

LONG AGO.

Once knew all the birds that came  
And nestled in our orchard trees;  
For every flower I had a name—  
My friends were woodchucks, toads and  
bees.

I knew where thrived, in yonder glen,  
What plant would soothe a stone-bruised  
toe—  
Oh, I was very learned then,  
But that was very long ago.

I knew the spot upon the hill  
Where checkerberries could be found,  
I knew the rushes near the mill,  
Where pickered lay that weighed a  
pound.

I knew the wood, the very trees,  
Where lived the poaching, sneaky crew,  
And all the woods and crows knew me,  
But that was very long ago.

And, pining for the joys of youth,  
I tread the old, familiar spot,  
Only to learn this solemn truth:  
I have forgotten, I am forgot.  
Yet here's this youngest at my knee  
Knows all the things I used to know;  
To think I once was wise as he—  
But that was very long ago.

I know it's folly to complain  
Of whatso'er the fates decree,  
Yet, were not wishes all in vain,  
I tell you what my wish should be:  
I'd wish to be a boy again,  
Back to the friends I used to know,  
For I was, oh, so happy then—  
But that was very long ago.

—[Eugene Field.]

A Fearful Straw Ride

BY EMILIE EGAN.

The young people of to-day can scarcely realize what a "straw ride" was like a hundred years ago, or that the fun-provoking excursion enjoyed so much nowadays had an ancient and necessary origin. It is probable, however, that as much fun and laughter accompanied the straw ride then as now, for young people are alike in all ages and the world over.

When our English forefathers settle first in the New England States, especially Vermont and New Hampshire, they established their homes upon the highlands, because, strange as it now seems, the larger lakes, ponds and rivers—where the beautiful meadows now are—were compassed about with miles and miles of thickly wooded swamps, which were almost impassable even in summer.

Last summer I climbed the mountain which is the scene of this story, and I counted there forty old cellar holes, overgrown with grass and brush, but indisputable evidence of former homes.

I asked stupidly—feeling certain the answer would be, "Killed by Indians or devoured by wild beasts"—"Where did all the people go to who once lived here?" The practical one of our party answered, "Oh, they moved down gradually, for, as the woods were cut off, the swamps dried up."

A hundred years ago the settlers on the mountain made nothing of the deep snows which in winter covered all that country, but turned out with shovels and ox sleds—the only vehicles known in the mountains in those times—and manfully "broke roads," in order that their social intercourse with their "Notchite" friends might not be interrupted.

Especially was this the case in a winter, when Mr. Stevens, the most "forehanded" of them all, had built a frame mansion, and was going to give a house-warming ball. A string of ox-teams was sent over the rough, drifted road, and all was ready for the revelers.

There were enough people to fill two sleds, and Thad Waldo and Freeman Eddy, each of whom owned two yoke of oxen, were chosen as teamsters. Their sleds were filled with straw and blankets, ready for their respective loads, and they started merrily off at four o'clock, reaching their destination before dark. They stayed there until three in the morning, gayly dancing and feasting, with never a thought of danger.

When the teamsters went out to "tackle up" for the return home, they found the sky heavy with dark clouds and much warmer than when they came over.

"Guess we're going to have our January thaw," remarked young Waldo.

"And I'm afraid we'll get a slump over the south side. It won't be very easy riding over those stumps and stones," returned Eddy.

For a mile or so the high spirits of the party made the woods and mountains ring with song and laughter, but by the time they reached the heights the fatigue of the dance began to tell upon them, and the younger of them commenced making pillows of the laps of their elders, who, also, soon became silent.

Waldo and Eddy, as they reached the notch, jumped from their sleds to better guide their teams down the mountain, and the latter shouted as he reached the road, "Old Buck and Bright will be more lively company than that sleepy crowd."

The drowsy rattle of laughter which followed this rally was suddenly drowned by a horrible scream which seemed to fairly fill the pass, echoing and re-echoing among the mountains as if being answered by a hundred others.

The two teamsters sprang quickly to the heads of their teams, now trembling and cuddling up to each other in fright. The men knew that they had but a moment to prevent a stampede down the mountain; for, as soon as the poor oxen should recover from their first alarm, they would seek safety in flight, when it seemed impossible that the whole party could escape being dashed to pieces.

Every person in the company, from the oldest to the youngest, fully appreciated their double danger. They knew that that defiant scream came from a hungry panther—and that it meant death.

Instantly every young man on the sleds had his gun to his shoulder—they never went without them in "those good old days"—peering sharply among the hemlocks which lined the road, for the two fiery eyes, the only part of the ugly beast which they expected to see in the cloudy darkness. Failing a shot, they knew that he would jump for them, when they passed under the tree where he had lodged, when he gave his warning scream. Should he miss, it would in no wise end the chase, for they knew that by his huge, vaulting springs he could soon force ahead to a vantage ground in another tree.

The road through which these hapless young people took their fearful ride is nearly obliterated now by a sturdy growth of young trees, except the "Three Ledges" around which the road ran. No trees can ever cover those cruel rocks. Here was the fearful climax which must end such a race, even should they keep together until they reached the ledges.

In thirty seconds, quick-witted young Waldo had unhitched his leading oxen and turned them into the deep snow, hoping that they might possibly attract the panther. Thus he obtained also a better chance to control the others. By this time a second scream, more defiant than the other, rang through the woods.

This second scream came from behind them over through the notch, and was immediately answered by the first, making the poor, trembling oxen fairly bound with fright, and sending them off on a mad gallop. The teamsters instinctively caught hold of yoke and horn. Young Waldo shouted back to those in the sleds, "Hold on for your lives!"

It was an almost useless warning. The young men who had risen were thrown among those who had not, their extended guns dealing cruel blows as they fell. But not a word of fear or complaint was uttered by the hardy young settlers, and no sound was heard for a few minutes except Waldo's and Eddy's shouts in their endeavors to check the mad speed of their teams; yet it seemed to those in the sleds, as they tossed and bounded from side to side, catching and losing their hold upon the stakes, that the next stump or stone must certainly wreck them.

Even the panther was forgotten in their efforts to keep their places, until the chase was freshly announced by the united screams of the panthers, now certainly both behind them. That the oxen had distanced them in their first mad run was plain; but that gave the unfortunate straw-riders no hope of an ultimate escape, for they could now count by the screams the rapidly-made jumps of their pursuers, which were fast closing in upon them.

Waldo's team, though much winded, was running fairly well, through his timely forethought in turning loose his leaders; while Eddy, who had barely time to catch the horn of his near ox, had no control over his leaders, which, in their successive frights at each scream from the panthers, bolted frightfully, adding to their danger as well as lessening their chances of escape by flight.

It would seem that the dangers already surrounding the party could not be increased, but those in the last sled became suddenly aware that Waldo's abandoned leaders were in the road behind them. They recognized the danger immediately, and tried, by flinging out their free arms, and shouting, to change the course of the pursuing oxen, but the poor, terror-blinded creatures plunged straight on, heeding nothing.

There was no time to escape this new danger, had the occupants of the sled any strength to do aught but hold on, and each face turned toward the end of the sled-boards. But when the shock came, it almost seemed the Providence interfered to save them, for only one ox planted his feet over the endboard, while the other fell with only his big horns and head inside, where by a miracle they hung, only to be savagely shaken off by the next stump or stone.

The continually nearing screams of the panthers showed that they were still in hot pursuit, and there was a regretful hope in each mind that the poor oxen might not be able to rise, thereby becoming a sacrifice for the safety of the load of human beings clinging to the sled.

Not so; for in a moment, just as a panther sprang from a tree across the road, probably not fifty feet behind the sled, the oxen were in the road again and madder than ever with fright.

Eddy, who had been obliged to look ahead, though comprehending fully all that had occurred behind, knew what the others did not, that Waldo's team must be far ahead, for he had not heard nor seen anything of him for a long time; and they themselves were flying past the "Boulder Spurs," with the three dangerous ledges less than a half-mile beyond.

Turning his face back, he shouted hoarsely, "For God's sake, shoot the oxen and be quick about it, for we are nearing the ledge!"

Two shots instantly answered his command, and, in the short interval of partial silence that ensued, he heard two sounds, which, strong, brave man as he was, he never forgot, and always remembered with a sense of unforgiven cruelty. It was a long, mournful "loo," a piteous petition for help, as it were, from one of the doomed oxen; and, "Oh, see!" The poor thing is dragging his mate!" in a sweet, girlish voice. But soon the poor fellow was left far behind,

and when they heard the next scream from the panthers, an agonized bellow followed, telling of the fate of the oxen.

For a while all believed themselves free from the panthers, and the oxen which were drawing them evidently shared their belief, for they showed signs of slackening speed; though ten minutes before, it had seemed as though nothing could save the party from being swept over the ledges, if carried upon them with such fearful speed. Now all began to hope that the team might be slowed up sufficiently to allow them to jump off. They began to take an interest in young Eddy's efforts to stop his oxen, and noticed that Waldo was not ahead of them. They saw that Eddy was redoubling his efforts to slacken up, with a vigorous use of his thick goad up the noses of the oxen. The stick had not left his hand in all that terrible ride down the mountain. Then he shouted, "Get ready to jump when I tell you, and jump to the upper side." A few more cruelly vigorous blows. Then, jerking the head of his near ox sharply round, he cried, "Jump!" And with one wild shout the whole sled-load landed in a struggling mass in the deep, soft snow.

Young Eddy, when he saw his sled empty, let go his hold upon his oxen and fell backward, through sheer exhaustion; but almost immediately he sprang to his feet again in horror. The worst danger they had been in to-night was upon them; for either one of their former pursuers, or an entirely new comer, had uttered his blood-curdling scream just over their heads.

They were in a narrow opening, only a few feet from the first ledge, where there was a sheer descent of sixty feet, with a rise of twenty feet of broken rock above them. Nothing could save them now from an encounter with a hungry panther.

Were the poor oxen fated that night, one and all, to perish that their precious load might be saved? The oxen had made but a few staggering bounds away, just to the open ledge, when they were checked and sent huddling and backing upon each other again by the sudden renewal of danger, and the leaders, in their efforts to get back to their human friends, turned completely round upon the other yoke, twisting them until the sled grated over the ledge.

Just for a moment the horrified young people forgot their own danger, as they watched the white stripes in the leaders' faces and listened to the sound of the sled-runners on the rocky ledge; then another death-threatening scream, and a huge body shot through the misty air. There was a frightful bellowing and a short scramble of hoofs; then sled, oxen, and panther disappeared, to be heard from but once more with a crashing thud as they struck the rocks below.

The suppressed feelings of the straw-riders found vent this time in a regular stampede for their homes; the girls were crying and sobbing, and unconditionally accepted help from the young men; and all, though it was mid-winter, forgot completely their lost wraps, caps, hoods and mittens.

All thought for certain that Waldo's team must have gone over the ledge, but only a few of the strongest young men had breath to express their grief or pity. Their surprise and joy were about equal, after they had recovered their breath sufficiently to see, count, and remember names, to find in the crowd of settlers coming out to meet them, every individual of the first load.

Waldo and Eddy suffered the most from the adventure; Eddy had rheumatic fever, Waldo constituted himself doctor and nurse-in-general to him, and they talked over many a time the fearful incidents of the ride.

The two places where the oxen fell were made the common hunting-grounds of both settlements, and many a panther, wolf, and fox were killed there before the winter was through.—[Romance.]

Terrorized by Wild Hogs.

There is terror among the people living on Mud Bay Point, caused by the roaming through that country of a drove of wild hogs. There are a dozen or two of the beasts. They have been breeding there for about seven years, becoming wilder all the time, but not until the last two months have they made themselves dangerous.

They are of a large-boned variety and have grown to an enormous height. They also have tusks. They live mostly on the skunk cabbage growing in the swamps, but as this provender has run low they have become further enraged with hunger and are seeking other food.

Only a few days ago they took after a fleet-footed pony and ran him down, killing him almost instantly. The residents of the Point have found it necessary to keep their stock within doors. Occasionally, however, an animal has become loose and lost its life by the attacks of the boars.

Nobody in the neighborhood dares go out after night, and extreme caution is exercised when out of doors during daylight.

A number of expert riders and marksmen living in Olympia are contemplating the formation of a company to engage in a wild boar hunt on Mud Bay Point, and it is probable that the fierce drove will be exterminated. The people living there do not feel equal to the task alone.—[Oregon Olympian-Tribune.]

It will surprise a great many people to be informed that there are 160,000 Afro-American Catholics in the United States, with thirty-one sisterhoods teaching in 108 schools over 8,000 children.

SOCIAL REFORM.

THE UNIVERSITY SETTLEMENT SOCIETY'S CLUB.

What the People Will Do When They are Given an Opportunity for Social and Intellectual Improvement.

Alice Chittenden gives an interesting account of her visit to the University Settlement Society in Delancey street, New York, as follows: "It is in the heart of the Tenth Ward, that great district variously known as the 'Typhus,' the 'Sulicide' and the 'Crooked' ward, where, on a single square mile, 335,000 human beings are packed; where the population is twice as dense as that of the most crowded London district, and five times as dense as that of any great city in the United States. An area where everything tempts men to vice. All this is within a mile of a part of the city where there are thousands of vacant lots.

Not only do liquor shops flaunt their signs on every one of the three corners allowed by law, but often on the fourth, with numerous smaller places between where liquor is sold. Dives of the lowest kind and 'coffee saloons,' where every sort of immorality is kept up until the early hours of the morning, abound, and gambling resorts are so ingeniously disguised and so innocent appearing as to deceive the very elect. The Hebrews form a large part of the population, and where they go the 'sweat shop,' with its attendant evils springs up.

Against all of these evils the Neighborhood Guild and its band of devoted adherents have to contend.

What are its weapons? I discovered two of them as I stopped in front of the four-story building of Milwaukee brick, whose bright windows and neat Holland shades offer so marked a contrast to the buildings in the vicinity, to read these placards: 'Gymnasium, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday even-



THE POOL ROOM.

ings from 8 to 10. Class instruction Wednesday evening, 8-9.30. Five cents per week. 'Pool room open every evening from 8 to 10.30. Two cents per cue. Initiation for 25 cents.'

As I paused, attracted by these announcements, I was soon surrounded by a crowd of happy, eager child faces.

"I go to school here, and oh, ain't it nice!" said one. "I learn to cook and to sew," said another.

So, having learned where the Guild was, I passed in to discover what it was.

The first floor covers a lot 25 x 100 feet and contains two large assembly rooms and a gymnasium. In the latter a number of little girls were practicing with such evident enthusiasm as can be felt only by those who have never known what it was to have even "elbow room" in life, not to speak of the absolutely unattainable freedom of childish gambols in fields and meadows. These children come from homes where three rooms for a large family is an almost princely abode, for many of them "home" means a single room shared by four or five.

The assembly rooms, which are also used for dancing, have the walls hung with beautiful etchings loaned by the Century Company, and photographs. Many of the former are the original sketches made by their own artists of illustrations which have appeared in the magazine. Among the latter is a large and beautiful Sistine Madonna.

Dancing classes are held every Saturday evening and are under the auspices of the oldest club of the Guild, the O. I. F. (Order Improvement and Friendship). There are about 170 members, pretty equally composed of each sex. The men pay \$1.75 and the women \$1.25 for a course of twelve lessons, the dues paying for the dancing master at \$10 per lesson and three pieces of music. Mr. James Galvin is master of ceremonies, and the circular announces that "the strictest ballroom etiquette will be observed."

The second floor contains a library and reading room and a large room used for club purposes and as a cooking school. The library contains 1,200 volumes, all of them donated. It opened in February, 1893, with twenty members, the fee being 5 cents, not a week, but for the entire year. New members were added at the rate of from 60 to 120 a month. It was suspended on the 15th of June, 1893, and waited to be opened until a permanent librarian could be engaged. Hundreds of applicants were also then awaiting admission. Cards of admission must be signed by some reliable person testifying to the good character of the applicant. A placard in large type advises them to "read slowly, pause frequently,

keep clean and return duly with the corners of the leaves not turned down."

The attendants made each child a special study, and instead of allowing them to choose their books at random, helped them to works on subjects specially fitted to foster the bent of each mind. It was surprising to see lots of 10 and 11 choosing histories and biographies of statesmen. One scrap of a boy took home and read "Milman's history of the Jews." It is impossible to keep a United States history on the shelves.

The third floor contains the rooms for clubs and various classes and pool rooms, where the three tables are all running every evening, with an average of five cues per game.

If too narrow orthodoxy should call this fighting the devil with his own weapons, ask yourself whether it is



THE READING ROOM.

better that these young men, bound all the day to occupations of the most toilsome and disagreeable kind, should play a healthful, and in itself a nowise demoralizing game here or in the saloons. And why should billiards be worse for the masses than for the Four Hundred.

The top floor is used exclusively by the residing workers, headed by Dr. Stanton Coit. It includes a sitting room, dining room, three bed rooms, pantry and kitchen. The halls, stairs and club room floors are bare. The top floor is covered with matting and artistic but inexpensive art rugs, and all the furniture is of the simplest description, but I do not think I exaggerate when I say that nine out of ten housekeepers could take a lesson here in neatness and cleanliness; the housekeepers of this establishment, be it borne in mind, are men. Such shining windows, such spotless floors, such immaculate freedom from dust I do not pretend to compass in my own simple meager.

Having learned where the Neighborhood Guild is and briefly what it is, the inquiring mind next asks, "What are its aims, what it has accomplished and what are its aspirations for the future?"

Its object, quoting from its constitution, is "to bring men and women of education into closer relations with the laboring classes for their mutual benefit." Being debarred by this constitution from becoming "the vehicle of any creed, religious, political or socio-economic," its efforts to do good must rest upon deep human sympathies.

In telling what the Guild is I find that I have omitted a very important branch of its work, viz.: the kindergarten. The dues are 10 cents per week, which pays for the daily luncheon of bread and milk. There are fifty-two children in the class, and mothers are fast gaining faith in the school. Fifty-two children are carrying the refining and civilizing influences of this school into their homes and are being assured of a future for themselves that shall make such homes as many of them now come from impossible.

A Penny Provident Fund Bank has been opened, the 450 depositors being



THE KINDERGARTEN.

mostly children, some of larger growth making deposits of 25 cents or more per week. Four hundred and fifty more future homes insured against want by learning lessons of thrift and economy.

It has instituted a social reform club—think of it!—in the Tenth Ward and every man and woman is invited to become a member. This is divided for active work into ten sections, with such large aspirations as the establishment of a public bath, laundry, park and playground, public lavatories, co-operative stores and sick benefit societies.

It has already opened a co-operative store which is being successfully run and at which pure milk and honest butter can be obtained at honest prices, for besides being the victims of every sort of adulteration of their food they are obliged, buying necessarily in small quantities, to pay most exorbitant prices.

Last Fall the sale of wood was

added, and those who chose to avail themselves of the opportunity offered were enabled to purchase coal at market prices, instead of paying, as formerly, more than double.

That this work, begun seven years ago, is not to be lightly dropped, the plans of the proposed building for the University Settlement Society will show. The name of Dr. Stanton Coit, the head worker of the society, whose book on "Neighborhood Guilds, an Instrument of Social Reform," is the standard work on the subject, is a still firmer guarantee for its future.

To a thorough enlightenment regarding the work it is necessary that I should mention that the only salaried workers are the matron, the secretary, the kindergarten teachers and the librarian, whom it was found necessary to employ at a salary, it having hitherto relied in its undertakings upon volunteer workers from uptown. Most of these come from the self-supporting classes. In conducting the Flower Mission this summer I was told that the most active worker was a boy of twelve.

This is a pie in which every one to whose heart the good work appeals may therefore have a finger. There is a demand for any number of friendly visitors—women who will go from house to house learning what nuisances or want of decent repairs the people have to complain of and then standing between them and the wrath of the landlord while the nuisances are removed and the repairs made, for these landlords, who get from 30 to 40 per cent, on their money, do not hesitate to set a tenant who makes an appeal for necessary repairs summarily on the street.

It is time that charitable people call a halt on indiscriminate almsgiving, much of which serves only to pauperize. Free distributions of bread and soup—of anything, in fact—lead to abuses, for instances were not wanting where families took advantage of gratuitous bread distributions to collect and sell from seven to ten loaves a day.

After I had gone through the Guild from the ground floor to the top story my guide said:

"Have you ever been through this district?" Would you like an object lesson such as possibly you have never dreamed of? Then for twenty minutes, with my heart growing heavier and heavier each moment with the weight of the world's woe and misery, we walked through the adjacent streets, into blind alleys leading to rear yards where almost every foot of space was covered with tumble-down tenements, where God's air and sunshine not only were not free, but where you could not purchase an inch of one or a ray of the other with love or money.

There is so much to do—so many wrongs to right—the task seemed Herculean—that wondering at the buoyant hopefulness of my escort, I said, "Sir, why do you do this?"

He replied, "Because I believe in the people."—[New York Recorder.]

A Great Cathedral Organ.

The Philadelphia Inquirer says: What is claimed to be the most complete, elaborate and costly cathedral organ in this country is being erected in St. Luke's Protestant Episcopal Church, Germantown, Penn., its cost being \$13,000. The specifications have received the approval of Sir John Stainer, the celebrated organist, late of St. Paul's Cathedral, London.

There will be three manuals, but there will be five distinct organs controlled by them, the swell organ, first great organ, second great organ, choir organ and echo organ, with independent pedal organ, having a thirty-two foot foundation.

An interesting feature of the instrument will be its orchestral stops and wonderful effects, which have only once before been presented in this country by the builder, Carlton C. Mitchell, in his famous organ in St. Stephen's Church, Boston. The whole of the mechanical movements, key action, draw stops, etc., will be under tubular pneumatic control. It is wound with separate reservoirs, supplying each division of the instrument with distinct and independent wind.

The organ will be blown by a Ross water motor, acting on four horizontal feeders five feet square, placed in the chamber beneath the organ. The instrument is divided. The swell and choir organs, with a portion of the pedal organ, are placed on the south side of the church, while the two great organs and echo organ are on the north side, separated twenty-five feet. The manuals are on the north side of the church.

Knotty Point for a Judge.

"One of the most puzzling legal propositions ever submitted to me," said Judge C. E. Clark of Kentucky, to the corridor man at the Lindell, was a will case which arose in the western part of my State. A man died, leaving considerable estate. He had no children, but at the time of his last illness his wife was approaching maternity. He therefore provided in his will, which was made a few days before his death, that in case the unborn child should be a son the mother and son were to inherit equally, each taking one-half of the estate. In case, however, the unborn child should be a daughter, the widow should take two-thirds of the property and the daughter one-third. In the course of time the widow gave birth to twins, one girl and one boy. The mathematical and consanguinity problem was too much for me, and the estate was finally divided by agreement, each taking one-third.—[St. Louis Globe-Democrat.]