

least prevent it from rolling back again. We saw two of them in half a minute force a ball for a distance of eighteen inches up a gentle slope, and when they reached a soft part of the road, one of them began to excavate a hole, and soon entirely disappeared under ground, heaving up the earth till it cracked and opened wide enough to allow his companion to push the ball of dung into it. The round mass immediately began to sink, and in a few minutes was out of sight. We saw another pair try in vain to bury their treasure, for they had selected a spot where the soil was too hard; at last they gave up the attempt, and, rolling it away, set out in search of a more favorable spot.

We crossed several plowed fields on the slope of the hills which descend toward the Potomac, where a singular kind of manure is used, consisting of dead fish, and almost exclusively of the bony pike, or gar-fish (*Lepidosteus oxyurus*). The hard stony scales resist decomposition for several years. The fishermen told us that they are greatly annoyed by constantly taking these pikes in their nets with the herrings. There is so enormous an abundance of herrings in some spots in this estuary, that 50,000 have sometimes been taken this season in a few hours.

In a marsh near the inn, we observed numerous habitations of the musk-rat, standing up like hay-cocks. When the small size of the animal is considered, the quantity of dried grass, reeds, and rushes accumulated in one of these hummocks, at least a cart-load, is surprising. We waded through the water to one of them, and found that it was four feet high, and nine feet in diameter. When we pulled it to pieces, the smell of musk was very perceptible. At the depth of about sixteen inches from the top we found a cavity, or chamber, and a small gallery leading from it to another chamber below, from which a second gallery descended, and then went upward again to a third chamber, from all which there was a perpendicular passage, leading down to below the level of the water, so that the rats can dive, and, without being seen again, enter their apartments, in which they breathe air.

The unio, or fresh-water mussel, is a favorite food of these rats, and they often leave the shells on the banks of the American rivers, with one valve entire and the other broken. In the even-