

the New Englanders' shiftlessness." Such families not only run short of sawed wood, but often the whole wood-pile stands in danger of being depleted. The farmer has then to resort with ax and sled to the woods for a new supply, and the housewife has to burn green wood, which is her especial detestation. She can only make the best of it, and that best is to always keep a supply of green sticks under the stove or in the oven drying, while they await their turn to become a part of the fire. The drying wood gives to the room a peculiar and not unpleasant odor.

Winter work is not so arduous or long continued as that of other seasons of the year. Aside from the regular work of looking after the stock and odd jobs of tinkering and tool-mending about his premises, the farmer's chief concern is his wood-pile. If he has a good deal of woodland, chopping and logging form an important feature of the winter. If he has little, he often hires himself out to those who want help in the woods.

The best parts of the trees which make good timber are hauled away as logs to the sawmills. The tops of such trees and their branches are cut into four foot lengths, split if necessary, and piled up ready to be sawed for the stove. It is the method, usually, to cut the particular piece of forest selected for work clear of all standing wood that has any value for sawmill or burning purposes. Spring finds the land bare, save for the brush-heaps, a few saplings, and an occasional gaunt and decayed old trunk still upright. The mountain-sides and the rocky hills and hollows are the chief homes of the forests, but the willows and poplars along the river banks are sometimes a source of wood-pile supply. In some towns are shops where tobacco-sorting or bro-



Breaking out the Road after a Snow-storm

tying have a place among winter industries. Such shops are famous lounging-places, and the affairs of town, State, and Nation, and in particular of neighbors, are settled there daily.

Where there is proximity to ponds or large streams the farmers have little ice-houses, back of their homes, which must be filled some morning the oxen, or the horses, are hitched to the long sled, and, with saws, poles, and grappling irons, the men-folks

start for the pond. It is sloppy work, but there are chances of diversifying it by taking along hooks and lines and estab-



Deserted House—Homestead of the "Tory Marchant," Longmeadow, Mass.

lishing a skirmish-line of fish-holes in the neighborhood. Winter is a time of increased social activity. There are more

"doings" at the church; the singing-school starts the first week of December at the Town Hall, and the Chautauqua club gathers in turn at the members' houses every week. Perhaps the villagers start a lyceum at the school-house, speak pieces, sing songs, have dialogues, and debate "Which is the most useful animal, the cat or the dog?" and other important questions.

For the children there are sliding and skating, and some youth, about this time, suggests the wild scheme of clubbing together and hiring an omnibus for a grand sleigh-ride of all the young people. Some fine evening they all pile into the long sleigh and drive off behind the four horses with their jingling bells, for ten or twelve miles, and have a turkey supper at midnight at a tavern. Afterward they may have a dance. Not always, for dancing is considered a doubtful amusement by many country families. And, indeed, in the country dances the company is



"The Woods that Bring the Sunset Near"

