

subsistence of their cattle. Instead of imitating the foresight and industry of the Pika, they rob it of its means of support, and so devote the animals that set them so good an example, to famine and death.* How much better would it be if, instead of robbing and starving these interesting animals, they learned from them to provide in the proper season a supply of hay for the winter provender of their horses.

But no animals in this, or indeed any other Order of Mammalians, are so admirable for their instincts and their results as the *beavers*.

I have more than once alluded to some proceedings of these, seemingly, half-reasoning animals, and shall now as briefly as possible give some account of those fabrics in which their wonderful instinct is principally manifested. There are two writers who had great opportunities of gaining information concerning them; Samuel Hearne, during his journey to the Northern Ocean, in the years 1769, 1770, 1771, and 1772; and Captain Cartwright, who resided nearly sixteen years on the coast of Labrador. To them I am principally indebted for the particulars of the history here given.

From the breaking up of [the frost to the fall of the leaf, the beavers desert their lodges, and roam about unhoused, and unoccupied by their usual labours, except that they have the foresight to begin felling their timber early in the summer. They set about building some time in the month of August. Those that erect their habitations in small rivers or creeks, in which the water is liable to be drained off, with wonderful sagacity provide against that evil by forming a dike across the stream, almost straight where the current is weak, but where it is more rapid, curving more or less, with the convex side opposed to the stream. They

* N. D. D'H. N. xxvi. 407—410.