

BENJAMIN'S BOMBHELL

A Juvenile Story.

"Please come over to our barn right after dinner, I've got a scheme for celebrating the Fourth that will wake up the town."

So ran the note which Farmer Tully's son Benjamin had sent to his four friends—Will Chester, Walter Casey, Hal Gossman and Eddie Wilmont.

"Benjamin (his chums always call him Benjamin) 'has got up something new again. Wonder what it is?' muttered Will, as he read his note. Benjamin was very versatile in schemes, and for this reason, probably, he was looked upon as a sort of leader among his companions.

After dinner Will went directly to the Tully farm.

In the rambling old barn that squatted close to the sluggish river he found the other four; Benjamin, sitting on a feed cutter, was thoughtfully chewing a straw.

"Well, what is it, what is it?" queried Will, impatiently.

"I will tell you. You know what a mortar is?"

"A mortar? Why, mortar is the stuff they stick bricks together with."

"That ain't the mortar I mean. I mean those sawed-off little cannon that point up in the air and are used to shoot bombshells out of. My idea is to make a mortar and some bombshells. They would make as much noise as a cannon, and when the bomb went off in the air it could be seen and heard for miles in all directions."

The boys looked at each other aghast.

"Why, we can't do that," said Eddie. "Those things have to be made in factories."

"We can make 'em all right," said Benjamin. "There's a big iron drain tile about a foot in diameter down in the field that will make a splendid mortar. All we need to do is to fit it into a log to stop up one end. I know where there is just that kind of a log, or stump, too, and it will prevent the tile from bursting when the thing goes off."

"But what would you make your bombshell out of?" asked Hal Gossman.

"I have thought that out, too," was Benjamin's ready reply. "We can take two baseball bats, rip the leather off and fit them together and plaster clay over them until they are thick enough to be pretty solid, leaving the inside empty to be filled with powder. We can get all the powder we want."

That afternoon four of them got the tile and carried it in Benjamin's boat to the spot chosen by Benjamin, close to the stump which they intended to put to such a new use.

The stump was curiously examined. It was the remains of an oak tree perhaps three feet in diameter. In its center was a deep opening which seemed just about large enough to accommodate the tile. All together the boys carried the tile to the stump, and with much puffing and blowing succeeded in getting it into the great hollow place in the stump.

"When shall we fire her off?" queried Will, when the mortar was complete.

"I think about midnight before the Fourth would be the best time," and the others thought so, too.

The powder was bought, a bombshell made and hidden away in the barn, together with the remainder of the powder.

About an hour before midnight on the 3d the five boys crept noiselessly down to the river shore where Benjamin's skiff was moored. They pulled down the stream and landed in utter darkness, for Benjamin said it would

be dangerous to have a lantern near the powder.

The charge for the mortar, about two pounds, was emptied from its sack into the tile. Paper was placed on top of it and rammed down solid. Then the "shell" was dropped into the mortar. Nothing was placed on top of this. The mortar was now loaded and ready for firing, for Benjamin had run a long fuse through a hole in the stump and up into the pipe until it touched the powder.

"Ain't it pretty near midnight?" asked Eddie Wilmont, eagerly. He voted the impatience of the others.

"Let her go!" said Chester.

Benjamin, on his part, was as anxious as his companions to put their experiment to the test. Striking a match, he touched the blaze to the end of the fuse projecting from the pipe. Hissing and spitting, the fire crept toward the charge.

"Now get to cover!" advised Benjamin, excitedly. "She will reach the powder in another minute, and the air may be full of flying iron and wood."

They hurried down the river bank to the boat. Then came a roar that almost deafened them, and a great

"Look! Look!" shouted Benjamin, pointing up. "There she goes!"

A ball of fire had leaped from the stump, and with one great bound had reached an enormous height, leaving a fiery stream behind it. They could see it away up in the air, glowing like a star. It seemed to remain motionless for a minute and then began to descend.

"Ain't that impense?" cried Benjamin, waving his hat in great glee.

Down, down, it rushed like a blazing comet. The paper wadding had struck to the shell, and becoming ignited from the explosion continued to burn fiercely. A stream of sparks rushed upward from it. The air was full of burning paper. Then, as it was about to drop into the river a quarter of a mile away, it burst. A heavy crash again woke the echoes and another blaze of light flashed for an instant. Then came darkness.

"It is all over," said Benjamin.

But he was mistaken. There was a good deal to follow, something which he and his companions had not counted on.

It chanced that some public-spirited men in the village had decided to give an exhibition of fireworks on the night of the Fourth also. Having determined to keep the matter quiet until the Fourth had arrived, the fireworks had been purchased very slyly and carried to a spot on the river bank about a quarter-mile below the place where Benjamin's bombshell had begun its flight. Here a raft had been made, and upon it the fireworks were put. This was done on the evening of the 3d. Two men were hired to sleep on the raft to see that it was not disturbed.

The men poled the raft out into the middle of the river and lying down on their blankets went to sleep surrounded by a wholesale assortment of sky-rockets, roman candles, giant crackers, bombs, pinwheels, and all manner of things, without a thought of danger. They had been sleeping soundly for about two hours when the noise of the mortar awakened them.

They saw the bombshell darting down with marvelous speed, which increased every second, and before they could pull in the rope to which the anchor was fastened which held the raft it was right above them.

Horror-stricken, they plunged into the river and hurried away as fast as they could through the shallow water.

Then the shell exploded.

The men ducked their heads. There was a great splashing in the water as pieces of the bursted shell were hurled into it, but neither of the men was hit. Half dazed, they lifted their heads. The red glare of the exploded shell and the accompanying roar had gone.

All was darkness for a brief moment. Then came a vicious hissing from the raft, and the air was filled with flying sparks. It was one of the pinwheels which had caught, and as though inspired by a spirit of mischief it was whirling at a great rate, sending its sparks everywhere.

The men rushed back to the raft to save the cargo.

Then the trouble commenced in earnest.

Firecrackers began to bang away in unsuspected spots, and no sooner was a pack snatched out and thrown into the river than other packs took up the chorus.

"Yank 'em out, yank 'em out!" cried one of the men, making a dash for them at the risk of burning his fingers.

Just then a couple of pinwheels started at the same time and began to buzz and fuster as though each was trying to outdo the other and both bent on putting out the men's eyes in a shower of sparks.

Now that they had got going the fireworks were evidently bound not to be interfered with, for while the rockets and roman candles were bombarding one man a giant firecracker did its best to tear the other's fingers off and to help defeat his assault a big bomb exploded almost in his face.

The tumult was at its height, but the men worked desperately to save what they could of the fireworks, but in the midst of their forlorn task they heard hoots, yells and loud laughter from the shore.

Looking shoreward they could dimly see a large crowd of people on the river bank. The village had been aroused and had come to witness the novel spectacle. Moreover, from the sounds from that way, they seemed to be enjoying it immensely.

"Well, that settles me," said one of the men on the raft, disgustedly. "Them people is laughing at us. Let's get out of this hornet's nest. This stuff is bound to blow itself all up anyway," and he coolly jumped into the river and waded ashore. His companion followed him.

Once ashore they were surrounded by a crowd of people curious to learn all about the matter.

The men were very discreet, however, in regard to who owned the fireworks, but told how they happened to be set on fire. Where the troublesome fiery visitor had come from appeared to be a mystery. Many had seen it, but none knew whence it came.

Benjamin and his friends were in the crowd. As soon as they learned that the bomb had caused the mischief to somebody's fireworks down the river they had rowed that way. Before they reached there they saw that the fireworks on the raft were too far gone in their career of self-destruction to be saved, and they rowed their boat ashore and watched the queer exhibition, somewhat frightened at the calamity the bomb had caused.

The uproar from the raft grew less after awhile, the firecrackers ceased to be heard and all became dark and silent.

The secret of who shot the shell did not come out until long after, for the boys kept very quiet.

When there is talk of rousing Judge Parker for President it seems strange that Brother Coxy of Ohio has not announced himself for the same position.

Every place investigated by Editor Stead is pronounced worse than all the others put together. We should think it would profit this man to pick out some decent company occasionally.

It seems to be the opinion of congress that the motives of these young women who marry pensioned veterans old enough to be their grandpas are not above the suspicion of serdudness. There are only three survivors of the war of 1812, but 2,800 widows of dead soldiers of that war draw pensions.

Two policemen in Boston are hard at work trying to prevent the students of a medical school and those of a young ladies' seminary from looking at each other. The schools are close together and the students are let out at the same time every day. If the plan worked the young persons would be less or more than human. It won't. There is only one sure way of stopping the mischief, and that is to abolish the schools.

Trouble has arisen between Germany and the little republic of Hayti, owing to the arrest by the Haytian police of a man claiming to be a German citizen. The German minister demanded his release and a payment of fifty thousand dollars indemnity. The man was set free, but Hayti is unwilling to pay indemnity. Germany threatened to send a cruiser to press her claim; at the remonstrance of our government she abandoned her purpose.

The gluttony of the people who flock to public receptions in Washington with less decorum than is usually preserved in front of the barkeeper's waist has provoked retaliation. The ladies of the cabinet announce that refreshments will no longer be served. The households of the cabinet members will no longer be embraced in a free lunch route. Thus will end scenes which have been a disgrace to the capital of the country for a great many years and an intolerable nuisance will be abolished.

The holiday publications are responsible for a great evil. They usher in the most popular of the saints two months before he is ready for the reception and while his attire is unfitted to the occasion. They put the family man to large and unnecessary expense and apprehension. They force the Christmas thought and the Christmas purse so premature that the world tires of them before they should have begun. Shall they be issued next year on the fourth of July or some time in September? Time has no forelock now. It has been yanked out.

The diabolical assassination of William Terriss, the distinguished British actor, by a worthless crank with a homicidal mania, brings up before us again and in a most urgent form the question of dealing with this class of pests. There is no law for punishing or even locking up a crank, no matter how dangerous he may notoriously be. Justice waits until he commits murder, and then offers to society the begrudgingly reparation of the gallows. The peril is one which the individual must meet for himself. Government avenges him only after he has been slain and his family desolated.

The postal authorities are properly paying attention to a class of advertisements that has appeared too frequently in some periodicals of late. The advertiser promises to give valuable prizes to persons sending him accurate solutions of a collection of "puzzles," of which the subjoined is a fair sample: "Supply the missing letters in the following name of an important New England city—B-at-n." It is said that the people have been swindled out of a sum of money large in the aggregate through this transparent fraud. Periodicals will henceforth publish such advertisements at the risk of being excluded from the mails.

A short cut to notoriety has been effected by a woman of Paris who contributed and collected ten thousand francs toward the Guy de Maupassant monument, recently unveiled in the Parc Monceau, on the condition that her own portrait be introduced. The ludicrous result, the figure of a fashionably dressed woman reclining in a long chair at the foot of a bust of the poet, is characterized by a writer in a London newspaper as "an advertisement in marble for some leading dressmaker." Human vanity takes many forms and some persons choose to bask in the world's gaze, even at the expense of self-respect or of life itself.

Two farmers were once discussing their local paper. One thought it had too many advertisements in it. The other replied: "In my opinion the advertisements are far from being the least valuable part of it. I look them over carefully and save at least five times the cost of the paper each week through the business advantages I get from them," said the other: "I believe you are right—I know that they pay me well and rather think it is not good taste to find fault with the advertisements after all. It pays any man with a family to take a good local paper for the sake of the advertisements if nothing more. And if business men fail to give farmers a chance to read advertisements in the local paper, they are blind to their own interests, to say the least of it. 'You never trade with me,'" said a business man to a prosperous farmer. "You have never invited me to your place of business and I never go where I am not invited; I might not be welcome," was his reply.

What is it a Name! After the Merrimac exploit, every Humanist pinner in the country shouted out: "The Human Catholics were here! Was there not a Murphy and a Kelly with Hobson?"

But what do these sarragranbs mean—this one from the N. Y. Sun of Monday—

"Trenton, N. J., Aug. 21—William Kelly a gunner on the Brooklyn, reached home on a furlough last night. This morning he attended the First Presbyterian church with his sister. Desiring to escape attention, he was in citizen's dress, but old acquaintances recognized him, and one of the deacons went to the pulpit and whispered to the Rev. J. C. Killian that there was one of the country's heroes in the church. The Rev. Mr. Killian announced that as it would be unseemly and out of place to give three cheers, the Chautauquus salute be given to Gunner Kelly. The pastor drew a handkerchief from his pocket, and instantly there was a waving of handkerchiefs from every part of the church. Then by special request the choir sang 'Home Again.' After the service Mr. Kelly received an ovation."

And this from the Boston Transcript of Monday:—

"J. E. Murphy, a sailor on the battleship Iowa, and one of the brave men who volunteered for the work of sinking the Merrimac, of which Lieutenant Hobson had charge, attended the Collegiate Reformed church of Harlem (Rev. Dr. Burdill) yesterday morning. Rev. John Lewis Clark of Chicago, who preached, recognized the naval hero in the congregation, and he made known his presence to the worshippers. Every man, woman and child shook hands with Mr. Murphy at the reception following the service. Some of the women could not restrain their tears, and wept while tendering their congratulations."

We think that no one will contend that these men, if Roman Catholics, would attend Protestant churches as soon as they lacked.

\$10 Reward. I will give the above reward to any person, church or patriotic society that will, before the 30th day of September, 1898, sell the largest amount of my Anti-Catholic books. Circulars and price lists sent on receipt of a two cent stamp. Money to accompany orders for books. Address

REV. J. G. WHITE, Stanford, Ill.

Out of town Americans when visiting Omaha can save money and get a pleasant room by applying at this office. Room can be secured in advance by deposit of \$1

Truth is always ready to go to war; error will run at the first opportunity.

J. T. PATCH, Attorney, Room 22 Patterson Block. 61-326.

In the District Court of Douglas County, Nebraska, Charles B. Evans, dec'd. To Lydia E. Spaulding and Roger C. Evans.

You, and each of you, are hereby notified that the District Court of Douglas County, Nebraska, has made the following order in the above entitled action, to wit:

"Now this cause coming on for hearing on the report of the administrator of the sale of the east half (½) of lot eighteen (18), Pelham Place, an addition to the city of Omaha, Nebraska, in pursuance of a license granted by this court to the administrator of said estate, dated 18th day of November, 1897, and it appearing by said report that said half lot was sold on the 25th day of July, 1898, to Oliver Chambers for the sum of five hundred and seventy dollars (\$570.00) cash. It is therefore ordered that all persons interested in said estate be notified to appear before me at court room No. 5, of the District Court of Douglas County, Nebraska, in the Bee Building on the 5th day of September, 1898, at 10 o'clock forenoon, to show cause if any, why said sale should not be confirmed and a deed executed to the purchaser, by service of this order. Publication of same to be in The American or non-residents."

J. PAWCETT, Judge of the District Court. Dated July 27, 1898. 8-54

The son of Admiral Dewey entered business in New York not long ago, and at his father's request began at the bottom, receiving the princely salary of \$29 a month. It is said that last month an unscrupulous editor invited him to join his staff. "You need write no articles," he said, "nor do any reporting work. Just sign your name to an article every day, and I will pay you two hundred dollars a month." The young man wasted but few words on the editor. His negative reply was as much to the point as his father's attack at Manila. It is a great thing, and a heroic, when a young man considers a high salary as mere dirt beneath his feet, compared to his own honor and integrity.

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QUEEN MAB. By WILLIAM WESTALL. "Queen Mab" is without doubt the best of this popular author's works. It is a startling, realistic and fascinating as the works of Jules Verne or H. Rider Haggard, and deals with the wonderful adventures of a young Englishman on a voyage to the tropics. Never since the days of Robinson Crusoe have such strange and startling adventures been recorded, yet all within the bounds of possibility. It contains over 200 pages, printed from new plates.

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"CARRIED THE TILE TO THE STUMP."

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