

托福阅读能力提升训练：passage6

Passage 6

In taking up new life across the Atlantic, the early European settlers of the United States did not abandon the diversions with which their ancestors had traditionally relieved the tedium of life. Neither the harshness of existence on the new continent nor the scattered population nor the disapproval of the clergy discouraged the majority from the pursuit of pleasure.

City and country dwellers, of course, conducted this pursuit in different ways. Farm dwellers in their isolation not only found it harder to locate companions in play but also thanks to the unending demands and pressures of their work, felt it necessary to combine fun with purpose. No other set of colonists too so seriously one expression of the period. "Leisure is time for doing something useful." In the countryside farmers therefore relieved the burden of the daily routine with such relaxation as hunting, fishing, and trapping. When a neighbor needed help, families rallied from miles around to assist in building a house or barn, husking corn, shearing sheep, or chopping wood. Food, drink, and celebration after the group work provided relaxation and soothed weary muscles.

The most eagerly anticipated social events were the rural fairs. Hundreds of men, women, and children attended from far and near. The men bought or traded farm animals and acquired needed merchandise while the women displayed food prepared in their kitchens, and everyone, including the youngsters, watched or participated in a variety of competitive sports, with prizes awarded to the winners. These events typically included horse races, wrestling matches, and foot races, as well as some nonathletic events such as whistling competitions. No other occasions did so much to relieve the isolation of farm existence.

With the open countryside everywhere at hand, city dwellers naturally shared in some of the rural diversions. Favored recreations included fishing, hunting, skating, and swimming. But city dwellers also developed other pleasures, which only compact communities made possible.