

provident habits enable it to maintain its body in a plump condition, affording thus a dainty morsel greatly prized and sought after by its enemies. These were many. The dog, the cat, the fox, the marten, and every species of hawk, owl and crow were unremitting in their attacks on the foragers, as they sallied forth in quest of stores; and not infrequently the fox, the marten, and even the rat carried the war into their very dwellings, and left their homesteads desolate. The extraordinary fecundity of the animal, however, quickly filled up the gaps made in their numbers by such casualties. With the exception of the more severe months of winter, the females brought forth every six weeks a litter of ten or twelve. In seasons when their homes were kept warm and protected from the invasion of enemies by deep snow-drifts, the increase in the population was marvellous. Two or three consecutive winters of this description brought about those disasters to cultivated lands which in years not long gone by spread desolation round the cabins of the settlers. It would appear however, as if some feelings of a domestic character were interwoven with the nature of the mouse. He abandons his native haunts only when his numerous progeny fails to find sufficient support in the immediate neighbourhood, and when starvation is sure to be his lot. In such an emergency the march in quest of food was conducted in a long narrow column which, turning aside for no obstacle, went onward in a direct line, until the cultivated fields were reached. The column of march then became a line of attack, and in an incredibly short time energetic voracity converted rich harvest fields into barren wastes. This accomplished, the marauders resumed their route in quest of fresh pastures. Should a river, or the sea itself, cross the line of march, the intrepid leaders plunged confidently in, followed by their devoted adherents who fought to the death with the waves and currents. This in the early days of settlement was the usual termination of such incursions. In these times the cultivated lands generally lay along the seashore or skirted the margins of navigable rivers, which might either protect the crops from these fell invaders, or overwhelm them in ruin on their departure for fresh depredations.

Many were the devices resorted to by the early settler in