

ning of their new life less trying than it otherwise would have been. They evidently believed the old adage that "union is strength," and practiced it with beneficial results in this strange phase of their existence. Each head of a family, after drawing his lot, would select a site for the cabin, and a small clearing was then made. As the course of settlement followed the shores of the lakes, bays and rivers, the first habitations were placed near the water, and usually upon a small eminence, as a security against wet. The preparations for building were confined to the general order of proceeding, the small tents brought with them serving as shelter for the women and children, in the interval, the men being content to find a few hours rest beneath the boughs of giant trees. Few teams were had, and for the time being few were required. The timber for building was soon felled near the spot, and cut into proper lengths. The logs and poles were small, so that a number of men could easily carry them some distance without much inconvenience. These were notched and placed in position, while others of the party were preparing boards and "puncheons" for the roof and floor. A straight-grained tree of suitable dimensions was selected, from which pieces about four feet long and as wide as the timber would allow were cut, and split with a large "frow." These, unshaved, were used for covering the roof, being placed upon the poles so that each range would lap some distance over the one below, and held in their places by means of logs placed at proper distances upon them. Sometimes the covering was made with long slabs, split from a tree, the rounded and flat sides being placed alternately up and down. On one side an opening was cut about three feet wide for a door, the ends of the cut logs being secured by two upright posts, through which holes were bored for pinning them fast. A similar opening, but wider, was made at the other end for a chimney. This was built of logs, deep and wide, so as to admit of a back and jamba of large stones. The puncheons for the flooring being laid, they were levelled, a clapboard door made, and the house was ready for occupation. Filling in the

crevices with moss and plaster was postponed until cold weather made this part of the work a necessity.

The furniture was rude and scanty. A table constructed of a split slab, with four legs set in auger holes; some three-legged stools, made in the same manner; a few pins stuck in the logs at the back of the house supported slabs for holding dishes; a fork with one end in the floor and the other fastened to a joist served for a bedstead, by placing a pole in the fork, with one end through a crack between the logs in the wall—these were the principal articles, which filled the pioneer's cabin. Cooking utensils and table furniture were equally limited in variety. An iron pot and kettle; a few pewter dishes, plates and spoons; some wooden bowls, trenchers and noggins, made up the list with which our grandmothers ornamented their pantries and side-boards. Cups and saucers were a novelty not very highly appreciated by many, as they were too liable to be broken, and regarded as an effeminate innovation designed for persons of quality, who did not labor. A genuine backwoodsman of that time would have thought himself degraded by showing a fondness for any such things.

The diet was simple and wholesome, well calculated to nourish the system and fit it for the imperative toil of their lives. Coarse bread, made of mashed grain, meat, vegetables, milk (in limited quantity), and fish and game of various kinds composed the usual dishes, though many were reduced to a much more moderate fare. On festive occasions a substantial spread of more delicate viands was prepared; but this trouble and expense rarely found favor. For many years it was absolutely impossible for the settlers to command any of the luxuries of life, and they were for the most part content with the bare necessities.

There being no mills for grinding grain until several years after settlement began, and then at such wide intervals as to make it a week's journey to get to them and return, each family had a substitute in the form of a "hominy block," "grater" or "hand-mill," with which they converted corn and other kind of grain into tolerable flour, generally by a laborious process.