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JULY THE FOURTH.

The greatest of all glorious days,
July the Fourth, all hail!
You fit a lamp in Freedom's fans
Whose flame shall never fail!
The Fathers of this Western World
Gave us their lives to these,
When they proclaimed to all the earth
That man by birth was free!

The morning signaled Freedom's dawn,
Whose noonday splendors now
Flood earth and sky with radiance beamed
From fair Columbia's brow!
Immortal Day! We hail thy rise
As Freedom's Easter morn,
When Liberty, so long entombed,
In glory was reborn.

The prisoned flame of ancient Rome,
Of Carthage and of Greece,
Whose absence made the centuries dark,
In you found glad release—
To blaze above this continent,
From ocean's rim to rim,
To cheer all struggling nations on
And never more grow dim.

You symbolize a sacred law—
The right of all mankind!
To win their share of all that God!
For human needs designed!
We know the lesson that you teach,
The duty you proclaim,
And we are here to guard that trust
In Freedom's sacred name.

— P. S. Cassidy.

HOW THEY CELEBRATED.

A FOURTH OF JULY STORY.

IN the little railroad town of Columbia money came rather slow to a majority of the boys, and how to celebrate the Fourth of July in an appropriate way was indeed a question of considerable magnitude. Most of the boys' fathers were railroad men, and railroad salaries are proverbially small.

With plenty of money the boys could have celebrated in a way that would have awakened the sleepy little town so effectually that the older inhabitants might have imagined that hostilities between the North and South had broken out anew.

To obtain the necessary articles with which to celebrate was the all-important question before the boys' club, called the "Our Boys," two weeks before the time designated as the "Glorious Fourth." One of the boys, Bern Gilman, suggested chipping in and buying a lot of sky rockets and red fire, but as his father was an engineer and made big money, the proposition was nothing remarkable.

The words "red fire" suggested an idea to another of the club, Jim Slade, and on his plan of celebration there was a unanimous agreement. It was to the effect that an effort be inaugurated at once looking to the collection of as much red fire as possible in the two weeks yet remaining before the Fourth of July, and on the night of that day letting it off in a bunch.

To the members of the "Our Boys" there was no necessity to formulate plans or advance ideas as to how this red fire was to be obtained. They were sons of railroaders, and knew red fire by heart.

Every dayman on a train leaving East or West has among his collection of lamps, torpedoes, poker and shovel a couple of sticks of this material, which are used on foggy or stormy nights to warn the train following of their near approach to the train ahead. These sticks burn five minutes, and, of course, contain a large quantity of the red powder. All the railroad men leaving from Columbia on the eastern or western trips were known, and very few of the through men, running from one end of the division to the other, were not known.

The "Our Boys" Club originally was a ball club, but had been in existence for several seasons as a social organization, minus a club house and the luxuries of such.

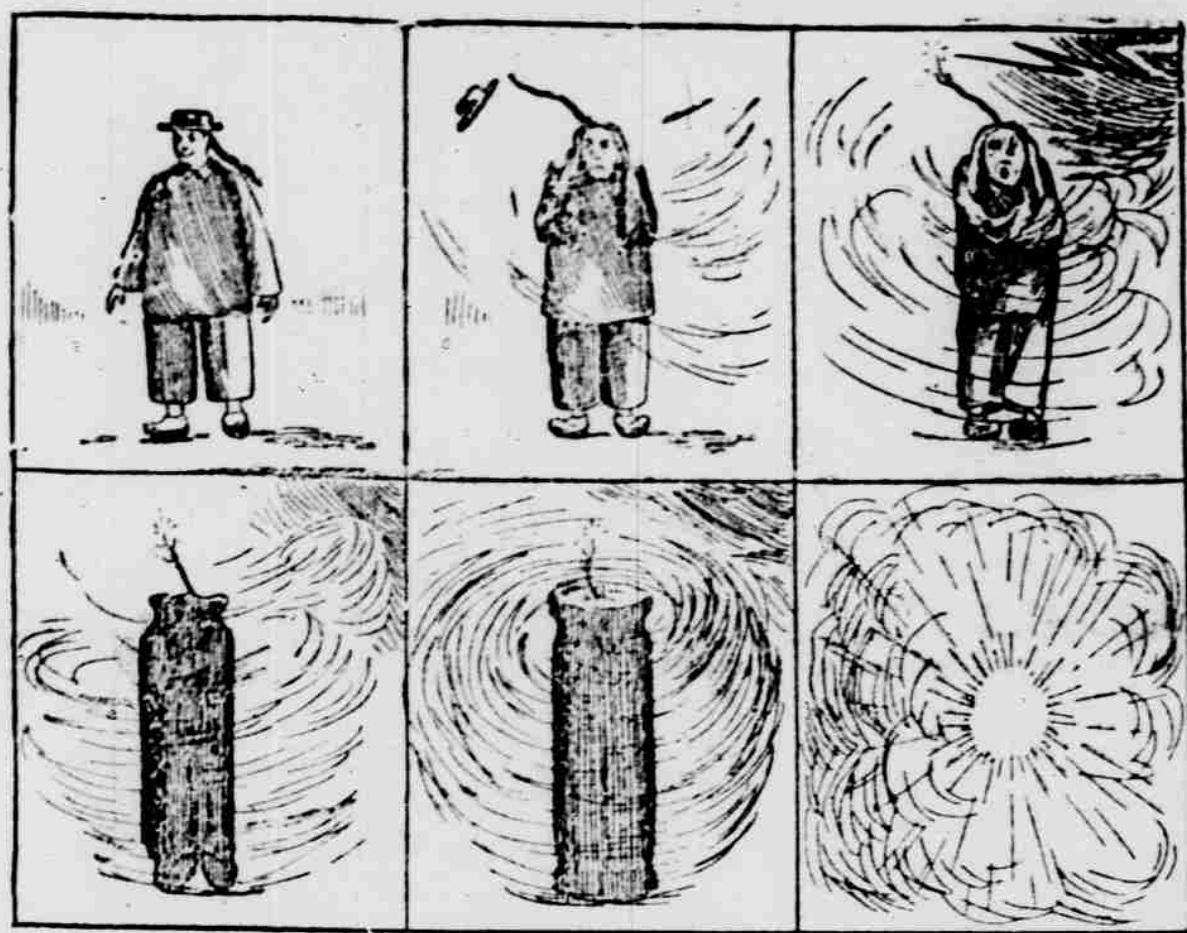
Jim Slade, being a member of a State militia company as drummer boy, knew something about organizing for effective work, and he it was that proposed and appointed committees to corral every train that passed through the town.

Boys born and raised in a railroad town soon become expert car jumpers, and it must indeed be a fast train that they cannot successfully mount. A rendezvous was selected back of the railroad round house, in the cellar of a deserted house, in which was to be stored all the material secured.

The boys worked like beavers and as only boys can work when a Fourth of July celebration is in the prospective, and at the end of the first week twenty-seven sticks had been secured and some seventy-five railroad torpedoes. The latter article is also an important part of a railroader's outfit, and, crossing the vision of one of the collectors, several were secured, and thereafter they were added as a sort of auxiliary.

As the day drew near the boys renewed their efforts and the red fire and torpedoes came in in such quantities that one or two of the more timid boys suggested a halt. But, like the trained bloodhound, they smelt the sport from afar and decided

Evolution of the Firecracker.



to give the little town a celebration that should go down in its history as a red-letter day of the most vivid hue.

To add zest to the collection the railroad officials began to notice the great inroads on their supply of combustibles, and the train men had to rack their brain for new stories as to their rapid disappearance.

On account of the vigilance of the railroad officials the boys' base of operations was transferred from the yards of the road to the outskirts of the town. Trains going east were easy to mount, but those going west called for volunteers who were expert train jumpers, and the narrow escapes made wherein the loss of a limb, or even a life, hung in the balance, were numerous enough to appall any boy but the son of a railroader.

Charley Van Lew and Johnny Hook were both thrown half under a fast moving freight one day, but their coolness and strength pulled them through with badly torn clothes. Coupled with these mishaps were numerous brushes with the railroad detectives in the way of chases over cars and out over the hills into the country. The boys were known to the detectives, and while they did not care to arrest them it was their duty to keep them off the cars and protect the company's property. At nightfall several of the boys, in company with their fathers, would run across these officers, but a knowing wink would set matters right before any harm had been done.

On the last day of July a halt was made in the foraging and the work of extracting the red powder from the sophomore signals was begun.

A flour barrel was used as a receptacle, and at the end of two days' work it was three-quarters filled. The torpedoes had mounted up in number until nearly 200 of them were piled up in a store box in an off corner of the room.

Then, as a final endeavor, three of the boys in whom were traits that go toward making up a diplomat called on the chief train dispatcher at that point and in the most persuasive tones begged for a contribution toward helping out their celebration.

With keen discernment the dispatcher saw into the whole scheme and promised to help them if they would let him know the full particulars of their plans. No more fun-loving man lived than "Em." Stevensen, the dispatcher, and the boys, knowing this, told him all.

His contribution was an eye opener to the boys, and, after opening the signals, the barrel was filled to the brim with the precious red fire.

At last the great day arrived, and the parents of the boys belonging to the club were astonished at the use to which the money given for firecrackers and other explosives was put. Instead of buying firecrackers and torpedoes they made the mouths of many of the outside boys water as they passed among them munching peaches or apricots, or contentedly chewed away on some delicious sweetmeat.

And then the novelty of the situation struck some of the younger boys and sarcastic remarks were flung at them as to their patriotism. But the members of the "Our Boys" said nothing, looked wise and waited for the cover of nightfall.

At 8 o'clock everybody in the little town was on the streets promenading and viewing the few roman candles and skyrockets set off by the more aristocratic and wealthy citizens.

By that time the barrel of red fire had been transferred to a field just back of the town and a long fuse connected therewith. Each boy appropriated as many torpedoes as he could carry without exciting suspicion and took up positions assigned to them by the chief conspirator.

The town was to be given a surprise and the Fourth of July a celebration that would open the eyes of the oldest resident.

The scheme worked to a charm.

At 9 o'clock exactly the through express was due and from the telegraph operator it was learned that it was on time. The town was located alongside the track and a grade of considerable length ran through the center of the former and was the cause of most of trains reaching a high rate of speed.

and the express was always a heavy one on the schedule was not called upon to stop at Columbia. The boys knew this, and on the instant that a freight preceding the express had pulled out of the way they set to work.

Only five minutes intervened, but they were experts at putting down torpedoes, and in three minutes' time every torpedo collected had been placed on two parallel rails. Then the sharp whistle of the express was heard in the distance, and on it came with a rush and a roar.

The boys scattered and with bated breath awaited developments.

They came the next instant. With reports like the explosion of musketry, and if anything louder, the torpedoes went off in quick succession and the promenaders first halted in amazement and then took to their heels in fright. They thought the noise would cease, but instead it seemed to increase. Two hundred torpedoes stretch out over a considerable distance, and they were laid for the length of two squares.

People came running down the streets from the back highways inquiring the cause, and it appeared as if the town was on its feet, or, figuratively speaking, on its head.

And the engineer and passengers on the train, what of them? To the boys they indeed furnished a surprise that was unlooked for.

The engineer, with hair on end, was trying all he could to bring his train to a standstill, but it was impossible to do so before the last torpedo had exploded; the passengers frightened almost into a frenzy, were climbing back over the seats, out onto the platform and gesticulating wildly from the windows.

At last the train halted and all gathered around, and, as the train dispatcher simply motioned the engineer to go ahead, a great laugh went up and the passengers were enlightened to the fact that this was the glorious Fourth, and they, too, joined in the hilarity.

As the train disappeared around the western corner of the street paralleled to the railroad and the people of the town gathered in groups to discuss the strange occurrence, the conspirators disappeared from the scene and glided toward one of the engine houses of the local fire department.

They knew what was coming next.

All of a sudden a great shout went up from every part of the town and all eyes were turned toward the western section of the town. It appeared as if the town was to be destroyed by fire and that a mighty conflagration was under way.

The sky was blood red and a mighty column of smoke was ascending on high. The boys had done their work well, scattering the red powder over a large area and leaving the most daring boy of the crowd to set the mass off.

Soon the fire bells were tolling and the exciting jangle of the fire apparatus denoted a race was on between the different companies who were desirous of securing places of vantage from which to fight the supposed conflagration.

In this race it is needless to say the members of the "Our Boys" were indulging to their hearts' content. They all swore allegiance to one company, the Vigilant, and were head and front of the rush with the hose reel of that engine.

At the end of the street the cause of the light was discovered, and again the tongues of the citizens were set wagging, and the younger generation of young men voted the day's celebration a great success. Even the solitary paper of the town, while taking the conspirators to task the following day for the fright they had given the townspeople, could not but commend the plan for its originality and startling effectiveness.

Among the boys of the town the story leaked out, and soon the details of the celebration were known to all. To say that the "Our Boys" Club took a boom but faintly expresses it. Every boy in town put forward his name as an applicant for membership, but "exclusiveness was desired," and the tone of the club remained at its first great height for several years thereafter.

An Extraordinary Swimmer.

They have just found a swimmer in Australia who has aroused the interest of all sportsmen who make swimming something more than a pastime in this country. Nobody seems to know exactly how the new man, Gormly, swims, though the Australian papers devote columns of description to his style, having got to the point of illustrating his method. Even the experts in this country are unable to fathom the peculiarities of his stroke, which has reduced all the notable swimmers in Australia and New Zealand to despair. It should be said, by the way, that the swimmers of that part of the world are men of extraordinary swiftness, endurance and power. Gormly does not pretend to train for his races, but makes it a point to spend six or eight hours every day in the water. His stroke is now being copied by a number of professional and amateur swimmers of the antipodes. He swims, according to the description, with his right arm perfectly straight—that is, it makes a long, slow sweep from the shoulders downward and backward as he lies on his right side. But the real stroke which sends him through the water at a rate which amazes his competitors is what is described as "the corkscrew motion of the left leg, which is drawn up and out of the water, so as to be almost completely in view, and is then pushed under the water and thrust backward with a corkscrew motion, which sends the body along at a remarkable rate of speed." This is the most succinct explanation which has yet been given of Gormly's method of swimming. He is coming over here this summer, so when the camera fiends get at him the public will know all about the "corkscrew motion" which he uses. Incidentally his style of swimming casts a bitter reflection upon the frog, which has heretofore sustained an unquestioned eminence as the model for champion swimmers.—New York Sun.

Indestructibility of the Diamond.

For thousands of years after the discovery of the diamond it was believed to be indestructible, as far as acids and fire were concerned. As respects the acids, I believe that it is still maintained that there are none known that will dissolve it. In the eleventh century Bishop Rennes wrote the following concerning the diamond in his poem, "The Lapidarium":

Hardness invincible which naught can tame,
Untouch'd by steel and unconquered by flame.

The last words of the second line are not true under all circumstances. If air be freely admitted to the retort, a diamond will burn like a piece of bituminous coal as soon as the temperature is raised above 5000 degrees of the Fahrenheit scale. Such excessive heat cannot, of course, be measured by Fahrenheit thermometers, but is recorded on an instrument called a pyrometer. But in regard to the fusibility of the diamond, while the experiment has proved that it is instantly reduced to ashes if subjected to a heat of 5000 in an open retort, counter experiments also prove that if the air be excluded no known degree of heat will materially affect it.—St. Louis Republic.

MAKES ALL MEN COWARDS.

"In reading of the terrible havoc wrought by the late storm on our Atlantic coast," said Captain L. M. Keene, of the United States Navy, at the Ebbitt, "I couldn't help a thrill of horror at the fate of the poor wretches that were drowned in sight of the help that was powerless to save. It will make any man feel thus who has ever gone through a shipwreck. It is facing death in its most dreaded form. The forces of nature, excited violently, make cowards of the bravest. I have seen South American cower and collapse in times of earthquake. They would lose every spark of courage and act like frightened children. The same men would stand up and, with smiles on their faces, stab each other to death with their keen, long-bladed knives.

"During the earthquake at Charleston, S. C., old soldiers that had demonstrated their nerve on many a bloody field, were victims of abject fear. Bullets could not make them fly, but the unseen forces that moved on them so mysteriously were too much for human endurance."—Washington Post.

TRICKS IN TEAS.

WAYS THAT ARE DARK OF THE HEATHEN CHINESE.

Very Slick is He, But Not Always Successful, in Adulterating Teas Sent to America—60,000 Packages Condemned in One Lot.

IF at the bottom of your teacup, after you have sipped the more or less fragrant and cheering beverage, you find a dark paste-like sediment, charge it up to the ways that are dark of "the heathen Chinese." The sediment is mud—plain, everyday, Chinese blue mud, and it was put there by your Celestial with intent to defraud the purchaser of the crop.

Perhaps there is no sediment, but that does not argue that you have escaped John's wiles. If the tea is bitter and rank to the taste, it is because that with the leaves of the tea plant there have been mixed all the way from twenty to sixty per cent. of the leaves of a willow, or of a plant that is known as the sloe, both of which grow wherever tea is grown, just as cheat or tares grow alongside of wheat.

Again, if your tea is neither muddy nor rank, but is weak and without either flavor or fragrance, it is because the leaves have already done full duty in some far-away tea-house, have been gathered up from the kitchens, re-dried and then colored with Prussian blue and soapstone and shipped to dear, gullible America.

The adulteration of tea and the substitution of spurious and exhausted leaves is a mammoth and monstrous evil. To such proportions had it grown that in November, 1883, Congress passed an act for the protection of importers and created the office of Tea Inspector in connection with the Custom Houses in New York, Chicago and San Francisco. Tea is admitted free of duty, but not one chest of it can be landed until the inspector certifies that it is free of adulteration or spurious substitutes.

When a New York World reporter called at the United States Appraisers' great work-house, on Laight and Hudson streets, recently, Isaac McGay, the inspector for the Port of New York, sat before a circular table, upon which were placed in neat array a dozen dainty china cups and saucers, each of which was filled nearly to the brim with the infusions which he had but recently made. A bright copper kettle steamed cheerily at his elbow. Mr. McGay had just completed a task, and he leaned back in his tilted arm-chair with an amused smile upon his cheery and ruddy countenance.

"You have come in good time," he said to the reporter, who asked for some information about Government tea inspection. "These cups represent samples from a cargo of 60,000 packages of tea, every pound of which has got to go back."

"To China?"

"I can't answer that question. Maybe to Canada or England, but it cannot come through the Port of New York. That is a great deal of tea to condemn, but that is what I am here for. I do not believe that within the twelve years I have been in this department, during the last four of which I have been the inspector, I have ever examined a shipment in which all the elements of fraud were so unblushingly combined. In the first place, forty per cent. of the weight of this tea is dirt. I mean common earth that costs only the price of the labor involved to dig it.

"This earth, ground to an impalpable powder, is mixed with a paste made of rice water and known as congee. This is skilfully done, the paste uniting the particles of dirt into the perfect semblance of small, curled tea leaves. As the tea proper is being packed into the chests a workman stands by with the congee and casts it with a sweeping motion of the hand in thin layers into the box.

"In a cargo of 60,000 chests of tea, each weighing sixty pounds, or a total of 3,600,000 pounds, a matter of 1,440,000 pounds of mud, paid for as tea, is quite a little item if the scheme goes through.

"In this instance I have no doubt whatever of a carefully planned fraud, for the firm which exported this cargo stands very high in China and has for years been considered beyond reproach. I have never had occasion

before to refuse any of their tea admission to this port.

"But I have not told all. In addition to the adulteration with clay, I find this cargo contains a large percentage of willow and sloe leaves and an easily traced proportion of marlowe."

"What is marlowe?"

"That is the name in the trade for tea leaves that have been exhausted and redried. In Hong Kong the principal tea gardens are located on Marlowe street. A regular wagon, familiar to all foreigners, makes a daily collection of the leaves from which the tea of the previous twenty-four hours has been drawn. This system of collect on is in operation all over the Empire. I imagine, from the amount of the stuff that was formerly floated upon this market. It certainly obtains in all the large cities."

Mr. McGay here called attention to the cups before him. With a spoon he dug up the muddy sediment from the bottom. He then flattened out a number of the infused leaves. The difference between the willow, sloe and tea leaves is apparent to the eye. He explained the system of inspection. The ship containing the invoice is visited. From each line of sixty to one hundred boxes a sample is taken at random. These are mixed together. Then they are examined under powerful magnifying glasses for ocular evidence of fraud.

Then Mr. McGay has a little tea party. Cups are set for from ten to twenty, but he is the only guest. He never gives 5 o'clock teas, but at any time from 10 a. m. to 4 p. m. he can be found tasting and spitting out the beverage he brews, or with his nose down close to the steaming cups inhaling their fumes. The penalty of this part of the process is an occasional vertigo or dizzy feeling, accompanied by a splitting headache. When this comes on he is forced to strike work for the day and walk in the open air.

Measuring a Millionth of a Degree.

Professor Langley, of the Smithsonian Institution, has brought his bolometer to a state of high perfection. This instrument, in theory extremely simple, is a fine wire through which a current of electricity is kept flowing. The resistance of the wire varies with the temperature, and hence the strength of the current also varies. By measuring the current, therefore, the temperature of the wire can be ascertained. As is well known, Professor Langley has explored the invisible regions of the solar spectrum with this device, proving by it that in them, as well as in the luminous portions, fine absorption lines exist. In this and in other fields it has easily taken a place as one of the most valuable of existing instruments. In the latest and most delicate form the wire is 1.500 inch wide and 1.5000 inch thick, and a difference of temperature amounting to 1-1,000,000 degree centigrade can be perceived.—Detroit Free Press.

Tides of 640 Feet.

Professor Ball, the astronomer royal of Ireland, calls attention to a curious fact in connection with tides. At present the moon is 24,000 miles away, but there was a time in the distant past when it was only about one-sixth part of this, or say about 40,000 miles. If the moon at a distance of 24,000 miles gives us tides that average three feet the world over, they must have been 216 times higher, or at least 640 feet, at the time when it was only 40,000 miles away. Such a tide as the above would drown the Mississippi Valley from the Eads jetties to the mouth of the Red Axe, and would pile up water 300 feet deep in the streets of St. Louis.—St. Louis Republic.

Saved by His Dog.

An eight-year-old boy was on the cowpath near the bridge at New Brunswick, N. J., playing with his dog, when he fell into the water, which is about six or eight feet deep. The lad was in a fair way to drown when his dog, a big Newfoundland, jumped in and swam to his side. The boy grasped the dog tightly by the hair on his back. The animal then swam to the shore, so that the lad could grasp the dock log and haul himself out. People who saw the incident declared that the dog showed almost human intelligence.—Detroit Free Press.