any enterprize or event of moment usually lingers long in after-memory and forms an epoch in the review of one's past life. Thus stands out an array of incidents in the writer's memory in connection with his first attempt at a professional trapper's life on the headwater streams of Little Sioux River in Northwestern Iowa in the autumn of 1865.

In this retrospective review aided by my original notes, I take up the record of initiation to a trapper's calling, making notation of the first trip from our headquarters at Correctionville on the main Sioux to Mill creek, and other headwater streams coming in from the treeless plains west of the valley proper.

Lyman Comstock, formerly a fellow soldier in Col. Sawyer's Border Batallion of an earlier day, was the projector of the expedition, he having many year's experience as a trapper, hunter and wolfer and familiar with the streams in which we were expected to make our fortunes in securing choice raw furs for the New York and London fur houses.

Our camp equipage and team were of the ordinary rigs used in those days by the trappers of Northwestern Iowa. The narrator had just come down the Platte River from the Rocky Mountains, where he had gained some knowledge of antelope, elk and deer hunting, but had to rely wholly on Comstock's experience in setting out a line of traps.

The stream of Mill creek had been selected by Comstock from his knowledge of the numerous beaver dams that backed one upon the other for twenty miles or more affording a tempting lure to the glummy and merciless trappers, who had allowed their better nature to be subverted to such a pursuit that bred only misery and destruction without any redeeming part to justify the continuance of such a life.

After the selection of a camp site and a visit to the beaver dams, filled as they were with animal life, we prepared our traps and marked out the line converging by centre to the camp.

Two or three days later, after assisting to put out a few traps, my partner surprised me by saying that, as the weather was now favorable, and traveling good, he thought it better that he return to Correctionville for more supplies, thinking we might need them. So bright and early the next morning, partner and team were rattling over the prairie divide toward the Little Sioux Valley. He did not return for two months after, and then left behind him the much needed "grub" box.

Nothing was now left for me to do but buckle down to a professional trapper's life. Not knowing what fur was on the lead, I set out a diversified line. But the net result seemed to be a specialty in wild ducks. Almost every morning I found a dozen or more of these fowls, dead in the traps. The beaver dams were literally covered with them, having come in from their nesting places to gather, before commencing their southward flight.

For the first time I realized the lonesomeness of a trapper's life, and in my journey to and fro to the traps, gave free reign to my mind as I viewed my surround-

ings of unpeopled lands, and barring an occasional trip to the settlement, fourteen miles away in which a glimpse of Cherokee and its frowning stockade and half dozen houses, did much to release the mind of the tediousness and sameness in the rounds of the trap line. Such journeys were not of a fagging nature to the lonesome trapper, who frequently unbraided himself for the temptations that had beckoned him on to such a disreputable calling.

After three weeks of solitary life, the monotony was broken one day by the appearance of two horsemen. It was the corporal commanding the fort at Cherokee, and a trapper guide. The brusque young commander soon announced his business. Garrison life was somewhat irksome, and by way of diversion from its onerous duties, and some hope in the profits likely to accrue therefrom, he had concluded to buy furs.

He assured me further, that the latest reports from the London fur sales placed mink in the lead, and with no wish to take advantage of my possible ignorance of the market, as a starter he would give, for good prime skins, ten dollars each for all I had ready, and the latest New York fur quotations on all other prime hides and furs in my possession.

After Comstock's departure, my company consisted of two young fox hounds and the camp pony. A distemper shortly after killed the dogs, leaving me alone with the faithful little nag. I often clambered a neighbouring butte, saying with the redoubtable Robinson Crusoe:—

“I am lord of all I survey
My rights there are none to dispute,
From the center all around to the sea
I am lord of both fowl and the brute—”

During one of the Indian summer days of early November, I made a journey up one of the creek's branches, hunting after some elk. On looking back towards the camp, I saw great, black clouds of smoke encircling the cabin on every side. The prairie was on fire and I hastened back to save my scant possessions. The pony was tied to a picket rope and would be almost helpless. But on arriving there he was missing and without looking further proceeded at once to save the cabin by extinguishing the flames on the inside circle. After this was done, I took up my gun, ammunition and a lunch of corn cake and venison and started to hunt up the pony.

I soon came on a fresh wagon trail and concluded to follow it. Noting that the hoofs of a led pony looked familiar, and guessing that the occupants were the starters of the fire, I redoubled my exertions to come within reach of them.

A full moon shed its silver light along the trail which enabled me to follow it for a distance of twenty miles or more when the settlement at Peterson was reached. Here I learned that the parties I was hunting had passed on through that settlement without stopping and were heading for Buena Vista some twenty miles further on. The village was reached about sunrise, it being a distance of something over forty miles from the place of starting. At this place I found that my game was a minister of the gospel and his two sons. They had been out elk hunting and had thought the pony Indian property, and therefore legitimate spoil. An apology was all the recompense offered by the minister or his sons.

That particular pony had a past—I was told. First

captured from the Cheyennes by the Pawnees; then given in a dance to the Omahas, after which its new owner, a good trapper of the Omaha tribe, was shot from its back by two disreputable white trappers from ambush. This gruesome and uncalled for deed was committed near the Lone Tree on Floyd River, sometime in April 1865. This record, added to the expense of the trip compelled the writer to part with the animal and mine host Phipps of Cherokee's public stopping place became its purchaser.

Late in December, Comstock returned and a regular winter blizzard set in, and we concluded to pull up the traps and reach the Little Sioux Valley in time to save our stock from perishing in the storm.

In crossing an eight mile divide for this purpose, we had to face a bitter north wind; and when within a few hundred yards of the valley where the traps were strung I succumbed and fell, as if in a blissful sleep, on the snow covered ground.

Comstock, meantime, marking my absence, retraced his steps, discovering me prostrate, gave me such an unmerciful thumping that I awoke maddened and followed him toward a bunch of dry grass which he immediately ignited, and coming to my senses, all went well. That experience convinced me, that death by freezing after a certain period of uncomfortable cold is passed, is absolutely painless.

Again Comstock and myself formed a trapping partnership and again we headed for Mill Creek; and, he after shivering around the camp fire for a few days blessing the March winds,—as before—deserted his companion.

He had gone but a few days when Hawthorne and Jackson, two trappers, appeared and asked for mutual camp and a division of the grounds. The proposition I cheerfully acceded to, though by trapper's rules priority gave me fur rights to the territory covered by my traps, providing a charge of dog-in-the-manger style of holding could not be sustained.

Trapper Hawthorn was at that time reckoned one of the most successful beaver trappers in northwestern Iowa. He usually sought places that had been—to use a trapper's phrase—trapped out. But he managed as a rule, to take about as much fur from the place, as the “skimmers” or first trappers. He was originally a Marylander, married young, brought his wife west, and were among the first settlers in Little Sioux Valley; in fact one of the earliest of the Smithlanders, but one who had refused to be a party to the disarming of Inkpaduta's hunting camp, characterizing it as an unjustifiable proceeding, lacking cause.

Had Hawthorn's counsel been heeded, the massacre of Spirit Lake would not now be a matter of record.

We made permanent camp at the Three Forks, and the following two months I became a diligent pupil in learning the noted trapper's method of catching beaver by the scented bait.

One March morning when the snow was falling fast, I started up the creek for an elk hunt, knowing that the storm would bring them in the braeks of the creek for shelter. I had not traveled far before I espied a band of about twenty, but having scented me were trotting out to the high prairies. I followed on the trail until drifting snow obliterated their tracks so that I lost the big game.

The air had become filled with drifting snow and I

became bewildered and lost. I had no compass and was drifting out to the treeless and shelterless basin of the upper Floyd River. In the direction I was going, I could not hope to strike timber short of sixty miles, and as the snow was from one to three feet deep I must become exhausted and perish in a few hours.

In this dilemma, while trying to take observations from a raise of ground, I saw on my back trail what appeared, though a slight lull in the still flying particles of snow, a grove of timber. I immediately retraced my steps, but on arriving where the supposed timber was, found nothing but elk tracks. These I followed at a venture, and after two more hours of snow wading was joyfully surprised to find myself within a mile of our trapping camp.

Towards night it turned blustering and bitterly cold, and the camp fire sent up a cheerful glare that hid the death phantom that had followed the wake of my outward trail.

About the middle of May, Hawthorne and his partner broke camp and started homeward, while I remained a few days longer to trap the beaver dam runaways. In so doing I met with the same trouble of the previous autumn, namely, from the immense number of wild ducks. They were there in every variety of plumage—the green headed mallard, the red headed fish duck from the Arctic and the white plumes from the Hudson Bay country.

As the May days lengthened and the prairies became fresh and green the morning walk to the trap line became periods of unrest. From the topmost buttes I gazed wistfully across the mazy and quivering sea of atmosphere that lay between the brakes of Mill Creek and the long winding ridges of the Little Sioux Valley and the West Fork its tributary stream. I would stand

upon a butte for hours, peering through the blue trying to locate the familiar hills within whose encompassed vale lived and breathed one dearer than all else to the lonely and discouraged trapper as he now began to think of the time wasted and the meagre return the outlay had brought him. Relief came once again with Crusoe and his philosophy expressed:—

“Oh solitude where are charms
That sages have seen in thy face?
Better dwell in the midst of alarms
Than reign in this horrible place.”—

and suiting action to the word, I raised my belongings in a bundle and was soon heading for Cherokee stage station and thence by coach down the Little Sioux Valley to the broad bottom lands of the Missouri.



MUSKRAT TRAPPER DISPOSING OF HIS PELTRIES.

TRAPPING IN NEBRASKA 1866-7.

AUGUST 20th, 1866, found an Omaha hardware dealer busy fitting out three enthusiastic young men for an autumn hunt and trap along the headwaters of the famous Elkhorn River. Ballard rifles, pistols, plenty of ammunition, and a large kit of traps were purchased with a reckless disregard for the wealth in hand. Game was reported plenty and prices in raw furs good, so that no uncomfortable visions distressed the minds of the trio.

The new formed hunting and trapping firm consisted of "Buffalo Ned," otherwise Mr. E. Minick, from the Peori bottoms of the Sucker State; Mr Jennings, or "The Gopher" hailing from the State that bore his non de plume and the chronicler, who had reached a round in his professional ladder, was dubbed the "Trapper." These names had been applied as frontier custom, by the jovial lumbermen that made the welkin ring around the forests of breezy Rockport.

A contract with a teamster making his obligation to deliver our luggage at some point on the North Fork of the Elkhorn River, was duly observed, and after an uneventful trip, following the course of Logan Creek, thence along the main river until the North Fork was reached, when after following along the stream for a number of miles, some beaver sign was observed and we concluded to go into camp and try our luck with the traps in that vicinity.

After pitching our tent and making some sort of order for the camp, the bright new traps were brought from the boxes and three enthusiastic fur catchers started out to sign up and put out a line for beaver.

The early season made sign hunting difficult. But little work was being done on the dams, the beaver wisely waiting for the passing of the summer freshets. But sufficient sign was found to set out a three mile line.

The traps were mostly set on the regular runways leading over the breasts of the dams, or where the slide of the wood workers led out to recently cut trees.

At dawn next morning Buffalo and the Gopher started out to attend the traps, while I remained in camp. In a few hours they returned in bad humor. They had a muskrat or two and said somebody had stolen half of the traps and "monkeyed" with the balance.

After breakfast was over I returned with my partners on a visit to the trap line. After a little observation I was soon convinced where the trouble lay. It was simply a case of beaver "up to trap." We were now located on the trapping grounds of the Omaha Indians, who were rated experts in that art.

The few beaver that had survived through this constant waylaying, came out often with the loss of one or both forefeet, and a full knowledge of what a steel trap was, and became wary and suspicious in their evening peregrinations.

In this instance Castor Fiber had made a demoralized looking trap line. The new traps shining like silver through the water, so that even the dull eyed beaver could discern them without much effort. Some of the traps were found sprung, with pealed sticks in the their jaws. Some were found bottom side up but unsprung while

the "stolen" ones were found nicely plastered against the breasts of the dams to do duty as material in making needed repairs.

These observations led us to take up the line and bring our traps to camp as it was useless to contend against old beaver with bright traps, and an exposure to the air and a rust varnish became necessary.

In the meantime while rambling around, we discovered a temporary balm from disappointment at the shrewdness of Castor Fiber. It was the finding of an immense orchard of the wild plum. The fruit was ripe, and the trees thickly interspersed, with red and green,—the red fruit and green leaves, and some were of the yellow color.

These wild plum groves are found along every considerable stream in the country of the Great Plains, and the fruit is highly prized by the housewives of the border, for jelly and preserves. The plums are of many excellent flavors, and range from the hickory nut to the walnut in size.

To eat plums and more thoroughly enjoy the prospect, we moved our camp to the grove. In this move we disturbed several wolves and coyotes, who had themselves been camping around and eating the ripe fruit as a needed change from almost constant meat diet. They would sit around in the daytime on distant hills in silent watching, but when night came manifested their displeasure at our presence by mournful howling.

After spending about a week in the plum camp; we were surprised one morning by a new set of visitors—a band of elk. They were nine in number, and taking their time feeding leisurely along the creek.

The band had passed camp unnoticed, but as soon as

we discovered them, Buffalo and I armed ourselves and gave chase. The elk walked faster as they passed out on the open prairie, and it became difficult to come up to them. The trail led south of the forks of the main river, where their speed was still further accelerated by the sound of axes among the timber. It was from a party of Illinoisans—founders of the after flourishing town of Norfolk.

As the elk were snuffing the wind it was not difficult in keeping a little behind them unobserved. About sundown we watched them pass down on the bottoms of a little stream, now called Union Creek. They then fed leisurely toward the water giving us time to reach within shooting distance just as they were passing down to the creek bed for a drink.

A magnificent buck, larger than any of the rest, remained standing upon the bank, with head erect, and his huge antlered crown catching the crimson rays of the fast sinking sun. He stood, indeed, a monarch of the woods, and with a haughty gallantry born of his kind, he measured with his eye the surrounding landscape with suspicious unrest. Did his sense of smell detect the presence of his unsated enemies, as they lay crouching in the grass an hundred yards away? We were divining his mind in about this way, when at a whispered signal we fired our unerring rifles at his breast. His disappearance was as sudden and complete as the transit of a ghost.

We arose with baffled expressions on our countenances and started, forward plainly hearing the departing animals crushing through the heavy underbrush across the stream. When we reached where the big elk had stood, crimson blood clots were found spurted on the green grass. The trail of blood led across the stream where it

mingled among other tracks. Up over the bank we followed, when on a little island, shaded by a few big trees the proud beast was found stilled in death.

As dark was creeping upon us, we concluded to build a fire and spend the night in carving up our game. The smell of blood again brought out the unmusical wolves, who whiled the tedious night hours away in a bedlam of discordant noises from the bluffs.

A little Indian dog came timidly into our camp at midnight. The wee stray was evidently now a consort of the coyotes, but being less timid or more hungry had ventured in on the chances of our pity and help or our inclination to destroy. He wagged his tail in glee, at our soft words accompanied by a chunk of meat, though the first streaks of light in the eastern sky found him trotting out with a full belly to join his less fortunate but noisier companions.

As it was easier, under the circumstances, to move our camp to the elk, than the meat to the camp, we soon brought down our effects and made permanent camp near the junction of the creek with the Elkhorn. Here on a grassy raise of ground near a grove of willow, a comfortable cabin was erected, for fall, and mayhap winter quarters.

When everything was completed and the united voice said "well done," we stored our wealth within the cabin and felt a concious security as the result of our work; but, alas!

The chilly nights of October were upon us. The surrounding prairies were fast putting on their yellow coat, while trees were losing their leaves. Our trap line only brought in a moderate revenue. for here as at the plum



patch camp, Castor Fiber understood how to circumvent the trapper's arts. Now and then a kitten, or a two year old, lose their caution and their hide but a big skin stretched on a grape vine, was a rarity about the camp.

One windy morning, we each started out to attend separate lines. About eleven o'clock as I reached my line's end and was returning toward camp, a great cloud of black smoke rose up suddenly in the direction Buffalo had taken. When first noticed it was many miles away but the wind then blowing at a velocity of about forty miles an hour, soon brought it sweeping down among the high and dry grass along the bottom lands. The rank underbrush then caught fire, and extending to the large whitened cottonwoods, that had been deadened by previous fires, they were quickly licked up by the hot flames. The air became stifling and filled with black, falling ashes and burnt particles.

I had neglected to provide a necessary precaution in such an emergency, namely, a few matches to protect oneself by backfiring; so but one alternative was left—as the appalling mass came veering toward me—and that was to make speed for the river and stand a partial immersion until the danger was over.

After the main sweep of fire had passed, I started for our cabin, and arrived at the place to find that the domicile had disappeared and a few charred logs were smouldering on its site. Everything was destroyed. The steel springs of the traps were overheated and ruined. The furs were all destroyed, even those that were drying in hoops, and hanging high up in limbs of trees. In truth our company possessions were now limited to the few traps fortunately setting out along the water line.

TRAPPING IN NEBRASKA 1866-7.

A consultation was held by the disheartened members of the firm. Buffalo announced his acceptance of the situation as presented, and speaking for himself, thought he had had sufficient amusement in trapping off his summer's wages, and now would look up some other occupation.

Our remaining traps were gathered together and deposited in cache on a point of bench land where they still remain—for all the writer knows.

During the month of December 1866, the writer found himself with a contract on his hands in clearing up the wood and brush from a small island near the mouth of the Loup Fork of Platte River, in which my help mainly consisted of about one dozen robust Pawnee women. After a successful finish, in company with a young Irishman named Scully we jointly proposed a midwinter trip to the headwaters of Shell Creek, or Tes-car-pedus-keets as the Pawnees called this little stream.

On the day of our proposed departure however, an only child of the brother of my partner sickened and died and had therefore the alternative left me to go alone, or remain in waiting for some weeks. I choose the former proposition and prepared to move. For this I hired my donnage and traps carted to the outward settlement about 13 miles from the Creek's mouth and from thence loading up with as much of the articles as I could carry pushed forward up along the frozen stream in the hope of reaching a place known to the Pawnees as the Never Freezing Springs in which they had averred was teeming with otter and mink. After an all day walk and just as a violent blizzard was succeeding a fall of snow I espied a bunch of trees, in which a few dry boughs were hastily gathered to start a fire while able to do so. In following the bottom of the creek I espied a

hole in the bank near the water's edge and to my great delight found an old dug-out that must have been used by trappers or elk hunters. The abandoned den did not look as if it had been occupied for three or four years but the old adage,—“any port in a storm”—was a truism in this case as the blizzard proved to be a violent and long continued one. I made a comfortable fire and after a supper of pan cakes and pork, lay down for a nap before a cheerful fire, although a veritable smoke house, as there was no chimney place in sight, and the smoke must pass out the doorway. It was at this juncture that a dream of timely warning came. In my sleep I had dreamed of being crushed by falling walls, and was awakened in affright. I glanced wildly about when sure enough the whole side next the door was falling in, and with a dash for a prop was enabled to stay the impending crash caused by the fire thawing out the frozen earth that supported the roof and front above the doorway. There would have been no possible hope of escape had I not been aroused at that critical moment and it would have been a clear case of a trapper trapped.

About two weeks after this event—Scully and an old trapper named St Clair appeared at my camp and received a good welcome, as the place was a lonesome one notwithstanding I was kept very busy with my traps. Mink, otter, foxes, and coyotes were very plentiful as the Indians had represented, and two or three houses of beaver were also found one of them being a family of black ones as my catch testified. The trappers had come out more from curiosity than for business, but went out with me early the next morning after their arrival to view the trap line, and see the catch. The morning

was foggy and when opposite the black beaver house, we were startled by Indian yells, or rather calls, and made hasty preparations for a combat but no enemy could be seen as the fog was dense. After scanning our surroundings and deeming the Indians' move that of hostility, we held a quiet consultation, and concluded it would be advisable to take up the traps and return to the settlement as the fur bearers were mostly destroyed within the few miles radius to the camp, and now that the Indians had discovered our whereabouts, a second visit might be expected from them at any time. St. Clair was a veteran trapper of the Rocky Mountain region and had considerable experience with hostile Indians, and advised to "pull camp" as the catch had been a clean-up.

Some months after our return to the Loup Fork headquarters, Bill Gibson, a Pawnee linguist and well posted in the ways of that tribe, made a statement from inquiry gained through the tribe that this party were of the Kitkah-haw band, and were led by Rodgers an educated but bad Indian who had intended to surprise the trapper in his morning call on the trap line, but were themselves surprised at seeing two companions with him—when they had expected to find him alone. Four trappers were robbed and killed on the Republican River, 150 miles to the westward of Shell Creek, some weeks previous to the escapade above mentioned, and Rodgers and his party stood accused of the same.

TRAPPING IN NORTH DAKOTA 1871.

AFTER a varied experience of the two previous years along the Upper Missouri as guard, wood hawk, hunter, trapper and wolfer, the writer ventured once more into a co-partnership with the purpose of a more systematic method in following a trapper's pursuit than in his previous efforts in Iowa and Nebraska.

For this purpose he associated himself with W. H.H. Mercer and Dan Williams, who had looked the ground over and concluded there was an even chance for a successful venture, and prepared to make the most of it by careful preparation and a good outlay for the necessities of a complete hunting and trapping outfit.

The autumn of 1871 was the time agreed upon and the Lake of the Painted Woods near midway between Fort Rice and Fort Stevenson was the point selected to renew life on the trap line, and with this object in view. our party boarded the steamer Peninah at the Yankton landing, and with a year's supplies carefully stowed on the lower deck, we embarked for a six hundred and fifty mile ride to the Painted Woods region.

Captain McGary was in charge of the steamer and a company of soldiers under command of Captain Logan formed a part of the passenger list. This officer was afterwards slain by Chief Joseph's command as well as several of his soldiers. McGary, the steamer's captain fell victim to mountain fever a few years later.

Without special event other than the tediousness of the voyage incident to shallow water and sandbars, the steamer reached Point Preparation, in the Painted Woods region, and discharged its cargo of trappers, traps and supplies upon the bar, facing the ruins of the stockade that had been burned by an incendiary fire during our several months absence.

About sundown on September 16, we reached the prairie shore of Painted Woods Lake and made ready to camp. The site was in a bunch of bushes facing the water which was a good view of the greater part of it. With the going down of the sun on that autumn day we looked around upon scenes that fortune favored us but the once to see—a perfect earthly paradise for wild animals and birds.

The slanting rays of the setting sun shone full upon the numerous, freshly plastered houses of the industrious the thrifty beaver, whose showy and glistening structures stood out like the famed castles of watery Venice in the past days of its commercial glory.

Otter were swimming in plain sight, and without fear. Wild geese, brants, ducks and mud hens were proudly cresting the diminutive waves, fanned up by an evening breeze. Our presence were unnoted or gave them no concern. Even the antelope lost their timidity and faced us in a soldierly line, on the bluffs near by, and watched in curious wonderment our movements about fire and smoke.

In fact, generations of animals and fowls had been born and reared here, since the last trapper, white or red, had put out trap and toggle around this lake's shore. Peter Buchaump, old and descriptit,—like Cooper's hero in his Prairie story, closing out his remaining days in the

hospitable lodge of his Indian friends. Old Jeff Smith now hopelessly blind and poor, lay withering away in the camp of the Gros Ventres, receiving to the last with fortitude though a broken pride, the shafts, of enmity, ingratitude and baseness, hurled from covert and rampart by his vindictive rivals of the other trading houses. Then poor old LaFrance, the year previous at the Little Missouri's mouth, had fell dead across a trap he was setting from a pistol shot supposed to have been the vengeful work of the Aricaree, Bloody Knife.

These were the last of the old free trappers in that section of country, and many long years had now passed since the sign of their calling had left its imprints on the soggy shore of this Lake of the Painted Woods.

The night followed with a moon clear faced and full, and threw its silvery beams upon us as we lay in the open air on our beds of brush and blankets. The breezes of the day lowering with the setting sun, and the still night air was crisp and frost-laden. Our camp fire cracked and blazed high in the air and seemed a danger signal for all the wild beasts within sight of its glare.

Elk whistled and deer snorted continuously from the dense jungle between the lake and the Missouri. Every living thing about us seemed as sleepless as ourselves. The wakeful coyote with its sharp bark and the wolf with the art of a voice throwing ventriloquist help swell the din and confusion of sounds.

Amidst all this vocal uproar, a strange and distinct sound now strain on our waking ears. It had the familiar sound of the thumping of a passing steamer. It seemed at first a good mile away but drew nearer and more distinct. The sounds multiply, and the lake appeared to have become possessed by un-seen demons lashing the

water with great flat boards. The animals and fowls screech and yell with added vigor. It is the beaver sounding an alarm; a long roll—where each and all of them beat an answering drum.

When the beaver commenced alarming each other, I felt no elation. No buoyancy of spirits at the good trapping prospects before us. Rather a feeling of regret at this self assigned work. I would gladly have left this paradise of the wild animals undisturbed,—could I know that it remain so. But we three trappers rested here as the advance pickets of a mighty invading host—a blending or reunion of the Aryan race upon these cheerless plains of western America. We were within the intended dominion of the great railway that was casting its shadow from the pine forests westward of Lake Superior. With the coming of this railroad and the human inundation that would follow, the beaver, buffalo and other wild animals must disappear. If the beaver and otter were to be doomed we would make the first strike. If we could not save we would destroy.

At the break of day next morning Williams and myself with the traps and guns took our boat and paddled up the lake among the various flocks of wild fowl, whom, on our approach, moved leisurely out of the way. Five sleek looking otter followed in our rear puffing, snorting and diving.

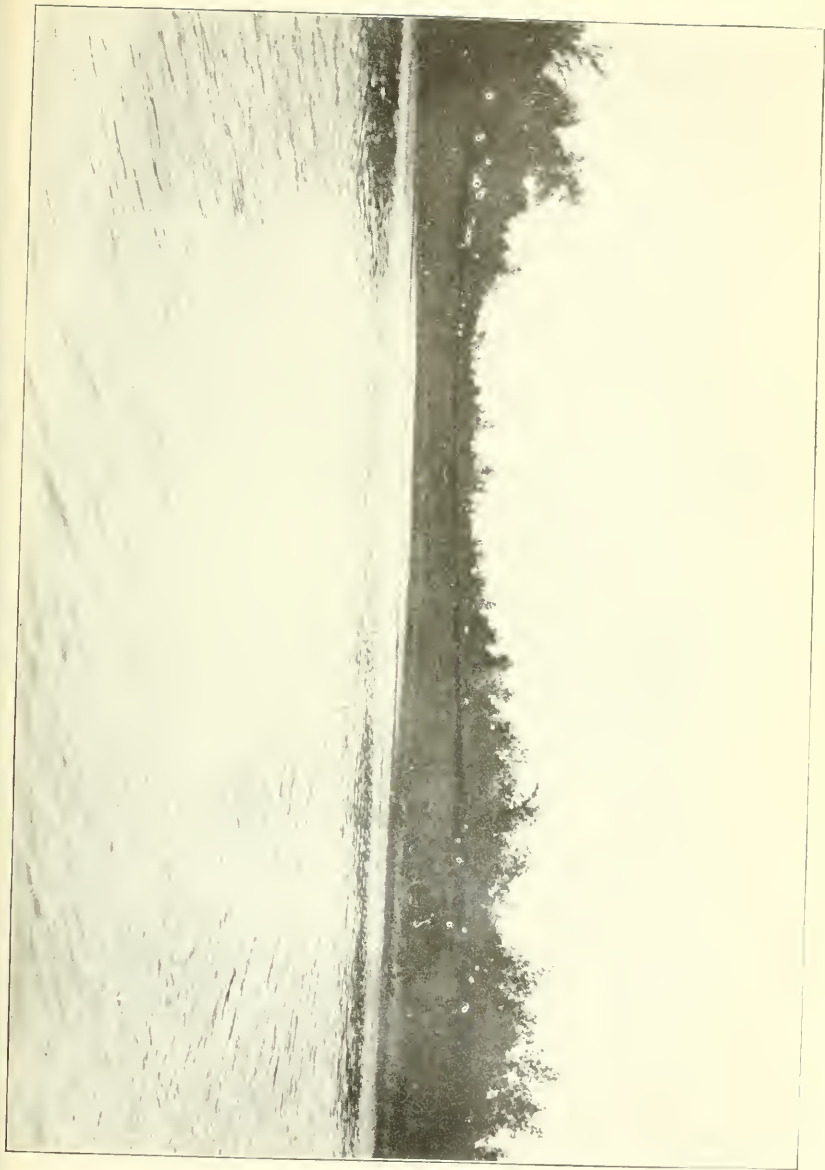
A heavy fog hung low over the water, and this together with our silent paddling enabled us to approach and take by surprise, three elks bathing in a bayou. Williams steadied the boat, while I reached for my needle gun and shot a long pronged buck dead. The other two being cows were permitted to escape.

On our return from signing up and setting out the traps, we boated the slaughtered elk to the camp and proceeded to cut up and jerk or sun dry the meat. While all three were thus busily engaged, we were startled by rapid shots and loud yells. We looked in the direction of our lone pony and saw that he was surrounded by about twenty Indians yelling with a loud uproar. On discovering us they spread out like a fan, heading for our camp. At this move we jumped for our guns and plunked ourselves on the grass. Some of the Indians then commenced to yell in repetition, "Pah-don-ee! Pah-don-ee!" (Sioux name for the Aricarees,)—and they all halted but one. He advanced slowly bearing aloft a white flag. They were a war party of Gros Ventres and Mandans, looking around for Sioux stragglers.

On recognizing them as friendly, we gave the sign to advance when they all rode up in flaunting style and dismounted. We then presented them with a big half of the elk, which they immediately carved up and divided, each one making a brush sprint and cooking his portion around our camp fire. After the lunch they squatted in a circle for their accustomed smoke, after which they all remounted and rode away.

After having spent about one week with our trap line well attended, we counted our pelts and found we had about thirty beaver, one dozen otter, some thirty-five wolves and foxes, and a number of mink, badgers, coon bob cats and other miscellaneous furs. Among the wolves was a black buffalo wolf, a very rare animal in that section of the country.

The week following was occupied by Williams and myself in sight-seeing at the Indian Agency at Ft. Ber-



PAINTED WOODS LAKE

thold, the return trip being previously described in *Frontier and Indian Life* under the caption, "With a Gros Ventre War Party."

About the beginning of October, we reset the traps at the lake with profitable results; after which we packed our pony and loaded our bull boat, to make a journey by land and water to the mouth of Heart River, a noted wild game stream, putting into the Missouri from the west side about twenty-five miles below our place of launching.

On the morning of our departure, the atmospheric elements nestled down to a dead calm, and a misty fog hung over the river Missouri, like a veil. The swirling current of the channel emitted roaring sounds that deafened us to all else as we drifted slowly along.

At a little cottonwood point in the narrows below the Burnt Woods,—about one mile from our point of starting—we got sight of an object and heard humanlike sounds, apparently, coming from it. As we neared the place the mist arose sufficiently to see that we were rapidly drifting on a huge sawyer that was bedded between two cross currents, and seemed to have a man clinging to it. But all disappeared as we passed rapidly by, save the ponderous snag whipping the water with unceasing pressure of the turbulent current. We concluded that the apparition was some unlucky boatman, who being asleep was dashed against the snag and drowned at that time, or was a phantom of some past accident. The Indians bore us out in this latter theory, they believing this neighborhood subject to visitation of ghosts, or, as they sometimes term it,—“where people have medicine put over their eyes.”

We reached the mouth of Heart River at sundown of the same day. After landing I started out rifle in hand for a short reconnoissance. At the edge of the willows I espied a band of elks and shot down two of the largest of the bucks. On returning to the boat I found the Trapper moralizing over the "fretful porcupine" he having encountered a bevy of them near by. Meantime Hunter Mercer could be seen on the opposite side of the Missouri riding down after a band of fleet footed antelope. On the same ground North Dakota's capital now stands.

We used considerable caution in trapping Heart River. General Whistler's military expedition to the Yellowstone River had just returned down the Heart closely followed by that redoubtable and crafty Sioux warrior, Chief Gall and his band of Uncapapas. They had shot one officer and lassoed another to death. A colored cook was also caught and put to the torture. All this took place on this stream, the black man's take off, happening but a short distance above our trap line.

To enable us to trap on both sides of the Missouri at the same time, we made general camp on the east bank. Our site was at the Otter Tail crossing. Here in July 1863, the remnants of the Minnesota Santees, fled across the river to escape destruction from Sibley's army. Their wagons, carts and other property were abandoned on the east bank in a grove of cottonwood, where they were found and cut to pieces by Sibley's soldiers. We found these cart remnants in a good state of preservation and utilized them in the economy of our camp arrangements.

While my partners used the bull boat to cross over and attend the line of beaver traps on Heart River, I took charge of the company pony and run out a line of

otter traps along Apple Creek. My line reached several miles beyond the old military crossing, with an every morning ride of twenty miles or more.

About the 20th of October, we pulled in both lines, Mr. Mercer going to the rendezvous at Painted Woods while Mr. Williams and I again launched our rickety craft and floated down a few miles and landed at Sibley Island.

Here we found Messrs. Suttles and Miller, two enterprising young Canadians running a successful woodyard for the accommodation of passing steamboats. They had a strong stockaded dwelling house for defense against Indian war parties; good stables; plenty of provisions of all kinds; and a cellar full of wine made from the native grape,—of which the Island abounded—and with no neighbors within twenty-five miles of them to share their good cheer.

After enjoying the hospitalities of these primitive wilderness nabobs for an evening, we continued trapping along the river to within a few miles of Fort Rice, when our absent partner came to us with a newly purchased team, so closing up a successful autumn trap, we all returned to the Painted Woods for winter quarters.

LAKE MANDAN.

LAKE Mandan once a part of the bed of the swift flowing Missouri—now but an unused bend of that mighty stream, lies northwest of the Painted Woods about twelve miles; being intermediate between that point and Lower or Big Knife River. It is a place of historic interest being the vicinity of old camping grounds of confederate Indian tribes. It was near this point the explorers, Lewis and Clark, found and had their first-formal reception with the lower village of the Mandans, the latter part of October 1804.

The shores around the lake and neighboring plain is still well marked by raised circles of earth where wild Indian life had its time of joys and sorrows—where the soft voiced maidens danced and sang their love lullabies in fantastic groups, in the, shadowy twilight of long summer days. Where the ambitious warrior returned from gory combat to show his spoil and vaunt his deeds; or some broken hearted wife or mother, wailing mournfully from a high bluff's pinnacle for the memory of he who went forth proudly to do battle, but never returned more.

After the remnants of the Mandans and Aricarees moved to the vicinity of Fort Berthold in 1856 the large brush bottoms south of Lake Mandan became a restort for numerous herds of elk and deer. While the rough and hilly country west of the lake were favorite haunts of black tailed deer and antelope.



MANDAN LAKE---From photo by Umpleby in 1902.

Otter, too—next the eagle, an Indian's greatest prize—clung tenaciously to the lake and the small feeding streams around and about it.

Here, also, in hiding like the deer he hunted, passing his last days in the quiet of a hermit life—scowling and soured—was Partisan, the last hereditary chief of the Wanderers, a defunct band of the once numerous Aricarees. Sometimes alone or with a faithful wife, other times with a companion or two—faithful adherents of a cause that was—this red man of brooding and solitary ways, often appeared as the uninvited guest to the banquet of some wandering trapper's camp or at the tie-up of the descending miners or voyagers on their way down the Missouri.

The following was one among the many laconic interviews that took place between the Partizan and the writer at Lake Mandan:

On one of the last days of October, 1874, in company with a young man named "Buck" Raney, the writer started out on a pack pony trapping trip to the lower Knife River from the Painted Woods, going up on the west side by way of Pretty Point and Lake Mandan. We reached the lake about sundown and went into camp on the south side under some large elm trees. After unpacking our loads and picketing out our ponies we went on separate ways to try and get a deer for supper. In this we were not successful and returned to camp only to find that the picket pins were pulled and our stock gone. It was then about dark and to attempt to take up the trail of the ponies until daylight would be out of the question, so we returned to the camp and consoled ourselves by building a large fire under one of

the trees and amuse ourselves by cooking supper and cracking jokes at our predicament at being "put affoot" on the breezy strands of Lake Mandan.

In the midst of our bandying the bright glare of the fire shot out into the darkness, and lo a red painted Indian stood with his gun barrel bared, and lying across his left arm with his right hand gripping the lock.

"Has the Pawnee Talker lived so long among wild people and yet learned no lesson in his experience with them," spoke the Indian as interpreted from his Aricaree tongue.

The apparition had startled us; but the tone-reassured us. It was the voice of Partisan the Wanderer.

"Has the Pawnee Talker been taught no lesson by the Sioux or Cheyennes. Has he never learned that it is bad to build fires near trees in the enemy's country in the night. See! Every tree about you now is a lantern, and can be seen from afar. Put out your fire or move camp."

By this time two more Indians appeared and each one held a lariat in his hand.

"We have brought back your ponies," again spoke the Partisan, "watch them closely or some Sioux will be riding them off."

The Partisan and his companions were then invited to share a pot of coffee with us, immediately after which they stepped out into the darkness and disappeared.

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In the center of Lake Mandan, with its growth of sand ridge cottonwood—with a black eagle's nest on the oldest and tallest—stands out in bold front the Haunted Island. An Indian mermaid once floated here to beguile

and betray. Assuming strange forms—sometimes as trysing maid—sometimes as sweet voiced siren, or gay feathered hunter. Could it have been that when the young clerk Johnny McCleland, while as passenger on an up bound steamer tied up for the night on the Missouri's bank facing this Island—walked out on that star-hidden dismal night to meet the guiles of the watery nymph decked out as pretty maid, or was seized and dragged though morass—through tangled willows and swaying rushes down deep in depths to the mysterious sub-teranian abode of the morose-faced but feathery dressed hunter? Be his fate what may, when he passed out beyond the glare of the landing torches on that first night in November 1879, he glided from human sight forever.

At odd intervals for many years I journeyed to Lake Mandan for the otter that I usually found in some numbers. Sometimes my trips were alone, but more often a companion or two accompanied me. Guppy, Trapper Sam, Diamond the Wolfer, made merry over many an evening camp fire there.

In December 1880, a hunting, wolfing, owl and otter trapping party of five of us, making two camps, started for the lake and its environs to make an all winter camp there. The winter was severe by spells, but snowy weather and chinnock winds enabled us to keep the dinner pot boiling. This party consisted of Eugene Farley, his brother John, A. B. Strickler and Minnesota Joe.

Lawyer Farley the writing member of the firm, received word from some Chicago furriers that the large snowy owl was in demand there and they wanted some nice birds shipped on at once. A trip to the White Owl Mountains east of the Missouri was made for this purpose,

but without success. The bait was too expensive—his nibs the owl, being too particular. He liked foxes, but preferred the ones not skinned.

In February the party, less myself, made preparation to go to the Deer Shooting mountains near the Little Missouri River. The object was to hunt big horn and kill bear. The party halted on their way, at the mouth of Knife River and by way of diversion founded a town—Stanton—or rather rebuilt Mahaha, the last home of the extinct Anahaways.

I now remained alone in the camp at the lake to close up the trapping, and recross the Missouri before the spring break up. About one mile above camp, near the ruins of old Fort Clark, were two lodges of Aricarees. One of these lodges was presided over by Good Heart, an Arapahoe captured when a child by a war party of red Aricarees, adopted by them and brought up as one of their own.—The other lodge had for its master Little Bull a good hunter, who had for his wife, the sister of Okoos-ter-icks or as interpreted into English—Bob Tail Bull, the bravest warrior and most noted hunter among all the Aricarees.

Little Bull, being an acquaintance of some years; was an occasional visitor to my camp. He would bring along his wife and their only son, a bright eyed little fellow of seven or eight summers. Some books with pictures in that I had in camp would claim the little fellows attention, and he would peruse their pages eagerly during his parents stay.

A thaw early in March, started the water running over the ice on both lake and river, thus obstructing for a time the ice trail of my visitors, and I was also cut off from land.

One night I was awakened by a horrible noise. A mountain lion, like myself, finding himself surrounded by rising water, uttered blood curdling sounds, on the still midnight air. My camp between the lake and river was a dangerous place in time of flood. In anticipation of this I had taken the precaution to have a bull boat and piling my effects and belongings in this big tub made out for higher ground.

Although in a day or two the air turned cold and the water receded I never returned to that cabin among the sand hills. My two ponies were already feeding out on the high prairie. Early one morning while attending some traps, I came across a band of seven deer and killed them all. This was not a difficult thing to do in these days of the improved breech loader. Hunting up the Indians I gave them the meat, reserving the hides only. Soon after I saddled up the ponies and moved to the Burnt Woods,—seven miles below.

While there in camp, I awoke one morning shook the snow from my blankets, and saw all around me a sea of ice. The Yellowstone River had broken its icy fetters, and throwing the floes under the ice of the unthawed Missouri, had formed a gorge. It was prodigious upheavel of masses of broken ice, spreading out for miles on either side of the river's natural bed, and bearing down and crushing mighty forests of cottonwoods, as if they were but reeds in a mill pond.

A cold wave followed, but the river kept on raising higher and extending its banks. About midnight after a gradual raise of forty eight hours, I could hear the neighs and dying bellows and moans, of the freezing and drowing horses and cattle, the property of Ranch-

man Merry, on the opposite side of the Missouri. The sounds were intermingled with the crash of trees and crouching of ice floes.

At daylight, the deer of the bottom lands, now driven by ice from their last perches on the sand hills in the timber, were struggling to swim ashore through the back-water, now coated with new ice. Numbers had reached the bank, but others tired out gave up in despair, and sank out of sight.

When the channel ice commenced moving, several deer were seen clinging to small rafts rolling around and around. Their silent supplication for life was a pitying spectacle. The jarring or crouching of the ice floes sent most of them to the bottom.

Nor were the troubles of those safely ashore over. Burned prairies and a cold north wind kept them close to the bank. They came about the camp like pleading lambs. They were safe. I harmed none of them—fired no shots. Had I so willed, could have killed some with clubs. The truth was the heart softened at the scenes being enacted about me. My hunting days were about to end.

Some days later I returned to Lake Mandan for a cache of traps. While there the Bear, one of the members of Good Heart's lodge, came to me at the place the traps were buried. He told me he was almost alone now.—Good Heart had been taken to the agency snow blind. Pointing my finger to an object like a shaft of stone on a high point of bluffs, a something—familiar as the surface of that country was—my eyes had not before seen.

“What is that!” I said.

“Oh! why that is Little Bull looking for his son.”

“Looking for his son?” I answered.

Yes, he is almost crazy now?” the Bear replied. And then he sat down to tell what had happened.

The day after I left, the ice on the river rose by pressure of water underneath, turtle shaped, and seemingly as solid as before the thaw between the two Indian lodges and my late residence among the sand hills. Bull was out hunting and mother and son were sitting in their lodge. The boy was occupied with some childish amusement. Turning suddenly toward his mother he said:—

“I am going to see Pawnee Talker’s books!”

With these words he passed out through the doorway.

The mother thinking him jesting gave no attention for some time. At length his long absence aroused her to search him up. She followed his little foot tracks by a fresh falling snow, out upon the ice ridge, then down along the river bank until she came to a huge fissure or crack through the ice to the rush of the channel waters. Here the marks of the boy’s footsteps ended. The mother now began to realize that her boy was drowned, and set up wailing sounds re-echoing along the river bank until the startled husband reached her side. He led her away a maniac, and in three days she was dead—hanging herself to the rafters of an Indian house in the village at Fort Berthold.

“Do you know what I think,” said the Bear gravely to me in concluding, “I think the Mermaid stole that boy.

AT THE PAINTED WOODS.

FROM the years 1869 until 1836, the Painted Woods proper was principal rendezvous for both hunters and trappers who were ranging the country between Heart River on the south, to Douglas River on the north.

At this point, also, were in operation two or three wood yards whose managers made a specialty of hard wood for the steamboat trade, which in connection with a large supply of dry cottonwood made the Woods a regular way point and wooding-up place for all steamers on their passage either up or down stream.

Being neutral grounds to the warring Indian tribes, made the place less dangerous to the average hunter as only war parties appeared there and they were guarded against by runners and mail carriers from the military posts who also made Painted Woods the principal stopping place between the two military posts of Forts Rice and Stevenson.

On account of the absence of Indian hunters the wild game in Painted Woods country had increased in great numbers since the advent of the military expeditions of Generals Sibley and Sully in 1863 and 1864, or about five years previous to the writer's first arrival among the painted trees.

Buffalo had become scarce—only an occasional stray from the main herds could be found, but elk were met with in considerable numbers in every cottonwood grove on both sides of the Missouri. Deer were also plentiful in the timber points and antelope could be found in herds of from one to five hundred scattered all over the prairies on the west side of the big river, but they were not so plentiful on the east bank of the stream. A traveler

riding through the country was seldom out of sight of a band or two of these animals. On the west side, especially about the Square Buttes—from any elevated point the observer could often count from twenty to fifty separate bands of the antelope feeding as contentedly as sheep on the green grass during the months of May and June. Later in the season they moved back from the river and made their winter quarters in and among the bad lands of the Little Missouri country.

In the summer months of 1872 and 1873, Lonesome Charley Reynolds made the Square Buttes his camping place, at which point he slaughtered hundreds of the antelope and sun dried the meat—finding a market with the traders at Fort Berthold.

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In August 1873 Frank Wambole formerly of Yankton and who closed his days in the insane asylum there,—was my only companion. One day he took his gun and went to the prairies, as he expressed it, “to take observation.” A short time after our three ponies came tearing in around the stockade snorting wildly, and with uplifted tails. Soon after came Wambole, breathless almost, and on the jump, excitedly exclaiming:

“Get your gun quick—a war party—get your gun!”

Doing as bid and after an hour of heart-thumping waiting we ventured out on an armed reconnoissance. We first discovered some broken juneberry and cherry bushes, then immense tracks of two huge cinnamons. It was a war party of hungry bears.

One October evening in the same year, the writer took a bull-boat from the Painted Woods landing and made a crossing of the Missouri opposite, for the purpose of getting a deer from the plentiful band near the mouth of

Deer Creek. In this I was successful, killing one and wounding another. After attending to the first deer, I followed the blood trail of the second, when lo, the fresh tracks of a big cinnamon bear was noted as sideling in on the blood trail of the wounded deer, and following it. As the trail led into a heavy strip of willows, I recrossed the river and hunted up the help of Partner Williams, as the bear would have the advantage in thick willows. In the meantime the bear had come up to the wounded deer and after killing it made a good feast upon its fresh carcass, upon which he covered the balance with leaves, and then made off as we approached. By this time darkness came on and we were obliged to return without even a shot at Bruin. Two years later the den to which this bear belonged was discovered by a man named Harvey, in Dry Point, near the old Indian village there, and with the assistance of a fellow hunter the whole family of five were killed, which closed out the last of the big cinnamons that had so long terrorized both men and animals in the timber bottoms of the Painted Woods. The bear who had stolen my deer was the old man of the family—as his big feet and long claws bore witness.



Of the larger wild game about the Painted Woods and vicinity, next the buffalo and bear, the elk were the next to disappear, which owing to a kind of domestication or attachment to the points where they were born and raised, they usually remained in the one neighborhood until exterminated by the great influx of hunters that came in with, or followed the building of the Northern Pacific railroad.

About the year 1870. Reynolds the hunter made an estimate of the elk at that time divided in the various points as follows: Sibley Island, Heart River Point, under the Square Buttes, Painted Woods Lake, Mandan Lake and Elm Point contained herds of about forty each, while Burnt Creek, Dry Point lower Painted Woods, and Buffalo Paunch Point and vicinity, contained herds of about twenty each.

The last elk killed in the immediate neighborhood of the Painted Woods proper, was slaughtered in the summer of 1874. It was a huge bull, and so noted and well marked had he become in warding off the bullets of the hunters that he was termed "Bull of the Woods." His haunts were in the neighborhood of what is known as Wash Out Lake, situated near the present village of Falconer.

Besides the traveling bands of Indian hunters, Reynolds, Archie, Diamond the Wolfer, Blanchard, Jimmie McBride and other noted hunters of that day had tried their gifts and arts in vain to make pot of the sagacious and much hunted beast. In the finale of this animal's career it was reserved for a little Irish lad who had fired the first shot of his life from a rifle to bring the antlered monarch to the ground and claim honors that brought a feeling of envy from professional nimrods of high reputation. The boy though panic stricken at the sight of the vicious looking beast emerging from thicket, yet had presence of mind enough to fire toward the animal before taking to his heels in affright. He was a member of Lawyer Stoyel's haying party and ran into the camp to tell of his adventures. He had shot at it he said—but did not wait to see the trend of his

bullet. A party went with him to the scene of his adventure and found the "Bull of the Woods" lying dead with a broken neck.

Editor Kellogg who was present among the campers, and being press correspondent for the Twin City papers telegraphed the disgraceful finale to the nervy and adroit beast which had so long held his ground and defied the smartest of his enemies, only in the end to die from the hands of a novice,—and a "kid" at that.



Upon my advent to the Painted Woods region in 1869, there were two great cottonwood trees in which the eagles nested and hatched out their young every year. One of these nests was that of the war eagle at a point on the Missouri bottom between Otter and Deer Creek just above the Square Buttes in what is now known as Oliver County, and the other being of the bald eagle specie had their nest on the giant old cottonwood tree that composed the original painted tree group which as yet bore the red paint daubing on the rough bark at their base—which according to the accepted story of the wild Indians' days, had given name to the lower Painted Woods section of the Upper Missouri. The first named tree was destroyed by the mighty ice gorge of 1873. The Indians said that the eagles had regularly nested in these two trees for at least thirty years previous to my first sight of them.

About the first of June, 1873, Richmond and Raney—two hunters—and myself, rigged up and went to the painted tree group, for the purpose of climbing the tree to secure the young eaglets and try the Indians plan of rearing and taming them.

We found the female eagle on her nest but the distance

from the ground was fully one hundred feet. An oak was cut to fall against the big cottonwood, and Raney mounted the leaning tree as a ladder, and with some ropes to assist in climbing, reached a position within a yards of the nest.

Up to the time of the climber's near approach, the eagle had remained quietly on her nest. But now she was frightened and darted off and commenced soaring toward the clouds. Meantime, at Raney's request, I stood watching the eagle while he continued his climbing and had reached a still higher point where he stood on a limb baffled and resting.

A mother's fury at the peril of her young, seemed now to possess the bird, for after remaining apparently motionless for a moment, she made a few descending circles and then darted down with terrible rapidity, evidently aiming to dash herself against Raney's back, and would have knocked him headlong from the tree at the probable expense of her own life.

Having my rifle ready at the commencement of her descent, and through with but rapid guess work for aim,—fired toward her as she darted down through the tree tops, when an accidental yet lucky shot for Raney was the result. The ball struck the tip of her wing, throwing her from the accuracy of her descending line, and she went crashing through the lower limbs to the earth.

She was then made captive, and Raney failing to reach the nest, as a last resort the big tree was felled to the ground with axes, but with no additional trophies save a few dead eaglets. The great jarring of the fallen tree had killed them.

The wounded eagle was taken to the stockade and penned up. After a few days of morose captivity she effected her escape. She was seen to raise slowly in widening circles as though half doubting her own power for aerial flight. Then after apparently assuring herself that all was well, made an air line for the painted trees. Here she circled around and around the fallen monarch of this famous group of giant trees, for full an hour or more,—as loath to believe her own eyes as to its destruction, and that of her young. She then arose to the clouds and disappeared—neither she nor her kind ever again to nest in that that section of country.



Point Preparation was first noted by the steamboatmen and others as having a thicker growth of large cottonwoods than were usually found on the upper Missouri and was in the early days frequently spoken of as the "finest body of timber between Sioux City and Fort Benton." Of the original campers or first woodyard men at the Point—the usual story is told that followed the fortunes of the woodyard men everywhere along the Upper Missouri. Ryan & Wilson was the name of the first firm and both had Indian women for wives. Ryan was found murdered many years after in an obscure cabin about Dauphin's Rapids. He was killed by a youngster who expected to find the cabin floor paved with hidden gold. While perhaps a miser he had no miser's store. His partner Wilson drifted down to Sioux City, became a gambler of some note and as a matter of course "killed his man," before he had followed the business many years. The two choppers that they had with them at this point were afterwards killed by Indians. The

Indian wives of the firm had long since ceased to be among the living.

Point Preparation had an unusul amount of hard wood, many of the oaks being very old with hollow trunks. To this was attributed the large number of big owls found there. Aricaree campers at the point in Indian war days were often alarmed by the hooting of the owls in which many of the Sioux Warriors were excellent mimics. The Mandans were accredited by the other tribes as understanding the language of these birds and were often called in as interpreters when hooting owls and a Mandan were in the same woods together.

The magpies proved to be the most interesting of birds and were of much assistance to the deer stalker and still hunter when following their vocation in thick brush. They seemed to know exactly what the hunter was after and would go a hundred yards or more in advance of him and when it espied a deer would fly up near the animal and set up a vehement chatter. The hunter would locate the sound, make a careful sneak and with the advantages thus given him, frequently got his game.

The magpie expected the offals for its services and usually got them. However a dark day came upon the magpie when the poisoner came and used the entrals to kill wolves. The birds being great meat eaters, thus fell victims by the thousands; and at the end of two or three years, they were so terrified that the whole specie made higeri from the Upper Missouri south of the Milk river, and departed for the Rocky Mountains. For ten years not a magpie could be seen. After that date a few returned—very few, in comparison with the thousands that once made their homes in North Dakota.

The year following the migration of the magpie, I had occasion to return to my Painted Woods residence, from our winter camp at Lake Mandan. On nearing the stockade I was surprised to see four handsome blue jays in possession of the corn pile. They were allowed to remain, and with the exception of one killed by a cat, put in the winter around the corn, but in the spring, disappeared. These were the only jays ever seen in Painted Woods.

Late in the autumn of the year following, four more strange birds paid my stockade residence a visit. They were larger than pigeons; plumage a drab grey, with a peculiar jumping motion. They put in their whole time about an abandoned Indian camp, and were quite tame. Within a few days they too, disappeared, through I had reason to think, without knowing, that these birds were victims of watchful hawks.

Of all the birds of these plains—and they are of many kinds—the pretty little yellow breasted prairie lark was of the most pleasing interest to the writer.

After the long cold winters were over, these bright songsters would perch themselves upon little mounds or hillocks and sing as for dear life, in their four sweet notes, singing them over and over again—a repetition that a passing wayfarer never tries of hearing. So long as the grass kept green these little songsters can be heard on the prairies, in fine summer mornings, bringing joy to all the disconsolate and sad hearted, by their presence and song.

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One morning in the latter part of February 1878, while out on the prairies opposite my stockade at Point

Preparation, I came across a fox traveling leisurely along and when the opportunity came for a good aim drew up the gun and pulled trigger. The shot took effect and the stricken animal went spinning over the snow. It had reached a point known as the Bare Butte, and at its base the animal fell over dead. On going up to the fox I was surprised to find a bunch of green paper tightly gripped between his closed teeth, which upon examination proved to be a \$20 greenback.

After the surprise of the incident was over I took the back trail of the animal to discover if possible the place where the money had been picked up, and after about nine hundred yards trailing over the snow, came to a place where the fox had been pawing through the frozen crust. After digging away the snow, I picked up about \$120.00 which upon after enquiry proved to have been lost by a wagon boss of a train from the Indian agency at Fort Berthold, the previous autumn, being on his way to Bismarck for supplies. About 200 yards from the spot where the money was found the train was moving along when the boss preparing for a smoke of his pipe, fished in his side pockets for matches and tobacco, when his roll of money was accidentally pulled out with these articles, and unknown to him, carried off by a violent gust of wind and deposited in a depression formed by an ancient land slide near where once the Missouri's muddy waters rolled. While this incident was an odd one—the facts are as above stated.

After the high water had subsided following the break-up of 1877, the water in the low point around the

stockade remained damned up and as a consequence, I made open camp on a dry knoll among the oak and box-elder. The water between the camp and stockade on account of an extreme cold snap became a solid sheet of ice.

While in this camp preparing breakfast early one morning, I heard wrangling-like sounds in the thick brush above camp and not over one hundred yards away. The noise bore on my ears at the time as though two badgers or catamounts were fighting,—these animals being quite plentiful about there. Breakfast over, I had curiosity enough to go, gun in hand, to the scene of disturbance. On the ice lay a large buck deer partly eaten, and apparently just killed. Around about him were evidence of a desperate struggle with two mountain lions, as the imprint in the snow by their massive feet testified. Panther like they sprang on the big deer as he was crossing a narrow neck of slippery ice, and downed him after a hard fight. The lions satisfied with their breakfast of blood and venison, had evidently moved off and slunk into the thick willows at my approach—without a growl or show of fight.



On a May day 1882, the writer started out from the Painted Woods for a few days outing, taking along a few traps and gun, more for diversion than a continuance of a trappers life, which had lost its charm as a vocation many years previous, yet an impulse would occasionally seize me to renew for a short time a reminder of the earlier days upon the trap line. After spending a few days around Painted Woods Lake and Turtle Creek, I followed the river closely in its course to the northwest.

Beyond Turtle Creek the rough, uneven and high bluffs were seen that mark the output of a little rivulet where the Crows and Gros Ventres parted. Here, the red man's legends say, a dispute over so simple a thing as the division of a buffalo's paunch, disunited two friendly people forever.

A few hundred yards along an old Indian and buffalo trail, though deep coulees and over sharp pointed hills, a small, timber lined lake, burst suddenly to view.

In signing up, I found the tracks of but one beaver, and by sign a large one, so set the trap with scented bait. The next morning I found a beaver struggling in the trap and around it, torn earth and cut brush showing a desperate all night's struggle to free itself. Even when being pounded to its death—though meekly submitting, the poor animal clung tenaciously to life, as though assisted in its struggles by a might greater than the strength usually allotted to its kind.

After the beaver was dead, her desperation was accounted for. She was the mother of four young sucking beavers and her life was their life. Her death their death. These babes of the beaver kind must now of necessity through lack of a good mother's care, perish by slow starvation.

I returned to my Painted Woods residence in a reflective mood. I had a surfeit of such cruel work—and would stay it. If the destruction of beavers and kindred intelligent, industrious and harmless animals must go on—let it be done by other hands than mine.

Hunted in season and out of season as were the deer of the Painted Woods country both by the white and red

hunters, yet these animals held their own in a remarkable manner during the two decades from 1870 to 1890.

In the early seventies Reynolds the hunter estimated that nearly every timber point between Fort Stevenson and Heart river contained from fifty to one hundred deer. This seemed a fair estimate judging from the amount slain every season. Ranchman Merry and his three boys killed on an average about one hundred deer a season between the years 1875 and 1885, around the Painted Woods Lake, and the hunters in other points were almost equally destructive to these animals.

For many years dating from 1870 until about the year 1876 there lived and flourished an animal variously known as the Hiddenwood buck, ghost deer, phantom deer, etc.

The deer was a large ten pronged buck with a never changing hairy coat of iron gray. He ranged back and forth between the Missouri bottom, and Hiddenwood Creek, a branch flowing into Painted Woods Creek from the South.

Although adroit in his movements the color of his hair made the deer an easy mark, and yet strange to say with the hundreds of shots fired at him by expert hunters none of them seemed to have taken effect as he always turned up regularly in his old haunts. For this he became famous to the hunters—many of whom believed it was really a deer's ghost and was impervious to hunter's rifles. Some of them averred that he drew the shots from the huntsmen, which would alarm the real flesh and blood deer and permit them to escape the stalking hunter. Be his fate what may, he disappeared about the time of the Custer massacre, and while we have no record of his death neither have we any record of his reappearance.

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While employed on the *Leader*, of Washburn, N. D. during the autumn of 1893, the writer, while no longer on the list of professional trappers had not altogether given up an occasional stroll after deer during the hunting season. Saturdays being a slack day to the printer after the paper was put into the post office, I usually took my 45-90 Winchester and beat around the north woods of Painted Woods Lake. At this time I made an unusual record, even for an old hunter, by killing eight deer with only eight shots from the rifle. The cartridges being all I had, were easily counted, and the dead deer brought into Pioneer Rhude's domicile, marked one each for the empty shells. This slaughter was not all done in one day, however, for several Saturdays, were spent thus in hunting.

One day in December after a fresh fall of thick snow I started out bright and early with my rifle in good trim and a fresh supply of newly purchased cartridges to make a further record among the deer. The snow being over 14 inches on the level the walk became tiresome and drifting in from the bluffs was proceeding homeward when on the side of a steep hill just along the old military crossing of Painted Woods Creek, I noticed a perfect cross such as were often in church spires, which in the fresh white snow seemed of wood about eight or ten feet in length with a cross beam of about four feet. I stood wondering why this was placed there and walked toward it. When within one hundred yards of the object—it became animated and I saw that it was three deer laying in such a position that made the illusion complete, and I fired several shots before they got out of my sight. But not a bullet of the many sent after them did not



seem to touch a hair. Nor did I slay any more deer during the balance of the hunting season, however the advantage gained or accurate the aim. This rifle here used was afterward stolen and never recovered.

While not superstitious enough to attribute the incident other than a "striking allusion," yet a change of inclinations or new ideas replaced the set ones of the past two decades, or more. The hunter's life once the passion of my existence became irksome and distasteful. To protect and save the few hunted deer left along the Upper Missouri bottom lands and stay their extermination came with the birth of new ideas—and with this also came a feeling of glad relief that my deer hunting days had ended.



There was a trite old saying often repeated among fur hunters of a quarter of a century ago, that a person who enters into a professional trapper's life, "formed a partnership with Old Nick." The records of the pioneer trappers of the Northwest as told by Washington Irving and other early day writers would seem to confirm it, even though contrary to another time honored maxim "that the devil takes care of his own."

Without making notation other than regarding the Upper Missouri country, the record there for the past forty years is that there are two other avocations beside the professional trapper and hide hunter, that can show a series of disasters in its performance,—viz: the woodyard man and saw mill proprietor. The record of disaster and misfortune that have befallen these sturdy sons of toil and timber destruction on the Upper Missouri, could hardly be believed did not the plain facts show the folly

of evasion or dispute. It is not a question of whom among those of the two callings courted disaster by following their bent, as to those who had been lucky enough to escape the vengeance of those mysterious genii that visit their displeasure on the destroyers of our woodlands.

The readers of Irving's "Astoria" will remember that in tracing up the various expeditions sent out in the interest of the fur trade he brings each and every one of them—from the sailing of the Tonquin at the outing, to the last of the trapper expeditions on the tributary streams of the Yellowstone—to an inglorious close.

It was well for the cheerful Tonquin crew as they gaily spread sail to catch the summer breeze that bore them from New York harbor in 1810, or the reckless dare-devil trappers that started out from the Aricaree village under Ramsey and Crooks the year after, that neither prophet, sorcerer or clarivoyant revealed the future to them as they turned their faces westward.

So it was with the first woodyard men along the Upper Missouri River. Careful observation with a little common sense revealed their danger, but these pioneer woodchoppers were from a class that courted it. And they did not court in vain. Danger and trouble came in so many forms that no services of a seer were needed to tell of the end. But like the flag bearers in a hotly contested battle, when one falls another is ever ready to take his place in upholding the waving emblem, so the "woodhawk" that fell in his line was easily replaced by another, and he yet by another.

The sketches of woodyard life as told in "The letter

in Cipher" or "Chronicle of a Spanish Woodyard" in a former work*, were but items in the woodyard history of the past forty years. While the record in most cases will lie buried with the actors, there will stand out now and again a case kept alive by public inquiry or sympathetic interest. With such a case the writer now presents to close these varied pen pictures of pioneer life at Painted Woods:

One early summer day in the year 1881, a traveling outfit consisting of two or three teams and wagons, drew up in front of Mercer's ranch. The spokesman of the party announced himself by name—Adams—K.W., and that the party hailed from Red Wing, Minnesota. With Mr. Adams were his two sons—John and George by name, both husky boys in their teens. Besides these were some other relatives and friends. The leader, with his father-in-law, John Day, sr., also of the party, was among the very first settlers of Goodhue county, Minnesota, and founder of Red Wing on the Mississippi, where the former had been proprietor of a woodyard many years, but was "done up" by the introduction of railroads that had taken away the steamboat trade. He had come over to the Missouri to try his luck, and after distancing rival yards—would have no fears of railroads for some time to come. In response the ranchman host told Mr. Adams that there were at that time three woodyards within a distance of ten miles and were not considered profitable investments. To this the Minnesotain responded that the reign of the old timer was at end here, as on the Mississippi, and as a Missouri River "tenderfoot" he would stake off claims for his party as near by as possible, which he immedi-

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ately proceeded to do. "Painted Woods Landing" was the name chosen for headquarters and a site selected on the Missouri facing the finest body of young cottonwood timber in what is now known as Oliver County.

For a time all went well. Thousands of young cottonwood trees were cut down, made into cordwood and carted across the Missouri for the steamboat trade. The "Landing" became a popular wayfaring stopping place as well as a hilarious neighborhood rendezvous. A fine farm and truck garden was opened in connection with the ranch, and Mr. Adams began to congratulate himself that he had indeed "struck it rich" by coming over to the Missouri. To put the rounding on his success he erected a wine press to utilize the luscious wild grape and tart bullberry that grew in generous profusion among the timber points of the Painted Woods country. But, unfortunately, there was too much destruction involved in all this to insure continued prosperity. Aside from chopping down the thousands of half grown cottonwoods for steamboat fuel, in his wine making, Mr. Adams employed a small army of grape pickers, who, thinking only of the present, destroyed the supporting vines. In this way the luscious wild grape gradually disappeared from that neighborhood.

After the noon comes the lengthening shadow. After the strike the recoil. Mr. Adams desired to spread out his woodyard business, and to this end sent his oldest son John and a young man named Cook to start a new woodyard at Elm Point, the graveyard of so many past ventures of the overconfident. Cook returned to the Painted Woods a few months later to die, while the boy John abandoned the yard and pulled out for the

upper river, where, after a series of adventures and mis-adventures was killed by a madman on the upper Big Muddy in the year 1885. Upper Missouri steamboating became a business of the past and with it the woodyard man's prosperity ended in that section—closing down with the Great Northern railroad's westward advance to the Milk River Valley.

With the advent of the season of 1894, came hopes to a few of the most patient of the "stayers" among the woodyard men on the Missouri immediately north of the Northern Pacific railroad. The activity came about through a gradual increase in population and a stride in the development of the resources of the region named. Painted Woods Landing became a place of action once more. Its generous proprietor exhibited the product of his garden and field as testimony to its wealth, and to his own industry and perseverance.

To take up the abandoned woodyard again, help and supplies were needed. A young man from Montana was secured as chopper, and in company with the proprietor's son George, the two made preparation to go to the Capital City with team and wagon for supplies.

It was on one of the closing days of September that the two started out cheerfully from the Landing on what proved to be their last round trip ride. The father came across the road from his garden work to give final instructions and admonition to his rather wayward son, after which the impatient and well groomed team sped rapidly along the river through the deserted streets and airy castles of Painted Woods City. The poise of a hawk,—the scamper of a gopher to clear the road and

a few sputtering yellow leaves wafted from near-by groves of oak and ash, were but the familiar morning scenes of the "river road" to the young man that held the reins from the wagon box. The sun looked no brighter; the birds sang no sweeter than other mornings and pensive thoughts were not his.

The story as given to his father was that the young man disposed of his garden product at good figures—and drew some money from a Capital City bank that had been deposited there on former trips. That the young man was seen in a convivial but not in a hilarious mood. That he made a trip to Mandan across the Missouri, and that there was a suspicion of a "woman in the case."

To St. Paul's able coroner—Whitcomb—grown gray in his official duties of long practice and secure in the confidence reposed by his townsman—we turn for an opinion that will stand endorsed because of the good judgment accredited him. The Coroner had come from the Minnesota capital for an autumn deer hunt on the Missouri—as was his wont—and in proceeding along the "bottom road" a few miles out from Bismarck, he came up with a party of three young men with a team. They had halted by the roadside and one of the trio was standing on the ground, and who seemed to have passed a bottle of something to the two in the wagon who were drinking from it. The place was a lonesome looking one to the Coroner, who passed around the party and proceeded to Dry Point where he put in an evening with the deer. On returning to the city next morning he was surprised to find the same team grazing near by attached to the running gears. On a slight raise

close to a by-trail, was the overturned wagon box and by its side lay two of the men he had seen in the wagon the previous evening—one rigid in death the other dying. The Coroner made a hasty inspection of the ruin and wreck about him with a practiced eye, and as a familiar to such tragic scenes, uttered the one plain but expressive word:—“Murdered.”

Burial of the murdered men over, woodyarding was resumed in the same point above mentioned with two brothers as choppers, and temporarily suspended when one was arrested for the murder of the other. One more attempt was made to resume, but the proprietor being then over sixty five-years of age, and who had been almost totally deaf for many years, was afflicted with blindness as an added misfortune. To abandon the scene of his many trials and join the family of his one remaining son was all that was left him to do, and with a heart of anguish he turned his back to the home that had brought him so much sorrow, and reached his boy's home for a brief rest, ere life closed and the scriptural injunction read to a small but solemn band congregated around his coffin that—“dust thou art and dust thou shalt return.”

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The members of the three rival yards were almost equally unfortunate in the general sum up. Konrad the proprietor of the Dry Point wood yard, who dated his first residence there since 1869, became insane and died in a Minnesota asylum. Merry, the Senior, hunter, trapper, ranchman, and lastly—woodyard proprietor—who shouldered the attendant misfortunes of Burnt Woods, and braved the superstitious Indian at Appa-

rition Point, gave variety and picturesqueness to a rapid career on the steep incline. Himself and wife coming to their last home but one, with \$10,000 cash and more to their credit until successive blows came hard and fast were among the first occupants of that "city of the dead" whose shafts of white marble meet the reflection of the morning sun from the high bluff overlooking Rhude's addition to Washburn. No coroner came to view the remains—as privation and broken hearts were not on the list of his official cognizance. No citation to the heirs as there was nothing to divide, and the last "will and testament" rested without probate or revision.

The original Painted Woods yard which fell into the possession of Mercer & Gray about the year 1872. With the new proprietorship came John Keeler, Diamond the Wolfer and Henry Atherton, the Virginian. The last named afterward killed a man for an antelope near upper Square Buttes, opposite Little Knife River and took to penance for the same at Elm Point, where he emerged some years later as an unsuccessful lecturer on phrenology and when last heard from was financially and physically stranded somewhere out in the Sand Hill country of northwestern Nebraska. John Keeler committed suicide by drowning at Scott's woodyard five or six years later. Diamond the Wolfer, afterward a sub-agent at Crow Agency, got into trouble, was wounded and returned eastward to his paternal roof in hopes to die in peace. Instead, he was dragged from his mother's side by Federal marshals and died in the penitentiary hospital, in Deer Lodge, Montana. Charles Gray, of the firm proper—after many mishaps—froze to death during a break-up flood in an upper river woodyard.

W. H. H. Mercer, the senior member, and successor to the old Baker regime—had his ups and downs like the rest of the first comers of the Upper Missouri Valley. A three years soldier with Hancock's famous fighting brigade of the Potomac army; a member of the first board of Burleigh county (N. D.) commissioners away back in 1873; a county given his name, and owning the first wheat farm beyond the experimental stage on the Missouri Slope. With all of this enumeration his woodyard experience covered twenty long years.

Out in a moonlit night under the shadow of the dark sides of Prophet's Mountain—unattended save by a faithful horse—Mercer had laid down on a bed of buffalo tufts—being suddenly taken by a mysterious malady, and conscious of his helplessness—peering out among the stars ere his spirit soared out in the pathless expanse before him. That his ghost had meandered in its flight—his only daughter testifies. Sixty miles away with a girl companion, she was startled from a feverish sleep—and looking about—screamed to her companion:

“Look at that man sitting in the chair.”

But her companion could see nothing but a vacant seat.

“Why, don't you see him—see him right there.”

The next morning word was received of her father's death.



BATTLE COULEE GROVE---From a photo by Diesen 1901.

THE BIRDS OF BATTLE GROVE.

ABOVE the steamer landing near the little town of Washburn there was once a beautiful grove consisting of cottonwood, elm, ash and boxelder trees. Underbrush was thick here, and varied in its kinds. In the autumn days when the red Indian roamed in his freedom, this grove was a hiding place for mating deer. In summer's long hours it was the nesting place for a large congregation of birds. The robin was here, the yellowhammer was here; the thrush was here; the cow black bird was here; the singing lark was here; the wood duck and pinnated grouse were here. Almost every bird that nested in this climate—save perhaps the eagle alone seemed to have had its representative in "Battle Grove," so named by some of the frontier rovers of 1869-70, for it was under the leafless shades of its cottonwoods that two chiefs of warring tribes met and received their death wounds in the last year of the sixties, and the first decade of the last half of the 19th century.

Even at that time so early in the season as May, the robins and the black birds were singing gaily from their hiding places in the groves. Be the fortunes of war with the Sioux or with the Aricarees, it was all the same to the birds. They were safe from wanton harm in either event.

But when—a few years later—at another nesting time, they beheld three beings garbed as were similar ones in their winter homes in the southland. Their color of face was different from those shot gun fiends of the southern jungles. These birds were unused to danger in their nesting grounds from beings like these and went on about their mating and nest building as in the other summer days that had come and gone. As now they feared nothing—nor had they anything to fear. They hardly noticed the bipeds who went plodding about over the even and uneven stretches of the prairie about them. This trio of the human had minds that were soaring through space—and holding time as it were—to the bid of their convenience—yet each mind was soaring within its own orbit with telepathic messages for the unseen. With all of this, the little twittering birds had nothing to do. This trio with automatic actions and minds preoccupied—were dreamers—but of such and with such the epochs in time must count. They were leaders and pilots of their kind. They were making but a casual inspection about them—but little as the diversion was, it forecasted a change in the face of nature about them. The grass must change—the trees must change and the birds must change or disappear.

A few years later—1886—the writer of these pages came upon the site of the events above described. It was by no means his first entry there, but it was time for comparison—for marking a line—change of an epoch. A cluster of human dwellings were erected on the level plain back from the grove and I became a temporary resident thereamong. It was autumn then and the tinted leaves of Battle Grove gave the landscape

t hereabout a beautiful coloring. The swirling waters of the mighty artery laved the bank and a big cottonwood or a mass of shrubbery, undermined by the current slid down like a vessel from its ways—and fell into the water with a splash. The earth would dissolve in mud and go swirling with the waters to add to new forms elsewhere. The roots from the large trees thus falling were oftentimes held them in tie-up, and protected the banks and oftentimes changed the channel current.

At that time the birds of the grove were grouping, preparatory to leaving for a warmer clime, yet I made note that notwithstanding the proximity of the town and disappearance of many trees there, the birds were numerous and cheerful. Returning again to this little village by the Missouri in 1893, after a wandering tour of a few years duration, I made further note of the birds of Battle Grove. It was the sunset of a boom collapse and the inhabitants of the community were sleeping off their excitement of previous years.

Around and about the only hotel stable in the village, clustered a flock of pigeons of variegated hues, and an old neighbor with kindly heart for beasts and birds had a kindred flock. It was beautiful sight in the spring and summer mornings to see these birds fly over the house tops with the rays of the sun glistening from their swift moving wings.

From the primitive print shop from whence came the Washburn Leader, I sat near a window with composing stick in hand—day after day—listening to the four sweet notes of the prairie lark as they serenaded from the eaves of the building the lonely occupant within. No gramophone ever produced sweeter or more classical mu-

sic, nor was there need of a gramophone then. In the autumn of that year—late and snowy—two little birds of the sparrow or chippy kind—crept through a knot hole in the eaves. In fair days all winter long they sat and chirped on the sunny side of the office roof. The next winter there were four. The next six and the fourth winter they seemed to have divided up as part of them to quarters in the court house tower. Down near the county jail facing the river a prairie hen built her nest, hatched out a brood of chickens, and not even a wandering cat disturbed the confiding hen and chicks. But human cats were watching. The first day that the laws of man allowed their killing—they were surprised in a bug hunting expedition just north of the village school house by a hunter—and all killed but one. That one flew in terror into the open door of the print shop annex where the Leader scribe had sleeping quarters, and ran under the bed. When given plenty of rest it was taken out reluctantly from its hiding place and given its freedom. It flew down by the jail and beyond. Of its after fate I know nothing.

The birds of Battle Grove continued to reappear in or about their old nesting grounds with regularity every spring time. Timber being plentiful and the inhabitants of the village on the plain few, so there was no necessity and but little desire for any one in those days to disturb the haunts of the birds. True—now and then a tree was felled there for fire wood or fencing, but disappearance of the primeval forest trees were not noticed except by careful observers or by the birds themselves.

On one well remembered time when the Juneberries were turning to the red, I strolled through the bad lands

to pick and eat a few of the ripest ones. The berries were by no means plentiful for the acreage in bushes, and the feathered residents seemed to know this. No sooner had I commenced to eat the luscious fruit when a bevy of birds surrounded me with an incessant chattering, chirping and scolding. Each bird seemed to take turns flying about my head, with incessant noise from every feathered throat. "See here, mister," they were probably saying, "don't you see the berries are scarce and unripe and we have all our little ones to feed. Get out of here! Get out of here!" "Well little birds," I said, "I guess I understand you—and you shall have my share of the berries this season in the bad lands of Battle Grove." And happy was I to leave them in possession, and I returned back to the village.

But the impending change would come to these birds of the grove—and fortunate were they that the days of the second movement or boom of the soil changers was so long delayed. Idle disposed people drifted in with the advanced hosts and the "bad boy" came in evidence through the lack of proper discipline and good example. The two flocks of pigeons about the pretty village grew smaller. The report of a gun, the click of a trap; the thud of a dead fall; the swish of a hotel pitchfork or jar of club, and the Venice appearing aspect of early Washburn had ended; and the old man whose pride and happiness was with his flocks, moved down to the Turtle Valley with the remnants, that peace and rest would come to him and to his bird and animal charges.

Then the few lazy fishermen who basked along the Missouri's banks contiguous to Battle Grove, suddenly conceived the idea that birds killed and their flesh cut

up for fish baits were the proper disposal of bird life—suiting a lack of conscience to the needs of convenience. Therefore in early June mornings the crack of a small rifle or shot gun was frequently heard in the grove and most of them tokened the death or mutilation of some little nesting bird. Up to this time with all the harassing, many of the more fortunate birds survived and came with each recurring season brimming with activity and joyful song.

But more people came to the village and their habitations multiplied—for the period of the second boom was at hand. Young men leaving the older States east, unmindful of the rapid changes on the border—had expected to find the wild Indian in his red paint and the plains covered with wild game, much the same as in Lewis and Clark's day, whose account of the country many of them had read or been told, and were not prepared to find it so unlike their dreams. But some of them had come prepared to shoot something, and as Washburn was then the end of the railroad, and the trees nearest to the station were those of Battle Grove, the slaughter of the few remaining birds went steadily on. To make the destruction of the birds more certain the principal part of the grove was cut away and a brick yard covered the vacant space, and to add to all, a contractor's grading camp located in and around the remaining timber and these with the groups of Sunday idlers with guns for practice on the unfortunate songsters, life ended for the feathered tribes in the narrow brush space in what was once known as Battle Grove.

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That this useless and wanton and shameless slaugh-

ter of useful insectivorous birds in defiance of law still continues we hear from every side, and will state the following incident of recent happening in confirmation.

A gentlemen of Robinson, N. D., related to the writer the following incident :

“I accompanied a fellow last summer on a claim hunt. We had a horse and buggy and were driving quietly along one of the trails when we heard the sweet music of a mating lark perched upon a hillock a few yards to one side of the road. The bird sang lustily and seemed happy in intertaining us with a good morning serenade.

“Look at that lark. Let me out to shoot it!”

The man with the lines expostulated but slowed up and the brute with gun in hand jumped to the ground, took careful aim and fired. The poor little songster was shot to pieces.

The brute with the gun was satisfied.

But the driver did not share in the shooter's satisfaction.

With the report of the gun so close to his ears the startled pony jumped sideways and the buggy shafts were broken. They patched the rig up as best they could and managed to reach their destination. The buggy repairs cost them several dollars, and the lesson was not altogether lost—on one of them at least.

Who had the greater soul the bird or its destroyer?

The one that was giving joy or the one that crushed the life out of the giver of joy?

A STEP BACKWARD.

I N these days of ours, legislative control is largely in the hands of great corporate interests that dominate the State, and while personal selection of legislative candidates is nominally left to local district leaders, yet his after official acts are carefully outlined and the exigencies of a future occasion provided against during the future legislator's incumbency of the office. To be sure a little suasion—moral or immoral—is often used. Like actors on the mimic stage these actors in the real life drama are selected for a certain part which require their attention and all else they view with indifference. To stand firmly in senatorial contests it often becomes necessary for the successful man of the pinnacle to remember a relative or close friend of the legislator who had stood loyally by himself in the scramble, with an after federal office of some kind, and through the courtesy and good offices of a friendly president, his wishes are respected. On occasions where the legislator defies the wishes of his constituents in the matter of senatorial choice or of some particular measure, then a federal or some state position is awarded the unreconciled legislator in lieu of a lost constituency.

It is said men with a single aim are more successful than those who try to do too many things in an aimless

way. Granted. Yet in the history of those elected on personal grounds for a personal purpose—without other aims or other merit,—their stay in public life has been of short duration.

These methods of the inception of legislators and legislation as herein stated are not confined to any one party or State, but is almost universally accepted as a "graft" in American politics that can only be rooted out by a moral discipline from fearless teachers and churchmen who have foresight and philosophy enough in their mental components to note the direction as a race to which we are drifting, viz: to the moral indifference that has always immediately preceded the downfall of the most enlightened nations of past ages.

But in these times corporate power in its dealings with legislators and legislation, does many meritorious acts that would fail of enactment were they hostile or indifferent to the merits of the same. The bridling of the iniquitous liquor traffic and its demoralizing attendants is due to the edict of the railroad interests, the fearlessness of the leaders of a powerful church and the employers of skilled laborers. To the railroads it was an act of self preservation. At its most hopeful stage, the numerous railroad wrecks and the destruction of life on the American railroads is great. With the indiscriminate use of whiskey it would be appalling. The employers of skilled labor also saw the necessity of curbing the liquor drinking habit among their employees and in this way the advocates of temperance found powerful helpers and well wishers.

But there are times with other measures that come up for legislative action, in which a strong or guiding mind

from the corporation lobby would be of service to the one class of members who could see nothing good in a measure that did not give him substantial return or which he could see no benefit to "constituents of my district."

Corporate co-operation was necessary when the move of the well disposed towards encouraging and sustaining efforts toward permanently establishing a Humane Society head for the State of North Dakota. By their lack of sympathy, even were self interest lacking to these representatives of corporate control, an injury was done to the good name of the State in the withdrawal of its patronage and sympathetic aid toward the enforcement of just laws in which the humane instincts of the best of all mankind saction and commend—instead of encouragement as the people in this enlightened age would have expected. Humane Societies meet with encouragement and are fostered in every well governed State in the American Union, and the repeal of this legislation was wrong. Through the efforts of the wife of Judge Bartholemew, of the State Supreme Court, the bill was made a law, and rigidly enforced during that lady's lifetime. Her successor, Mrs. Holly, while fully as competent as the first named lady did not have her fearless energy, so the arrest of persons, charged with cruelty to animals was less frequent.

The abolition of this office by legislative enactment in North Dakota, was a step backward. For here, more than any Northwestern State, where conditions are so chaotic from the immense immigration and its diversity as to their race and national characteristics and their previous manner of life: the moral force of this a was it stood upon the statutes had a deterrent effect upon the careless and cruel, upon whom severedes.

cipline and punishment should be meted out for their misdeeds, for with many of this class the emotion of pity find no vent and the braidings of conscience a sensation unknown.

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In the onward move of the tide of Western emigration, when North Dakota was reached, the prevailing opinion—even among the best informed—was that the land lying to the west of Red River Valley was of value for its wild grasses only, for even the great deposits of lignite on the Missouri had not entered into their calculations as of being of any commercial value at that time. But the old saw “live and learn” was fully verified to those who have lived within the present boundaries of North Dakota since 1870, that the western part of the State does not have to depend wholly upon the value of its wild grasses for the prosperity of its people.

But in the decade of the seventies, but little use of the land west of the James or Dakota River by land owners and the widely scattered residents of the rivers and creeks was thought of, save for its pastoral value. It was then the stock raising industry became the leading feature in the development of the western part of North Dakota. At the start in—imitating the surroundings of a military post—ample provender and shelter was provided for the cattle and work horses but the hardy Indian breeds were allowed to “rustle,” to which they had been used to, and no hardship attached while the prairies remained unburned.

But during a few mild and comparatively snowless winters, cattle came through without much hay being

fed to them and the fact was advertised so extensively that many stockmen quit entirely putting up hay or just enough for an emergency storm, believing, as many of them did, that this section of the country was as safe for unsheltered stock as southeastern Colorado or New Mexico.

In the spring round-up of the "bunches," an estimate would be made of the missing cattle by their owners and the loss by freezing and starvation during the winter would be calculated coldly as so much per cent, ranging all the way from twelve to sixty.

In the per cent calculation no cognizance was taken of the suffering of the stock by the bitter cold, or of the weak and tasteless grass, bleached and frosted by alternate rains and frosts of early autumn. At other times great stretches of prairies were burned over and upon this black and cheerless waste the cattle drifted from an arctic storm, and upon which the poor starved and bewildered beasts sought in vain for even a mouthful of grass.

During the winter of 1886-7 and 1887-8 some of the most distressing scenes were witnessed from the car windows by travelers over the Northern Pacific railroad west of the Missouri River. This was especially true during the first named winter. The snow during January and February was over 18 inches on the level but had drifted badly in places, but a heavy crust of frozen ice baffled the attempts of the cattle to reach it. Along the railroad the prairies were burned, and here during the worst storms the cattle had drifted. The poor creatures stood for days huddled under culverts and bridges, and looking up with glassy eyes to the fast appearing and

disappearing train, as though there was yet hope for their succor. A few bundles of baled hay or a few sacks of bran or shorts tumbling from a moving car was a possibility—and if possible why not hope on? But with the inmates of the cars it was a matter of property. The cattle did not belong to them—and what had they to do with these starving cattle? The champagne tasted just as good to them—the warm fire in the smoking car was just as comfortable after their swift passage through the distressful scene as before they came to it. To the cattle a ray of hope came and went and came and went again. Theirs was now a part of the eternal years that would go and come and go and come forever—and in time's onward way would there come a day of reversal to this earthly order in the rule and in the dominion of the animal man?

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The trains over the Northern Pacific continued to roll over the rails and a fresh fall of snow acted as a screen or curtain to the scene we have just described. But when the days became longer and the big bright sun grew warmer, the snow uncovered its dead about the trestles and bridges. The cattle were there still and for that matter still there—for they were all dead. The hardiest of the bunches had clawed and chewed the ties and bridge timber in the vain hope of extracting a further lease of life—but to the wretched creatures—only death came.

With the destruction of these herds the owners thereof became bankrupts. But new owners came with new herds—and many of the scenes were re-enacted

there in 1896-7 and I doubt not will be followed in 1904, but the day of the big stock ranges are passing away—as they should—for humanity's sake.

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With the advent of the small ranchmen the general condition of the stock changed for the better, although every severe or snowy winter brought to light scenes of horror as to the freezing and starving of helpless cattle by the neglect to provide proper food and shelter by some stock owners or caretakers. But where one such ranch is exploited for its shiftless overseers there will be a dozen—perhaps—where the cattle are comfortably housed and regularly watered and fed.

It is to the careless and improvident whose inertness causes unnecessary suffering to the dumb beasts whom the fates have entrusted to their care, that we would have their sluggish bodies prodded to activity by the officers of the Humane Society backed and upheld by the power of the State of North Dakota.

And further.

By nature, the sympathies of women are more easily interested in these humane matters than men, yet owing to the severities of our winter climate, outside of the towns and villages, women as officers could hardly be expected to appear at isolated farms and ranches during deep snows and cold weather, and where the amenities and chivalry to sex may not always be waived by an offending ranchman or stock tender. Therefore, vigorous and active men—with their heart in their work—deputized by the county sheriff if need be—and expenses of arrest and conviction allowed them should be paid by the commissioners from county funds.

We might venture that no tax would be more cheerfully paid by the average citizen—if necessary—than for the arrest and conviction of a person guilty of extreme cruelty to dumb animals.

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North Dakota's vast territorial expanse has been almost completely settled upon and its tillable land put under cultivation within a comparatively few years' time. People from almost every race and nation are here. The swarthy Assyrian, the blue eyed Northmen, and even the Turk is here and has taken up government land and made themselves homes. The city artizan is here, the Canadian woodman is here, the Icelander is here; and the hardy Russian from within the battered walls of Sebastapol or the sunken Sea of Azof, is here.

With this incongruous mass of would be-farmers most of them have recommenced life under new conditions, but a few of the many of these settlers—heretofore—have not had experience with stock of any kind—and there is the rub. To do farm work horses and cattle must be used—and in using them properly both mercy and judgment are required.

Who among us that have lived in North Dakota 25 years or more, but has witnessed many a case of the abuse of stock and suffering from the owners' or drivers' ignorance and who of us but has not witnessed the unmerciful beating of an overworked horse or ox for no other reason than the brutal whim or pure cussedness of the owner or driver.

For reasons here outlined we hope to see local Humane Societies established in every county, and that future legislation will sustain their good work.

ABOUT THE GAME LAWS AND THEIR ENFORCEMENT.

TO save the native American wild animals, of the herbivorous or herb eating kinds from extermination, as well as our insectivorous and game birds, it became necessary many years ago in the older states to make and enforce restrictive laws for their preservation. That these laws were at first openly violated and their enforcement resisted by the lawless element—the excuse being that by its special tenor the law was merely an adjunct of the penal statutes and not necessarily a part of it, and therefore entitled to no consideration. Fortunately for the birds, the law abiding class thought differently and their thoughts sustained the law and kept it upon the State statutes.

It was in the Eastern and Middle States that the first attempts were made for enacting laws to protect the birds. Beginning in the schools for the young, the people became educated up to the necessity of preserving the lives of insectivorous birds, that the birds in turn would be able and willing to assist in warding of calamity from destructive insects in orchards, gardens and farms. To protect the game birds and animals in these States it was more difficult, but the organization of sportsmen's clubs and kindred organizations for the preservation of this class of birds and animals—being composed of men from the higher walks of life—and with much political influence with legislators and the directors or promoters



BEAVERS' FEED BED—PAINTED WOODS LAKE. [From a photo by Dieson 1903]

of legislation, they were enabled to have several creditable measures passed for game protection, that well suited to the various States and localities, and although suited to the needs of the times, more practical and stringent laws have since grown from the crude nucleus until every New England State except possibly Rhode Island, have wild deer within their borders, and are even plentiful in both Maine and New Hampshire. The wild birds in these States, as well as those in New York and Pennsylvania continue to grow less in numbers from various causes, not the least is the destruction of the primitive woods; the unnatural whims of fashions and inducement offered to the greedy and heartless poacher to continue in his career of bird killing, laziness and semi-starvation.

In the Dakotas it was not until after the wanton and criminal destruction of the last of the wild buffalo herds which occurred about the year 1884-5, did there develop a sentiment among the more thoughtful that the hands of the wild animal slaughterers should be stayed, ere every native wild living thing in the woodlands or on the grass lands met the same fate that had swept the bison so completely from the face of the prairie and plain.

On August 21, 1887, the writer, as regular correspondent for the McLean County Mail, penned the following from his residence at Painted Woods in an article entitled "Enforce the Game Laws."

"Of all the Northwestern States or Territories, Dakota is pre-eminent in having the poorest set of Game Laws, and the least respect shown by our citizens in their enforcement. Who has ever heard of a convic-

tion under any of its clauses—and who among us does not see it repeatedly disregarded and the offenders silently condoned? And why?”

Then again—

“Enforce the game law. Let it not be said that the great prairies of Dakota, which twenty years ago was the natural home of countless thousands of the finest breeds and kinds of wild animals and birds to be found on the North American continent should in so short space of time fall even behind New Jersey with its ground hogs, snipe and reed birds as an attraction to the admirers of wild things.”

This letter was written two years after the great boom of '84 that had brought so many intending settlers with guns in their hands and each seeming anxious to gratify their animal killing propensity to its uttermost limit. And if this was not enough—came the swarms of would-be wolfers who purchased their strychnine at \$8 per case, and costing so little—covered it over the wide prairies with unstinted hands. The meat was poisoned; the animals were poisoned; the grass was poisoned; the birds were poisoned and the whole plain seemed a skeleton covered Golgotha.

Since the date of the foregoing communication of territorial days, while the game laws as amended are much improved, even though passing the gauntlet of hostility of the professional political grafter of the Jud LaMoure type—a man who could see little merit in any measure that he was not sponsor for. This brainy senator with a long legislative experience and a patient constituency to bear with his excentricities—has for

twenty years steadily opposed every measure likely to interfere with his annual hunting trips to which he seems personally so fond. While these game laws as placed upon the State statutes read well and their language plain, yet in some manner—no odds how direct the evidence for prosecution—there is seldom a conviction for enfraction of its provisions. This is owing to the prevailing opinion that such an act like the temperance law was apart from the general statutes and not taken so seriously in the matter of their enforcement as with common law infractions.



Many of the more thoughtful and law abiding citizens of North Dakota are advocating the procedure of the penal code direct in dealing with the destroyers of our insectivorous birds and herbivorous wild animals. In other words, while keeping laws upon the statutes as before except as to their enforcement which should be placed with the sheriff or his deputies, or constables of the county in which the law is being violated; the prosecuting witnesses to make complaint and appear in justice or district court under the same procedure that governs any other infraction of our common law and be subjected to its prescribed penalties without fear or favor.

This change in the law would mean the dismissal of the present useless appendage to the State of North Dakota known as the State Game Wardens and their deputies. The first game warden under the present law—Bowers of Fargo—had some interest in his work and done fairly well but the game wardens appointed and serving under the two State administrations of Governor

White might properly be termed actors in a farce comedy. During his first administration the governor appointed a party from Devils Lake as warden and in justice to the governor it is said the appointment was the result of a "political deal" in which the governor was expected to make good by this appointment of the game warden. During this fellows incumbency of the office of game warden, he took no interest whatever in the duties of the office beyond drawing his salary, which amounted to about \$2000 per annum. Even in the appointment of deputies he evidently followed random recommendations, as these officers were not of the active or alert kind, nor were they ever able to get sight of offending poachers who advertised rather than hid their crimes and misdeeds. No one ever reported the presence of the State game warden in any part of the State other than his own town, as far as the writer could learn. In plain English he was properly a "stoten bottle" as far as the administration of the office of game warden was concerned.

During the interim of Governor White's second appointment the law had been changed in the division of the State into two districts instead of the one as before that date. But the service did not improve with the induction of the new regime. A personal follower of the governor at Valley City received his appointment as one of the wardens and a Mr. Hale of Grand Forks received the appointment for the northern district. Not one citizen in five hundred in this State know the name of the first appointment—off hand—without consulting his State directory. And if he has made any effort to secure a single arrest for the many offences committed

by the game destroyers throughout his district the public is not apprised of it, and if he or his deputies have earned a single dollar for the State in the detection or prosecution of offenders, the writer of these lines would gladly chronicle it. But unfortunately for the creatures for whose mercy they would appeal, this warden's administration is a blank. Mr. Hale—who is said to be a fine gentleman personally—report has it, started out on his official career by arresting one of his own deputies for killing deer out of season in Williams County N. D.

In pleasing contrast to this supineness and inefficiency of the North Dakota game wardens, is that of State Game Warden Fullerton, of Minnesota, who has earned a national reputation for his fortitude and fearlessness in his crusades after the poachers and game law breakers of that State. While every impediment possible has been placed in his way by rich commission houses dealing in contraband game; by express companies who carry mysterious consignments from the north woods, as well as friends and abettors of law breakers everywhere, Sam Fullerton has earned a reputation that any State would be proud off.

Warden Fullerton in his recommendations, is responsible for many amendments to the Minnesota game laws that help him in his good work in caging the professional poacher and quieting title of the outlaw braggart as the "whole thing" in the Minnesota north woods. In a recent interview with a reporter on one of the twin city dailies, Mr. Fullerton strikes at the excuses and subterfuges of the professional law breaker with some pointed legislation for his undoing, from

which the following extract is taken, and to which the friends of game protection in North Dakota would be glad to see such recommendations formulated into laws in their State. Of course the squirrel is not much in evidence in North Dakota, but the red variety is to be found in the Turtle Mountains and on Mouse River.

In his interview with the reporter, Warden Fullerton said :

“Minnesota should have a law protecting rabbits and squirrels during a portion of the year—from February 1, to September 1. The passage of such a law will mean the greater safety to all kinds of game.

“Game is being slaughtered today in endless quantities, and much of it by people who go out under the guise of rabbit and squirrel hunting done during the early winter, but after the first of the year it is too often the case that would be rabbit hunters turn to poachers.

“In the early months of the year, the game which we are endeavoring to protect is literally at the mercy of unscrupulous hunters. A covey of quail found huddling in the lee of a hedge or a tree are often shot as they sit there, and the hunter never admits that he has secured anything but a few rabbits or squirrels. Birds of all kinds which make their winter home in the northern woods, and the larger game which we pay wardens to protect, are slaughtered in great quantities in this way.

“A law placing a ‘close season’ on squirrel and rabbits, after January 15 or February 1, would work no hardship to anyone and would deprive the poachers of the excuse which they now have for going into the woods at all seasons with a gun. Boys are among the worst offenders as they shoot at everything in sight.”

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The boy and his gun—just now—is attracting considerable attention among the lawmakers of several states—particularly New York, and the boy without the gun seems to be the proper position in which to place him if we would have less maimed people to help through a long life—the result of boy carelessness with fire arms. Even out in this western State of North Dakota where the population is so scattered, how often we read the newspaper item—“boy accidently shot”—or “didn’t know it was loaded.” While our population is not numerous in comparison with our vast acreage era, yet we read of from twenty-five to fifty separate newspaper items yearly, similiar in caption to the above that tells of killed and maimed boys. Better to educate the savage out of the young fellow, by buying him a kodak or camera instead of a gun, that he might learn to protect and not destroy the small birds of our woodlands and prairies.

While the tresspass law remain upon the statutes of North Dakota, the resident owners of farms need not wholly dispair, for in this the law makes every land owner a game warden over his own premises and his own rights are imperative. Whatever game birds and animals are saved from year to year in this State are due to the partial enforcement of the law as to tresspassers, in which the farmer posts up his notices of “no tresspassing with dog or gun” or “no hunting here” and backs it up with fortitude to the dismay of the brazen wrongdoers who cower before a determined person in the right. But the penalty as to wilfull tresspass

is not severe enough to meet some cases that needs to mete out severe punishment to the convicted persons.

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In concluding these impressions about the game laws and their enforcement in North Dakota, we can but hope that the game laws of Minnesota will be drawn upon in future legislation in amending the game and trespass laws as a good guide in the preservation of our useful birds and animals and for a more methodical and surer way of convicting offenders, not forgetting that much depends on the courage, character, pride in the success of, and special interest in his work of the wardens and their deputies. These officers should have a monthly stipend or salary, but should be kept continuously on the move in sections where violations of the game laws may be looked for. An officer elected to a county office on beginning his duties enters the court house and takes charge of the county records. In like manner the duties of a game warden lies among the haunts of wild animals and birds and it is for them and with them he is expected to use the major portion of his time.

While admitting the necessity of some radical and timely amendments to the game laws for their better enforcement, it also needs a few wardens of the Fullerton kind to lend material assistance thereto.

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One of the old timers in Dakota Territory is Jos. H. Taylor, who resides at Washburn, N. D. and who has

been a continuous resident here since 1867, though being here even before that date. He is a charming writer, and has the faculty of close observation usually well cultivated as is usual with all frontiersmen. The third edition of his work *Sketches of Frontier and Indian Life on the Upper Missouri and Great Plains* has just appeared; the first appearing in 1889 and the second in 1895. The present edition contains much new matter. The work embraces over 300 pages and is embellished with good illustrations. The book is valuable from a historical standpoint as it contains many events of interest, and the Indian legends are graphically told. The work is one that will interest every reader."—*Fargo (N. D.) Forum*.



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The Great Plains of 1864, Fort Berthold in 1869, Early days around Fort Buford, With a Gros Ventre War Party, Bull-boating through the Sioux country, and

many others of similiar nature gives glimpses of Indian life and thought in the early days that are both interesting and valuable. Lonesome Charley, Buckskin Joe and others are western character sketches of a type now rapidly passing away.

Altogether the collection is unique, and bears an interest not only for the Indian scholar but for the general reader who likes an occassional dip into the unusual."—Southern (Va.) Workman.



"It cannot be said of Mr. Taylor, as of so many of the writers, who take up space in even the best of our magazines, that he has rushed into print when he had no story to tell.

Thirty years ago, when all Dakota was one vast battle ground for the "blood-thursty Sioux," the "Fost-eared Assinnaboines," "Blackleg Anathaways," "painted Gros Ventres" "hidden faced Sisseton" and other savage tribes, all engaged in a war of extermination, one tribe against another and all against the buffalo and the pale face, Mr. Taylor was a hunter and trapper at Painted Woods on the Missouri. Strange indeed, if any man who had passed so many years in this wild life should not have a tale to tell that were worth reading and Mr. Taylor had rare ability as well as opportunity for collecting material for his book.

He has set out in a natural and modest way many dramatic incidents in his own life and in the lives of those with whom he was brought in contact. Tales are told of battles fought and friendships made; of desperate struggles with cold and hunger in the terrible blizzard, of Indian love and vengence from which neither age nor infancy, womanhood nor weakness could hope for pity.

Yet this man, who surely knows them well, is no enemy of the Indians and his book is no mere tale but a study of these people.

A "Fated War Party" is the story of a tribe, "Band of Canoes" who made their home in our own Mouse river valley. The scenes of many of the tales are familiar to us and since reading Mr. Taylor's book, they

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We call attention of our readers to the need of fostering the love for our surroundings especially in our young people and recommend "Frontier and Indian Life" as a means."—Ward County (N. D.) Reporter.

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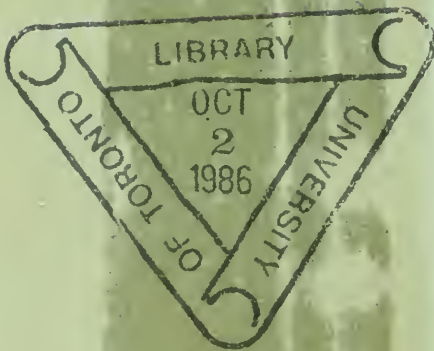
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—Minneapolis Journal.



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