

purpose with their feet and tails ; and they transport it in such large quantities, that they block up all the intervals between the piles. These piles are formed by a number of stakes in several rows, exactly of a height ; they are placed opposite to each other, and extend across the river : that this embankment may sustain the weight of the water, it is made sloping, so that although it is twelve feet at the base, it is not more than three at the top ; from which ingenious contrivance it has not only the requisite thickness and solidity, but also a form of others the most proper for confining the water, maintaining its weight, and baffling its attacks. Near the top of this bank they make two or three openings for the superfluous water to escape, and which they occasionally enlarge or contract as the river rises or falls ; and when by any sudden inundations their work is damaged on the retreat of the waters they repair it with the utmost diligence.

After this display of their public labours, it would be superfluous to add a description of their private constructions, were it not necessary that, in history, an account should be given of every fact, and where not this first great work of the beaver, made with an uniform intention to render their smaller habitations more commodious.