



Never Again

I wish the crackers would sound as loud
As they did in the days gone by.
I wish the candy would taste as sweet
As it did in a past July.
I wish the chums of the days of yore
Would gather about in the grove
once more,
And take their part in the great
day's roar,
Under the July sky.
I wish the skies were as clear and blue
As they were in the days of old.
I wish the sunlight would gleam again
With the shimmer of burnished gold.
I wish the boys of that yesterday
From over the hills and far away
Would come again with light hearts
gay,
Under the old flag's fold.
I wish their laughter would ring again
As it did in the years long fled.
I wish that youth could hover once more
O'er the curls of each care-free head.
I know such wishes can never be,
But we can gather again, care free,
For one more day, just you and me—
Boys, though we're grown up men.

Remembrances of the Fourth

Remember the very first Fourth of July on which you were considered old enough to shoot off your firecrackers without parental supervision? Let's see—that was about, about; well, no matter how many years ago. Quite too many to think about with pleasure.
Between the first day of July and the Fourth day of July—you always use capital letters when you write, speak or think of that glorious day—there was a lapse of time amounting to about a year and thirteen months, according to your boyish imagination. It seemed as if the Fourth just never would come. The night before the Fourth was the longest in all history. You went to bed early so you could go to sleep and thus pass the time quickly. And you jumped out about 1:30 a. m., only to be amazed to see that the clock had stopped—or that time had ceased to fugit. You were finally rejoiced to see 5 o'clock come, and in two minutes and thirteen seconds you were dressed and washed, and all ready for the day's festivities.

But you were still a few hours too early. The celebration was to be held in Walters' grove, about six miles from town, and although you wanted to start out and walk, father negated the idea and said you would have to wait and ride out with the rest of the family. He was the most sedate, deliberate man that ever lived. He wouldn't hurry through breakfast, and he wouldn't hurry about hitching up the ponies. It was quite 8 o'clock before he was ready to start, and there was a good three hours of the glorious day already wasted. But start we finally did. It was hot, and father wouldn't hurry the ponies. He thought a lot more of the feelings of those ponies than he did of the fidgety lad by his side—at any rate the lad thought so.

But it was lots of fun, riding out to the grove. Everybody in the

whole world seemed headed for that particular place. Wagons, equestrians, pedestrians and carryalls lined the roads in all directions. Everybody was happy.

You could just smell that celebration before you got within a mile of the grove. It smelled powdery, popcorny and peanutty, with a faint trace of molasses candy and lemons. But there's no manner of use trying to tell about all the features of that day. Couldn't remember all of 'em if you tried. You can remember that Maria Maguire was the Goddess of Liberty in the parade, and it didn't take as big a wagonette to hold all the states then as it does now—not by a whole lot. And you remember that Etta Tandy read the Declaration of Independence, and that the orator of the day was—let's see; who was the orator of the day? Well, no matter; no one ever pays any attention to the orator of the day on the Fourth of July. That is nobody but a lot of men and women who are too tired or too indolent to walk around, or the women who have babies to take care of and find the shady seats too comfortable to leave. Doubtless the orator on this occasion was a big man, but somehow or other his name has escaped.

But that firecracker stunt! Ah, that was the main thing about this particular celebration. It was the first time you were allowed to hold the bunch all by yourself, pick 'em out one at a time and touch 'em off without parental assistance. Shortly after arriving at the grove father responded to repeated hints and finally pulled out his old leather wallet. Opening it with provoking slowness he dug up from its inner recesses a shinplaster bearing the stupendous figures, "25." That was about all the money there was in the world at that time, wasn't it! Just seemed impossible to ever spend all of it. But it didn't last so very long. Firecrackers cost 10 cents a bunch in those days—but they were worth it. Those firecrackers banged just three thousand times louder than the firecrackers of the same size today. Two bunches of firecrackers—that meant 20 cents. And a chunk of taffy about as big as a peck measure—that took the remaining 5 cents. No, not a nickel. Didn't have any those days. It was just five cents, in the shape of a shinplaster. Everything was paper money in those days, except now and then a 3-cent piece or a copper cent. And if the 20 cents' worth of firecrackers didn't last long, the 5-cent chunk of taffy did. Of course you didn't waste any of your good money on the gingerbread so temptingly displayed at the stands. You know a big basket safely resting in the back end of a spring wagon that contained the very biggest and best hunk of gingerbread ever baked. My, O my; what would you give to be able to eat right now a slab of gingerbread made by the same hands? Anything in this wide world, wouldn't you? But you never will, for those hands were folded peacefully over the mother's breast many long years ago.

It took an awful lot of hinting, and about as much promising, to extract another shinplaster from that old wallet, but along about 2 p. m. it came. It went for firecrackers, too. And you shot them off all by

yourself. That is, no one helped you shoot 'em, but all the boys enjoyed them with you. True you were a little slow in letting go of a few, with resultant blisters on your good right hand. And two or three shot off backwards at unexpected times, much to the damage of the waist mother had taken so much pains with. And a bare foot is not just the proper thing to set down upon a firecracker that is glowing hot. You can remember that, can't you?

You don't remember much about the basket dinner under the big walnut trees. Of course there was fried chicken till you couldn't rest; and sliced ham, and coldslaw, and pickles, and peach butter, and apple butter, and jelly, and marmalade, and grape butter, and plum butter, and currant jam, and raspberry jam, and blackberry jam, and marble cake, and sponge cake, and apple pie, and peach pie, and custard pie, and radishes, and onions, and pickled beets, and generous slices of bread, and golden butter, and gooseberry pie, and vinegar pie, and cove oysters fresh from the can, and cold roast beef, and hard boiled eggs and enough other edibles to make out a fairly comprehensive bill of fare. But eating came so naturally to you in those days that a dinner didn't make much of an impression on your mind—nothing at all like the impression made by those three bunches of firecrackers.

And the ride home as the evening shadows were falling. Of course you don't remember much about that. You curled up in the back end of the wagon, your head in the dinnerbasket and your feet somewhere, goodness only knows where, and went to sleep. And it took father's sharpest tone of voice to get you out to help him unharness and feed the ponies and do up the evening chores. No trouble to go to sleep after tumbling into bed that night. No troubled dreams—just sleep!

My, wouldn't it be great if we could hike out next Fourth of July and enjoy another day like it? But you can't. There'll be something lacking. There'll be more firecrackers, and they will be cheaper. There'll be a thousand different kinds of candy, and fireworks such as your youthful fancy never dreamed of. But there'll be something missing. Ah, yes; it will be youth and light spirits and freedom from all care. Nothing can bring them back.

But just the same, we are going to shoot off a lot of firecrackers, God willing, and we're going to do our best to see that a bunch of kiddies—Lord bless 'em—have the time of their lives on that day. They'll never be young but once. In that respect the children of today have very little advantage of over the children of other days.

His Business

"There goes a man who is always looking for trouble."
"He don't look like it."
"O, he works for the telephone company."

Brain Leaks

Some people score their greatest success when they fail.
The stars shine every night, just as the sun shines every day.
On the square now, brother; do the women gossip more than the men do?
It is not necessary to borrow trouble. It will camp with you if you will let it.
The average man loses enough time worrying over trifles to accomplish something really worth while.

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