

The big dance of the year was the Bachelors' Ball, which was quite formal -- Clawhammer coats, white board front shirts, white kid gloves, and patent leather pumps; it cost \$2.50 a couple, with lunch free at tables, and Mayor Greisback welcoming the guests.

One of the outstanding dances Alf and I went to was back in about 1905, a masquerade ball on New Year's night. To the strains of oldtime music, Alf and I dated the slim little "flower" girl with the long golden braids -- she was light as a feather, and she liked to lean a little in your arms. Often the flower girl would meet us halfway across the hall. Then a brown-haired "peanut" girl butted in -- she was nice, too, but a bit heavy to carry when she leaned on your arm. Her eye was on the masked boys that danced every number -- I ditched her to Alf, who resented my action, and kept right after my flower girl. Oh, how I liked her golden tress as we swayed to "Let Me Call You Sweetheart." I ticked my chin with one braid while she laughed and leaned a little harder on my arm. Around and around we went, while Alf danced with the girl with the flowing dress covered with peanut shells. One last hug, one last pull at the golden tresses, and the master of ceremonies announced the Grand March. Then we unmasked -- we were holding hands with grandmas. In a flash we boys ran to the entrance of the Forester's Hall and laughed ourselves to tears. Never did we think that the gals we mushed over were in their fifties. But in the years to follow we could not help but think it was a well spent evening.

Gleichen's first hall was east of the Palace Hotel. Once Alf and I went to a dance when I was really too young to attend; Carey had fixed me up in a good suit and a white shirt with a high board collar -- which came up around my ears! My only partner was Mrs. Windfield, who had known me since babyhood; she swung me off my feet in the quadrilles as she was big and strong while I was small and light. Biggs said I looked like a bulldog horsefly hanging on to a horse. An Englishman asked, "Who's that little fellow 'opping around inside the big collar?"

I had to sleep in that collar as I had had help to get it on, but none to get it of until morning -- by which time I had an angry red ring around my neck. In those days you really had to dress up to take in a dance, but now some young fellows attend in overalls and big boots, with their shirt tails sticking out -- what a difference time does make!

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