



FIVE or six years ago, when the rain-making experiments were being conducted, first at Washington, afterward in Texas, my college chum and I became greatly interested in the subject.

We were then sophomores at B. Elementary chemistry was our regular course of study that year, and we spent most of the spring term experimenting on our own account and exploding a vast number of gas balloons.

We made a great deal of noise, and maintained that we produced rain. Showers certainly did follow some of the explosions.

The spring term closed on June 26, and all the boys went home, except my chum Jarvis and myself, who, in consequence of spending so much time experimenting, had been "conditioned," and had a week's hard work to make up in our Greek.

Rather than have it hanging over us all summer and into the next year, we agreed to do it at once and have done with it. Permission was accorded to us to go on living in our rooms at the hall, and the resident professor in Greek consented to give us an extra examination.

Hardly anyone except the old janitor knew that we had not gone home as usual; for, naturally, we were not very proud of being obliged to stay after term time to make up our work. We stayed indoors all day, and burned the midnight oil, besides.

It was dreadfully hot during the last four days of June, but we toiled away with Greek grammar and lexicon, hoping to get home for the Fourth of July; and we should have done so, but our Greek professor ate too much cantaloup on the day set for the examination, and thought for 48 hours he had appendicitis.

It proved to be no such serious trouble, but it hindered our plans. The professor was not able to examine us till the afternoon of the third, so we could not possibly get home for the Fourth.

Jarvis was furious. "Confound cantaloup!" he grumbled. "And confound a professor that doesn't know better than to eat it! No use to start now. We couldn't get home!" he raged on. "I won't spend the Fourth in a railway car! Let's stay here and shake the old town up! Let's send up a balloon at midnight! We'll make it rain here to-morrow!"

Rather an incendiary sentiment, the reader will say, but we had been shut up with Greek for six long, hot days. We had access to the laboratory in Chemistry hall, where we had our balloons, and generated the oxygen and hydrogen gas for exploding them.

There was a quantity of cotton cloth, paper and glue, which had not been used; and that evening we made a balloon ten feet in diameter, which we succeeded in charging, outside the window, with oxygen and hydrogen from the laboratory retorts, in the proportion of two to one, that being the formula by which the two gases unite to produce water—and a particular ear-splitting explosion.

We finished the balloon, and had the gas generated at a little past 11 o'clock; and then, after charging a large Leyden jar from the static electrical machine, we started out to astonish the quiet little town, and usher in the Fourth of July.

We had a large ball of strong manila twine and a spool of small copper wire, the ends of which were attached for a spark at the base of the balloon.

the chemistry building, and out across the campus to the edge of the pine woods. Then we let it rise.

The night was very dark and still, but clouds had risen in the north and west, and there was a frequent glow of lightning in that quarter, although so distant that the thunder could not be heard.

"There's a shower coming!" Jarvis exclaimed, as the balloon began its ascent. "We shall have to make haste."

But as yet there was not a breath of wind stirring; the balloon had risen and hung directly overhead, and was pulling hard at its restraining string.

We knew from past experience that when the electric spark acted on the two gases the explosion would be something tremendous; but we thought that at a height of 800 or 900 feet, out there by the woods, no damage would follow.

And perhaps none would have followed, if all had gone as we planned, but Jarvis had a great deal of trouble connecting the wires. He was bothering with them for some minutes.

Then suddenly the first gust of the oncoming shower struck us.

What followed came quickly. The balloon swayed over before the wind. Down it bowed until the cord strung out far aslant.

"Good gracious!" I cried, holding hard. "She'll get away from me, Jarvis! Touch her off quick, or she will break away!"

In the darkness we could not see just where the balloon was, or what it was over.

But the next moment we saw! Jarvis had managed at last to connect the wires and touch off the balloon. There came a sudden blaze and a tremendous detonation, as if the whole town had cracked clean down through the center of the earth!

The shock bowled us both over, and we heard a crash of timbers following the report. The thing had exploded about 30 feet over the barn and shed of a worthy inhabitant of B., who lived near the ball grounds, and kept a lazy horse which he hired to the boys at such high prices that they had nicknamed him "Old Gripus."

"We've done it now!" gasped Jarvis, as he scrambled hastily to his feet. "That's Old Gripus's barn!"

But that was not the worst. Shreds of the burning paper and cloth from the balloon must have fallen among hay and straw, for even as we stood staring in that direction a bright flame shot up from the building.

The only thing left us now was to run to the house and shout: "Fire!" That we did with a vengeance, and soon roused the fire department; the new steam engine and two old hand "tubs" responded.

Through their united efforts, aided considerably by the shower which soon began to pour copiously, the old man's house was saved from the fire, but the barn and shed and an old buggy were consumed.

Jarvis and I were greatly worried, and, indeed, were on the verge of honorable confession of our act; but now, I am sorry to say, to our relief, we found that it was the unanimous opinion of every one, including the fire department and the owner himself, that the barn had been struck by lightning! For everybody in town had heard what they believed to be an awful clap of thunder!

Jarvis nudged me in the crowd, and we went home to talk it over. We had very little spare cash, and disliked exceedingly to go home, own up to such a prank, and try to get \$250 each from an unsympathetic father.

"Chum," said Jarvis, with a downcast look, "this is a pretty low game,

I know, but hadn't we better let well enough alone—for awhile, at least?"

It was a terrible temptation, and I have to confess that, after a great deal of mental agitation, we surrendered to it.

There was \$300 insurance on the barn, but the loss was estimated at \$500.

We never mentioned the matter to each other during our two remaining years in college, for we were far from rich; yet I knew by the way Jarvis would look at me once in awhile that he was thinking of it, and trying to discern how I felt.

But we said nothing. Directly after our graduation Jarvis went out to Hawaii, and I did not see him for three years; but we wrote every month or two.

I knew that we should have to settle for the damage before we could feel right; still, I did not like to open the subject to Jarvis, for I did not know exactly how he was situated. It transpired that he felt the same way about it as I did; but the sense of dishonor wore him out first.

"I say, Jack," he added, as a postscript to his letter last New Year's day, "Gripe's old barn is pretty heavy on my conscience. Hadn't we better fix that up? In equity it will be a matter of \$300, interest and all, which we owe to the Phoenix company, and \$260 to Gripus; \$325 each. Hadn't we better do it?"

We squared up the long-standing "conscience account" last month; and thus—after six years—ended our effort to make it rain in B. on the night before the Fourth of July.—Youth's Companion.

The Small Boy's Day

THIS is—
If any one should ask you,
Or even if no one should—
The Day we Celebrate,
That is,
To-morrow is the Day,
But we start in
All of one day previous
So as to be certain
Of good measure.
Don't worry,
Or lose any sleep over it
If no one should ask you—
Never fear.
Every one will find it out.
The man who didn't know
That it was
The
Fourth
Of
July
Would have to be blind
In both eyes,
Deaf in both ears,
And lame in his intellect.
To be perfectly safe
It would be well also
For him to be
In darkest Africa
And to have been
Dead ten years.
There is no danger
But people will find it out.
In fact,
Most of them know it now
And those who do not
Are rapidly acquiring
The information.

Along about this time of year
It is one of the
Most obvious facts
Ever brought to the attention
Of a great people.
It is easier than falling
From a bicycle
To know when it is
The Independence day.
All one has to do
Is to remove one's head
From between the pillows,
Take the cotton
Out of one's ears
And listen.
Fourth of July.
Was invented by the Yankees.
The Chinese worked patiently
For many centuries
And invented the firecracker.
Together they make
A great combination,
Also a noise
Which resembles the shot
That was heard round the
world.
Only it's louder.

In the olden times
Fourth of July
Was comparatively harmless.
The average boy
Had about five cents
To spend.
That would buy 100 crackers.
After they were touched off
He was through.
Possibly he got up in the morn-
ing
And shot off the old musket,
But he was not allowed
To waste ammunition
During the day.
No one was hurt
Unless he ate too much.
Now it is different.
The small boy
Who is not allowed
To have two toy pistols,
One in each hand,
A firecracker between each toe
And a bunch of cannon crack-
ers
To throw into street cars
Thinks he is abused
And that his father
Is not patriotic.

Many years have passed
Since we licked the British
But, say, we did such a job
Of it that we are
Obliged to get together
Once every year and
Yell!
Our forefathers fought,
Bled and died
That we might shoot fire-
crackers
Once a year
Provided we had the money
Or credit
To get them.
They licked the British
So thoroughly
That the latter
Never interfere
With our innocent sports.
And we are at liberty
To shoot off our thumbs,
Ears or toes
To express our feelings.

Then turn the Small Boy loose.
Give him full swing,
And matches.
And let him enjoy himself
While we
Take to the woods.
—Chicago Daily News.



A Unique Celebration

By F. H. LANCASTER.

AS LANCE crossed the lawn he was hailed by a chorus of anxious voices: "Come help us, Lance. Please come."

He shrugged his rather heavy shoulders, and came slowly toward the group under the cedars. "What's up?" he asked, lazily throwing himself upon a seat a little apart from the rest, and leaning forward to bend the grass down with his stiff-brimmed straw hat. He did not look at anyone as he put the question, but the young Creole replied: "It's Cedoni."

"I have nothing to do with it," corrected Cedoni, whose vivacity and fun had vanished when Lance approached.

"Ah, but you said it must be something different this year."

"Oh, it's your Fourth of July celebration, is it? The same old cry. You are tired of barbecues and regattas and fish fries and sunstrokes. You expect me to help you with such a conundrum?" Lance spoke with good-natured impatience, but he did not look up. "Why not ignore the Fourth? Not have any celebration at all? That would be quite a novelty for this hot-bed of patriotism." His last words were drowned in a clamor of indignant protests.

"We are going to read the Declaration," insisted the Creole, who was the orator of the town, "but how, and where?"

Lance dropped his hat into the grass and stared at it. He was thinking of a curious dream he had had the night before, and spoke aloud absently: "By torchlight, upon the water." Such being the words he had seen in his dream upon the magical leaf at the fountain of Castalia. The party of young folks received them with joyous acclamation.

"Go on, Lance, you have made a grand beginning. Now, when?"

Lance lifted his head and looked at Cedoni: "At midnight, when the clock strikes 12."

"The oracle has spoken," cried the young Creole. "Why look so mystified, my friends? We will have a floundering party on the night of July the third. At midnight we collect around the torches—read the



HE WAS THINKING OF A CURIOUS DREAM HE HAD HAD.

Declaration, make speeches, sing songs—in short, celebrate the glorious Fourth. There will be no smell of burning meat, no din of cannon, no sunstroke. Only dewy coolness of early morn, dancing lights on gleaming waters, poetry, music—"

"Yes," interrupted a practical member, "and after we are through with all that, we can take our flounders on shore and have a fish fry."

"Yes, indeed! And then we could dance on the beach to the music of a fife."

"In our wet clothes. That would be a floundering party, sure enough."

"Nonsense! We would have tents."

"Oh, oh! We might as well have lemonade and peanuts."

"No! We'll use the bath houses—"

"But where will the flag come in?"

reading "Ben Hur" that he dreamt of the priest and the fountain and the magical leaf. But the answer to his question: "How and where would happiness come to him?" had been: "By torchlight, on the water." Why should those words, of all others, have appeared upon the dripping leaf? He grew nervous when Cedoni was urged to join the party, and when she consented he got up and walked away, feeling weak and unnerved through the whole of his big, brawny frame.

"I'll do it," he muttered, "if I live until the Fourth. At any rate," he added, after a pause, "I'll be done with this sickening uncertainty." By which it may be inferred that Lance was not in a very hopeful mood.

He was in a still less hopeful mood when he joined the flounders upon the momentous night. Cedoni was



AND SO THEY CELEBRATED THE FOURTH

flirting with the orator, who carried her basket, and threatened to grow sentimental. It was a large party and a gay one; the long line of torches, the flashing waters and laughing voices, shouts of triumph, ejaculations of dismay. Over all the eternal stars brooding peacefully above the trivial toils of man.

Lance splashed along with dogged determination, spearing flounders, saying nothing. He would say something presently—while the speeches were being made. After they were ashore the oracle would be void. He saw no hope of a word with Cedoni until the orator should be called to attend his public duties. Even then she would probably be invited inside the circle of light. But he would see that she did not go. Like all quiet men, when a deed was once determined upon, Lance expected to carry it through. He had not an idea what he would say—only that Cedoni should stay and listen. So it happened that when the grand stand—a bay of shallow water—was reached, and the torch bearers began to circle around the speakers, Cedoni felt a strong hand upon her arm.

"You wish something?" Her tone was distant, as it had been ever since he reproached her for that bit of idle gossip.

"I wanted to speak to you," Lance replied, quietly.

"Well?"

"After the speeches begin."

"You must excuse me. I am to sing the opening song."

"I can't excuse you."

"You must!" But he held her arm firmly and silently, while the circle closed and the song began.

"Do you consider this courteous?" she asked, indignantly.

"I wanted to speak to you," he repeated, quietly.

"Well, speak for—" The notes of "America" swelled out and drowned her words. Hundreds of voices singing under the stars, and the music floated far away over the silent water. It was soul-inspiring, yes, was more than that. Lance leaned over Cedoni.

"I love you, dear." His strong voice was a little husky. Did she hear? She stood by him until the orator's tones rang out, and then she moved.

"Wait," he said. "Did you hear?"

"Yes," she answered, steadily.

When the second speaker came forward, Lance spoke again, quietly. He was not pleading, only stating a fact. "This suspense is killing me." Cedoni's spear fell into the water with a splash. She caught the big, unsteady hand in both her own, and kissed it.

Far away was cheering, and torchlight and song, but here upon a log half-sunk in the sand sat two lovers talking of—well, a dream, a fountain and a leaf. And so they celebrated the Fourth. Was the manner unique?—Minneapolis Housekeeper.

Before the Fourth.
Little Willie has ten fingers
On his hands to-day.
Ah, what apprehension lingers
When we should be gay.
For a question grim, uncanny,
Fills the soul with sorrow;
Can he hold up just as many
When we're through the morrow?
—Washington Star.