

An Unpremeditated Celebration

A Fourth of July Story
By EARLE HOOKER EATON
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THE twilight and Small, the nitroglycerin shooter, were approaching Gusherville together—the twilight slowly and silently, the shooter noisily, musically and as swiftly as the wretched oil country roads would permit—when the sight of a girlish figure in the road a few rods ahead caused the shooter to suddenly set his brake and draw his magnificent horses back upon their haunches.

"Kittie! Miss Coleman!" he called. A roguish face framed in black curls and wearing a well feigned look of surprise was turned toward him, and its owner, a pretty, black eyed, rosy checked girl of eighteen paused until the shooter and his team were beside her. A tiny American flag peeped from her corsage, and there were wild flowers in her hair.

"My, how you frightened me, Mr. Small!" she cried. "And when I saw who you were I was even more frightened."

"What, afraid of me, Kittie?" he said.

"Oh, I am not at all afraid of you, but of your awful nitroglycerin," she retorted, with a roguish smile that displayed her white teeth.

"Won't you ride to Gusherville with me? I have only about ten quarts in the wagon, and there's no danger."

"I'm afraid. Suppose it should go off. What then?"

"We would be angels in two seconds," he said grimly. "But it won't."



"BUT—BUT ARE YOU SURE THERE IS NO DANGER?"

go off. I will vouch for its good behavior tonight. Come on, Kittie."

Prudently holding the reins in one hand, he leaped to the ground and touched her arm. Fate had named him Small, but he was 6 feet 2 inches in height and was muscled like a young Hercules. A slouch hat graced his long black hair, and a heavy black mustache swept his lower lip.

"You don't mind my calling you Kittie, do you, Kittie?"

There was a tremor in his deep voice, and he pressed her little sunburned hand until the roses deepened in her cheeks, and she drew the hand away.

"No," she said hastily. "But—but are you sure there is no danger?"

There were ten quarts of liquid concentrated earthquake in the padded compartments of the great wagon box, but he laughed heartily and shook his head.

"There's no danger, Kittie. Do you think I would ask you—you if there were? Besides, it is a good mile to Gusherville. Come."

Half lifting her into the vehicle, he clucked to his horses, and away they sped to the music of the jingling harness, the rumbling wheels of the wagon and the tinkling of the tin shells on the rack at his side.

There was nitroglycerin enough under the seat to annihilate them in a trice, but Small's mind was as unperturbed as the silent hemlocks that reared their funeral boughs high in the breezless air, and Kittie seemed to have forgotten her fear.

"What does this little flag mean? Oh, yes, the Fourth of July is tomorrow. I had almost forgotten it," he said.

"I suppose you intend to celebrate tonight?" she asked.

"No, sorry to say, I'm pretty well tired out now, and I must get up tomorrow morning at 3."

"You're not going to work on the Fourth?" with a note of displeasure in her voice.

"Yes, all day. Bannon Bros' Nos. 4 and 5 are just in on the Clayton lease, and they must be shot tomorrow sure."

"The Fourth only comes once a year," she said, the note of displeasure deepening.

"I know, but business is business. They're heavy operators and good customers."

"You'll be working Sundays next?"

possibly permit you to go to the picnic in the grove?"

"Certainly."

"I cannot get back in time, I fear. Pahaw! I wouldn't miss it for worlds," he said honestly.

"Then you do not intend to celebrate a bit tomorrow?"

"I don't see how I can."

"What are you, a Chinaman?" the girl said scornfully, her black eyes flashing. "You haven't an atom of patriotism about you. I'm ashamed of you! They're to set off a number of empty glycerin cans and fire anvils at sunrise and run the flag up on the hotel and on all the derricks, and you—you will be hurrying off to work about that time like a Chinaman who doesn't know the Fourth of July from any other day of the year."

The face he turned to her was full of pained protest. "Say, dear," he whispered, "don't be so hard on me. If I had not promised to shoot those wells—"

"Oh, don't distress yourself. Do as you have promised, by all means, and next year do not forget that you are a citizen of the United States. I never saw your like," she continued scornfully.

"Even the foreigners who come here celebrate their great days, although they are in a strange land, even the Chinese celebrate their New Year's, and you, a free American citizen, who say you were born in sight of Bunker Hill monument, pay no more attention to the Independence day of your country than one of your horses!"

"I am very, very sorry, Kittie"—he began despairingly.

"Never mind," she said curtly. "Please let me get out here. People will talk so, you know, if they see me riding into Gusherville on a nitroglycerin wagon with you."

As he checked the spirited horses and leaped to the ground to assist her she fluttered to the roadway on the opposite side of the wagon with the ease and grace of a bird.

She left him without even a look, and he saw no more of her that night. His big heart ached as he climbed into the nitroglycerin wagon again and clucked to his horses. She was the dearest object on earth, and after months of devoted courtship he saw her slipping away just as her heart seemed warming toward him. She had never confessed that she loved him, but his attentions, his protestations of affection and even his timid clasping of her hand had seemed not unwelcome to her. He had believed that she was learning to love him, but now his thoughtlessness had completely estranged her.

Half an hour's ride up a steep and winding road brought him to the nitroglycerin factory, where he stabled his horses, refilled his wagon with square cans of the explosive from the great iron magazine, replenished his store of shells and then lay down upon a bunk in the factory to catch a few hours' sleep preparatory to starting for the wells at daybreak. Shortly before dawn he arose, harnessed his big black horses to the wagon load of glycerin and, mounting the seat, started for the scene of the day's operations.

He drove with what seemed recklessness over the rough road, considering the fact that he was carrying 100 quarts of the explosive, but a discovery he made shortly after leaving the factory caused him considerable uneasiness. The reins had fallen under the horses' hoofs while he was harnessing, and one of the slender leather ribbons had been cut in two by a steel calked shoe. He had not noticed the accident in the dim light, and as he was now a considerable distance from the factory he dalked to turn back.

"It will probably hold, and if the team does run away and blow me into a billion shreds who'll care?" he said bitterly. "They'll bury me in a

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believed of the sudden strain upon their bits, the horses broke into a gallop, and the lurching, reeling, jolting wagon dashed down the hill at break-neck speed.

Small called to the horses, endeavored to check them with the single rein and pressed his foot upon the brake until the wheels fairly screamed, but his efforts were futile. With constantly increasing momentum the wagon sped down the hill. It rocked so violently that Small could barely retain his seat. It leaped high in the air at every bounce, and each instant he expected the deadly cans beneath would blow him to the cold, gray clouds.

On, on, the frenzied team sped, the wheels roaring, the wagon complaining shrilly in every spring and bolt and the terror stricken glycerin shooter clinging for life to his chariot of death.

To jump was to be dashed to pieces on the rocks that studded the precipitous roadside. To remain meant annihilation when the crack of doom came. In his mind's eye he could see the road ahead, and he knew that the inevitable could not long be delayed. A minute more and the sharp bend at the brook would be reached. The horses, dashing on at terrific speed, could not safely make it. They would plunge headlong over the bluff. In desperation he half rose to steady himself for a leap for life. Again and again the jolting wagon threw him back and foiled him. With a roar the vehicle struck the plank bridge over the brook, leaped into the air, cleared the turning road at a bound and a second later plunged down the hillside.

For an instant there was deathlike stillness. Then a volcano of smoke and flame leaped from the hillside toward the town, earth and sky seemed to meet with a mighty crash, trees, rocks and tons of debris rained down upon the valley and a thunderous boom like the concerted voices of ten thousand cannon bellowed from hillside to hillside and slowly died away in the distance.

Nearly every man, woman and child who happened to be awake and standing in Gusherville, and several of the houses, were knocked down by the concussion, but in ten minutes the scene of the explosion was thronged with excited spectators. A few shreds of horse-flesh, a hoof with a shoe half torn off and a spoke or two were all that remained of the team and wagon.

The first man to reach the spot saw a dark object in a pool that the brook formed in a narrow ledge on the hillside. They seized it and dragged it from the now shallow water. It was the body of Small, limp, still, apparently lifeless. The wagon in its plunge had shot him into the pool, and the water, closing over him just as the explosion occurred, had completely protected his body. He was half drowned, but years of life yet remained, and after eager friends had worked over him nearly an hour he opened his eyes. The first person those eyes rested upon was Kittie Coleman.

"I—I did my best," he whispered with a weak smile. "I fired a hundred guns at sunrise, and—and you'll forgive me, won't you, Kittie?"

A fond pressure of the hand soon to be his for life was her response. Words were useless. The big glycerin shooter's shattered ears would never hear her voice again!

The kindness of Moslems toward these four footed pariahs of their streets is the more astonishing when it is considered that the dog, being held to be an unclean animal, is never admitted into their houses. Concern for the welfare of this animal has indeed occasionally induced pious Turks to add to their good works testamentary bequests in favor of the dogs of their quarter of the city of which the "deen and chapter" of the mosques, or their Moslem equivalents, are constituted the permanent trustees and administrators.

Some recent writers on Constantinople have asserted that the number of these canine lasses of its streets have greatly diminished of late years. One can, however, at the present day hardly walk a dozen yards, even in the European quarter of Pera, and still less in Stamboul, without being impeded by half a dozen or more dogs curled up in a row on the narrow pavement or in the roadway. A driver may occasionally bury them from under the wheels with a touch of his whip, but the pedestrian invariably walks round or steps over their prostrate bodies and disturbs not their slumbers.—Good Words.

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WOMAN AND FASHION

A Smart Linen Gown.
Handsome linen gowns are among the season's choicest models, and an excellent example is given in the sketch. It is made of red linen. The skirt and bodice are trimmed with openwork insertions in the same color



LINEN AND INSERTION.

over unbleached linen. The bodice is further enriched with a large collar of unbleached embroidered linen and four linen passementerie designs which trim the middle of the front. The skirt is finished with five serpentine flounces narrowing toward the front.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Fads and Fancies.

A butcher blue crash blouse was rendered distinctive by an applied embroidery of poppies and leaves up the front in natural colorings.

New sashes are made with three long ends, each streamer carrying a ribbon rose a few inches from the end.

Novel belts are of satin ribbon ends and fasten with jeweled buckles.

Aprons of jewels, at present the peacock seems the favorite subject for introduction into brooches, necklaces, pendants and charms.

If present indications go for anything, then sashes of taffeta, taffeta glace and pompadour silk will be largely worn with summer frocks. These are fastened with a jeweled pin and in front knotted at the back, not a bow, but something like a four-hand tie. The ends are generally fringed. These sashes are from 2½ to 3 yards in length.

Some very dainty black dresses of silk net have just made their appearance. Many employ the tulle flower ornamentation so much used during the winter, but the newest are decorated with rosettes, a small button center being surrounded with ribbon, gaufered.

A Nobby Waist.

This is a blouse of black taffeta tucked all round, the tucks opening out at the bottom to form a little blouse. The wide box plait in the middle of the



BLOUSE OF BLACK TAFFETA.

front is stitched on the edges and ornamented with six large buttons of steel surrounded with brilliants.

The wide shoulder collar and the cuffs are of Irish gauze. The sleeves are made like the waist, with tucks opening out at the bottom and a box plait on the outside.—Chic Parisien.

Peasants' Hair Seters.

Alpaca straps well and is cool, quiet and distinguished in wear and in appearance. It is a half sister to toulard when it comes to utility. Supposing a bottle green length were chosen for a costume, it might have a short surplice coat, with a shoulder collar of cambric adorned with wheel lace appliques, or one of blurred blue blossom silk and a braid lace edge and be accompanied by a blouse, minus a neckband, to match the shoulder collar. The blouse would show all around the figure above the waist and be belted with an art nouveau metal calature.

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