

troop, they have, with one consent, deserted it, and retired to some more secure and less frequented neighbourhood.

Winter is the season principally allotted for hunting them, as it is then only that their fur is in perfection; and when, after their dwellings are demolished, a number of them are taken, their society is never restored; but those which escape captivity or death, become houseless wanderers. Their genius is overcome by apprehension, and they never more attempt to exert it, but conceal themselves in holes under ground, and reduced to the condition of other animals, they lead a timid life, employing themselves only to satisfy their immediate and urgent wants; nor do they any longer retain those qualities which they so eminently possess in their social state. However marvellous the description we have just given of the society of the beaver may appear, it is beyond a doubt strictly consonant to truth. A number of ocular witnesses have agreed in their writings to every fact I have mentioned; and if the present recital differs from some authors whom I have followed, it is only in such points as appeared to me to be too marvellous and improbable to be believed. Many writers, not content with ascribing to the beaver social manners, and evident talents for architecture,