

## REMINISCENCES OF PRIMITIVE TIMES IN PENNSYLVANIA STATE.



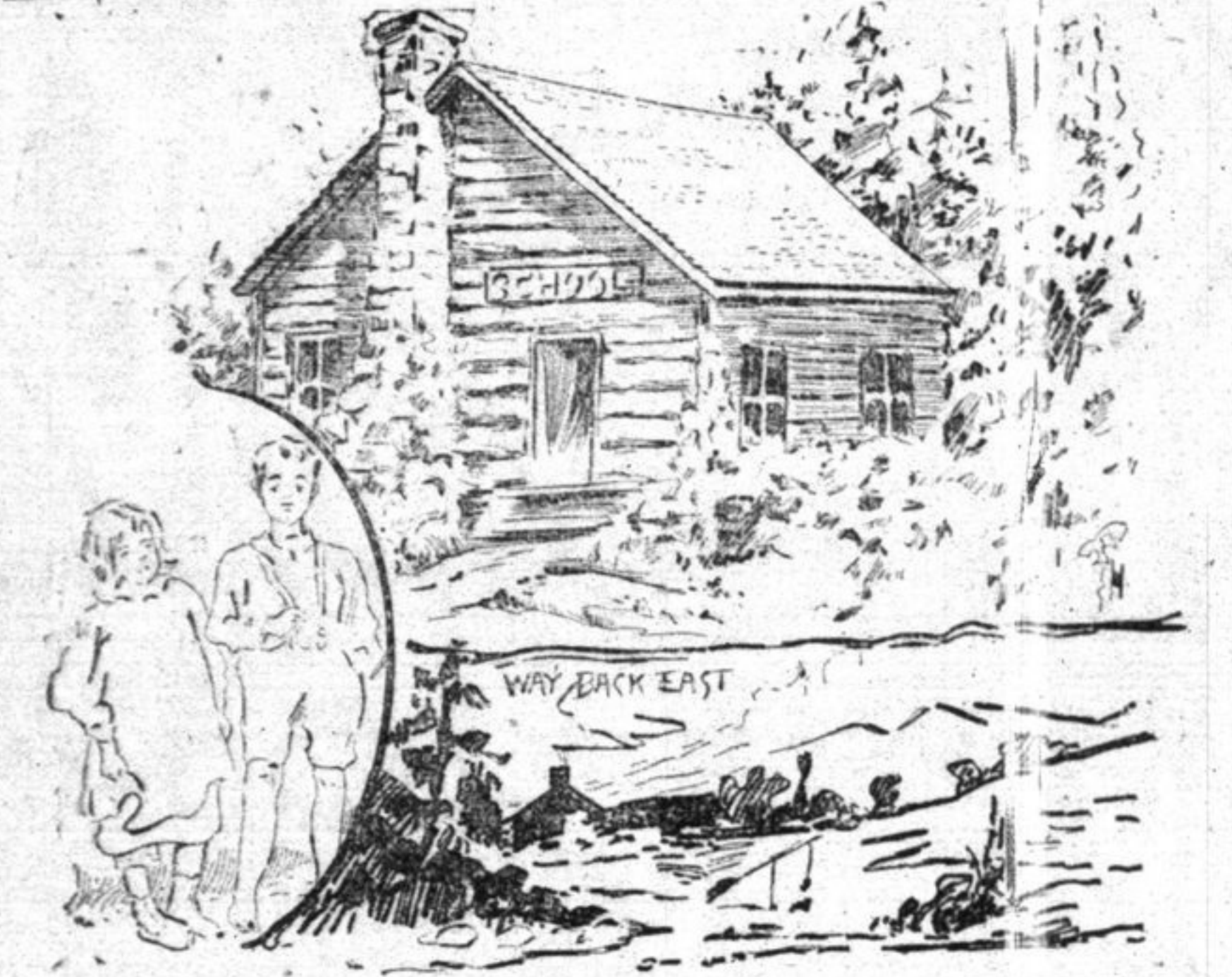
It is difficult to conceive of anything more primitive than some localities in Pennsylvania were prior to the civil war, before railroads were built into Clearfield County, where the writer was born. The sturdy pioneers, principally Germans, had pushed west into Clearfield in the famous Bald Eagle valley, to where land was cheap and plentiful, and there began cutting farms out of the vast forests. Not infrequently a young man, after engaging himself to a country lass, would strike out into the forest on the western range of the Allegheny mountains and clear a few acres as a nucleus for his farm, build a small log house and then return to the wedding journey by ox team with their wagon loaded with the household goods their parents gave them and wandered out into the wilderness to build homes for themselves and their children. It was largely of such industrious and frugal people that Clearfield county was populated. They cared little for society and less for fictitious show, and believed in the strictest economy and the most incessant toil.

A brief sketch of life in that community as we remember it may not be uninteresting to the present generation, especially in the great West, where farm life is a luxury, compared to what it was when the writer picked limbs and chips in the clearing, hoed corn and potatoes on the stony hillside, cut grain with a sickle and helped thrash the year's crop with a flail. It is safe to say there was not a mowing machine in the entire county until some years after the close of the rebellion. There were no riding plows, no hay rakes and stackers, no cultivators,

in that old building several hundred boys and girls gained their first knowledge in education, and it was from that same old school house that more than a score of young men went into the Union army during the civil war, some to win glory and others never to return. The building was used for church services for many years, and many funerals of soldiers were held there.

At the time we write of a teacher was not employed so much because of his learning as his ability to wield a whip and maintain order. The least show of fear on the part of the teacher meant giving up his job. Behind his desk, lying on two nails in full view of the school was usually the choicest rod he could find in the forest. When he had several offenders to deal with he would stand them in a row in front of his desk and punish them all at the same time. Some teachers were needlessly severe, but no doubt a great deal of severity was necessary in order to preserve any sort of order. One teacher in particular had a long code of rules hung up that it was almost impossible for any child to obey. When a sneeze above a whisper would subject the victim to some sort of punishment. Some years later that teacher was drowned in a mill dam, and no one who ever attended his school shed a tear.

Each winter we were given several "spelling schools," and that was the one bright spot in school life. Sides would be chosen and one side would spell the other down. Usually two of the prettiest girls were named for captains, and naturally they would choose first and the best spellers in the school. Many a boy studied his old Cobb's speller late at night in order to get the slim privilege of standing by the side of the prettiest girl for a few fleeting moments at spelling school. Then, when the close came, the boys would range themselves outside the door and ask permission of the girls to walk home with them. Many a well-meaning lad came to grief in that way, but as that was backwoods etiquette we



tors, except the old shovel plow, and no rest at any time for the weary country boy. He was given the poorest scythe and expected to keep up with his father in the clover field or meadow and at night time, when the day's labor in the field was done he turned the old grindstone for an hour to sharpen the tools for the next day's work, cut wood, feed the cattle and horses, and do other chores before seeking rest in his trundle bed. The next morning he was up by daylight and at it again. It is strange how many things Pennsylvania fathers can find for their boys to do all the year round. In the early spring it was repair fences, clear a few acres of timber into another field each year; then came getting the ground ready for corn, potatoes and buckwheat, they haying, harvesting, which was soon followed by plowing and seeding winter wheat and rye. But, why enumerate? It was one continual round of hard work for the greater part of the year, and the balance of the time was put in worrying over what was coming.

In the early fall the migratory shoemaker would put in an appearance and "shoe" the whole family, from mother to father down to the last baby. He was hired by the day, our parents furnishing the leather. During the summer shoemakers would visit the farmers and solicit the jobs, but they all asked the same price per day, and even then in the wilderness of Pennsylvania these cobblers were not averse to forming a trust on labor. When the shoemaker was located with his bench and tools each member of the family would take their turn, and there was often great rivalry among the boys as to who should be first. The girls were generally given preference, and it did a brother's heart good to see the little tots enjoy their winter's footwear while it was new.

Following the close of the summer's and fall's work came three months of country school. To some this came as a relief; to others it was worse than drudgery on the farm. How familiar to the writer, after a lapse of many years, is that old log school house standing as it did then in the woods, with no farm or farm house in sight. Not even a public highway passed near it, but paths diverging in all directions from that temple of learning led to settlements surrounding, many of the pupils walking as far as three miles through the deep snows of winter in order to secure an education. It was

knew nothing better. As we look back over our experiences in that country school we feel that a country belle is the most arbitrary creature on earth. She loves to make a fellow miserable, and will smile on him one day to raise his hopes only for a chance to frown on him the next to dash them to earth. "Husking bees" were other country diversions that made life worth living. The young men of a neighborhood would be invited to husk the corn and the girls would make apple butter until nightfall. Then the young people would pair off and husk corn for an hour or two. It was an unwritten law that every time a young man found a red ear of corn he had a legal right to kiss the girl by his side. Of course it was charged that many of the young men yelled "red ear" when they had nothing of the kind, and it was even charged that some very pretty girls were color blind and called the young men's attention to only slightly discolored ears. At any rate there was music in the corn field similar to pancakes hitting a sidewalk. Then would come a good supper and dancing until daylight. Those old time "husking bees" are yet a pleasant memory of farm life during boyhood days. The wake, the country funeral, the revival meetings, an occasional horse race and barn raising made up for life's humdrum at home.

There were, of course, other bright spots in the life of the country boy. One of these was a "huckleberrying trip" into the mountains in the summer. Several families would join in a party and drive some 20 miles into the western range of the Allegheny mountains after berries, and they do so there yet to this day. A camp would be chosen, a boy or two left to watch the teams during the day, and the balance would go in search of berries. Usually about a week was consumed in this way. At night time the old folks would sit in a circle around a fire for an hour or two and gossip, and some of the yarns they would spin about bears, wildcats and ghosts would make the young people crawl closer to their parents. No doubt many stories were told to see the effect it would have on the children. But the trip was looked forward to every year as a sort of an outing, a going away form home on a vacation, and that did us youngsters good.

Another vacation of a couple of days each year was soon after the frost, when we went into a forest some miles away and gathered chestnuts, hickory

## DEPEW TO BE A BRIDEGROOM.



Chauncey M. Depew United States senator from New York, although almost a septuagenarian, will soon wed young and beautiful Miss May Palmer. He eagerly looks forward to the hour when he will install her mistress of his home.

nuts and walnuts. No well regulated country home considered its winter's supply of something to eat complete without a bin of nuts. Instead of buying them each family went into the forest and gathered them.

At the time we write of the nearest railway was 85 miles distant. At least two-thirds of the inhabitants of our district had up to that time never seen a train of cars or heard a steam whistle, because sawmills and "grist mills," as they were called, were propelled by water. Whenever a man needed some flour he carried it to the nearest mill and had it ground, paying in toll out of the grain for the grinding. Some of those old mills were wonders of architecture and machinery, but they answered their purpose well.

Nearly all the original settlers lived in log houses, many of which are doing service yet. They were roomy and warm, though not handsome. In time, as the owners grew able, they weather-boarded their houses, sometimes even painting them, but this was unusual. The barns were the most pretentious. However, as these were supposed to hold all the grain and hay raised on the farm, besides housing all the livestock in the winter. The barns were generally built on the sidehill, with a threshing floor on the first story, and mows for hay on each side, while in the basement the cattle, horses and sheep were sheltered.

Taken as a whole, life in central Pennsylvania was very primitive up to within less than half a century ago. Few newspapers were read then, and about all the books in the house were the old family Bible and the school books used by the children. Young men would grow to manhood without going 30 miles from home. There was nothing to coax them away from scenes familiar to them, nothing to tempt them to seek adventure. The inhabitants were peaceable and law-abiding. There was seldom a quarrel and a lawsuit, and while every "tavern" had its saloon attachment it was rare that an intoxicated man was seen. A drunkard then was considered a nobody, and were he a young man no self-respecting girl would speak to him. Moral suasion was all powerful in everything. The people were fairly happy and prosperous, no doubt fully as much so as they are since the advent of railroads, the opening of mines and the inauguration of vast manufacturing industries.

The famous French savant, M. Berthelot, has discovered platinum in Egypt. Examining a metal box, once the property of an Egyptian queen in the seventh century B. C., he found a plate supposed to be silver. Closer examination showed that the plate is made of an alloy of platinum and gold. The box itself is otherwise interesting, its sides being covered with inscriptions and designs in gold and silver. It hails from Thebes. The platinum probably came from the alluvial deposits in the valley of the upper Nile.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson, the Norwegian poet, is idolized by all Norwegians, while Ibsen may rather be said only to be admired. The two men are opposites in personality, habits and tastes, and indeed, have only one thing in common, the unfriendliness with which they are regarded in Sweden.

## THE ARMY CHEST.

A veteran gray and wrinkled,  
And scamed with scars was he,  
A man who marched and battled  
With Sherman to the sea:  
All day he dozed in dreamland,  
His head upon his breast,  
Unless he chanced to open  
His war-worn army chest.

Then like a bony troop-horse  
That hears the bugle-call  
His eye grew clear and brilliant,  
His form erect and tall.  
The boys of "boots and saddles"  
And battle's blood crest  
To him were all imprisoned  
Within the army chest.

With careful, loving fingers  
He took its treasures out,  
The flag that led the sortie,  
The sword that checked the rout,  
The blanket full of creases  
And memories of rest,  
And bivouacs in the starlight,  
Were in the army chest.

The blouse in which a bullet  
Had burned a blackened hole,  
The plume so bright and yellow,  
When the drums began to roll,  
Though from its nodding splendor  
The moth had made a nest,  
For many a sultry summer  
Within the army chest.

But most of all he cherished  
A ringlet soft and fine,  
A Southern-maiden gave it—  
The palm-tree to the pine—  
When in her home he lingered  
War's not welcome guest;  
It's silken sunshine glided  
The dingy army chest.

Long since the brave old soldier,  
Who gloried in his scars,  
Has heard the final roll-call  
And musters with the stars;  
But still at times I fancy  
In regions of the blest  
He yearns to rummage over  
His battered army chest.

—Minna Irving, in Leslie's Weekly.

The prime minister of Holland, Dr. Abraham Kuiper, has broken the record by being the first doctor of divinity and preacher to hold that position. In the British house of commons during the last decade several former divines have attained eminence. Thus, the Rt. Hon. H. A. Acland, who was a member of the cabinet of 1892-95, is an ex-clergyman of the church of England, and served at one time as curator under Dr. Creighton, the late bishop of London.

An adverse trade balance of \$30,000,000 for the month of August does not make a very gratifying exhibit for the country which has long been the leader in international trade. To Americans the report is instructive in that the total British purchases from this country were valued at about \$7,425,000, while its sales were only \$915,000. In other words, the month's total debit balance is all due this country.

Arkansas has 4,749 manufacturing establishments, with a capital of \$36,000,000, and a yearly product of \$45,000,000. The increase in ten years is capital, 140 per cent, establishments, 131 per cent, products, 98 per cent yearly. The wage earners number 26,501, with a yearly payroll of \$8,686,291.

Possibly the clergymen who invested the church funds in a rubber plantation with disastrous results had never heard of that commandment "Thou shalt not rubber."

## CHINA'S NEW STAND

### EMPEROR KWANG SU IS GAINING HEADWAY.

Immense Probabilities for Telephone Development on Account of Peculiarities of Language.

Hong Kong letter: The return of emperor to headquarters at Peking under present conditions means a great deal for the regeneration of China if he is allowed to sustain his present purposes.

From present appearances it would seem that he has gained the ascendancy in Chinese affairs, that he has enrolled some of the most progressive spirits here under his banner and that the ex-empress has subsided.

There is little doubt that Kwang Su will battle for the right if allowed to sustain his ideas. If he will maintain his rights many of those who are opposing reforms in the country will be won to his standard.

His issuance of four edicts forbidding the sale of offices and providing for the abolition of the old style of examinations based upon the reform memorials sent to the court by Chang Chih Lung and other southern viceroys is distinctly in line with progress. The southern viceroys seem to be thoroughly in touch with the idea of the regeneration of the empire and are undoubtedly more cognizant of their responsibility to public interests than any of the others.

It must be understood that the public mind of China is in a crude state and the policy of truthfulness does not seem to prevail.

The provincial treasurer, Chou Fu, is trying to arouse public sentiment by means of Bible teachings in order that the masses may be gradually aroused to a sense of their responsibility.

The fact of the matter is that with all their adherence to religious methods the Chinese are practically materialists.

They have long since arrived at the point where they consider fighting a dangerous and unnecessary expedient.

They are naturally law-abiders. If not harrassed by those in authority they accept their rule with comparative equanimity. But above all things they believe in financial purity, for population has so checkmated and permeated the Chinese bureaucracy that honest officials appear to the ordinary citizen to be an almost impossible proposition.

There are tremendous possibilities in line for China if the proper control of affairs can be maintained. It will be astonishing to learn that electrical appliances are finding a wide use in China and that here are wide possibilities for electrical development there.

A thousand cities and towns are involved in this development; thousands of miles of electric railroad will be built and innumerable telephone lines are projected. The telephone system will have the advantage over the telegraph because the language of China is mainly inarticulate.

The common words represent a largely incomprehensible problem and the effects desired can be more readily conveyed by telephonic communication.

The telephone facilities established between Shanghai and other interior cities could not be more properly conducted and the lines have proved very remunerative.

There is a great demand for telephone facilities from all the coast towns and cities, for the business people are rapidly converging to the point of utilization of novel facilities, the superstitious ideas in regard to them becoming rapidly dispersed.

It would be well if national consideration of this question could be brought about, for the force of domestic economy in China will have to be one of the first questions considered.

MALCOLM J. GRAHAM.

## A CASE OF CONSCIENCE.

After all there is considerable conscience among the people of this country. Sometimes we get up against men who do not show even a symptom of conscience, but the cases are rare. A little romance comes from the states of Indiana and Colorado, that shows how soft as velvet a man's conscience can become if he stops in the mad race for dollars to ask forgiveness for the wrongs he committed many years ago. A resident of Colorado sent the following manly letter to an Indiana farmer he did not treat right over 30 years ago:

"I send this asking pardon for the damage I and Lige Baty did you in tearing up your spring to get boards to swim on, I supposed it was a seed bed settled in the sand. It has been over 30 years ago. I want to make every thing straight here below, so when my case comes before Christ in judgement I will not be found wanting, I am trying to lead a different life. If we lose the hereafter this life don't amount to much. Please drop me a line and let me hear in regard to this matter, so I can know it is settled. Perhaps you won't remember me, James Chambers was my grandfather and I lived with him four years.

The farmer says he had entirely forgotten the incident referred to, but was so impressed with the earnestness of the writer that he not only freely forgave him but highly commended his courage and manliness. After all there are many people with consciences, and you do not have to go among the immensely rich to find all of them either.

Dr. F. W. True, head curator of the department of biology, has been appointed to represent the Smithsonian Institution and the National Museum on the board to select and prepare the United States government exhibit for the St. Louis fair.