

The Fourth of July of Our Boyhood.

In the dead of night, the first Fourth of July sound which was heard in our village was the old school-house bell. Generation after generation of boys had rung that bell directly after the town clock had struck the midnight hour. To stay out all night and help ring that bell was for us one of the great joys of the anniversary. When very young, as I lay in bed and heard this glorious sound, every tinkle seemed a note of pure gold. A few years later, on growing up to youth's estate, I arrived at the honor of helping to ring it myself. Sometimes unpatriotic and childish school trustees denied us this luxury. That made no difference. We found ladders, scaled the building and captured the belfry. Such risk, lawlessness and excitement only added to the pleasure. One thing was certain, that old bell had to be rung at the earliest moment of Independence Day, and ring it always did. Besides this, we broke out with guns, pistols, hand-bells, tin-kettles, horns, drums and a miniature cannon which some mischievous sailors had robbed from a Sandwich Island fort and brought home in one of our whale-ships. All the old folks who wanted to sleep, and who, twenty-five or thirty years before, had been just so blowing, ringing, beating and banging at the same hour, turned over in their beds and grumbled and growled at old John Adams, who had particularly recommended the ringing of bells and firing of guns on Fourth of July mornings. They did not always know that their own sons were making that noise. We had such exciting times getting out of the house after father and mother had retired. We tip-toed down the back stairs, shoes and stockings in hand. How some of those steps would c-r-e-a-k! They never creaked so in the daytime. They seemed to whine out like a miserable taltale at school: "Sam's-a-g-i-t-t-i-n-o-u-t-t-h-e-h-o-u-s-e!" Then we had to stop and stand still a long time. Then we would tread clear over that step and down two or three more. They were nice, quiet steps. They wouldn't tell. Then we came to another traitor. C-r-e-a-k! And when we slowly and cautiously opened the back door its miserable hinges also did their best to alarm the family. "Sam's-a-g-i-t-t-i-n-o-u-t-t-h-e-h-o-u-s-e, I tell ye!" But as these scares were no one ever woke up. When fairly outside and we felt the cool midnight air on our brows, our limbs, full of vigor, flew down the street to the appointed rendezvous, there to meet the gradually accumulating band, who had all effected similar escapes by doors or windows, and all equipped with respectable dinner-bells captured from hall tables to be impressed for the time being into this disorderly and turbulent service.

Sunrise found us waiting eagerly for breakfast, very tired, with heavy eyelids, but still resolved to celebrate though we died, or more likely slept, at our posts. The morning's meal over and the serious business of the day commenced. The savings of the past six weeks now commenced going. Deacon Pitts had a street stand ornamented with green pine-tree boughs on one corner; on the other was the cake and confectionery shop of Aunt Hitty Conklin. We traded staidly from one to the other. We bought cup-custards, then cakes, then candies, then ice-cream, then some more custard, then spruce beer, then sandwiched a fire-cracker between every course. If a boy's stomach has any consciousness of its own, its musty regard the Fourth of July with gloomy forebodings. Our Fourth of July was grandest and brightest between ten and twelve o'clock in the morning while the procession was forming and marching through the streets on its way to the church. The arrival of the country farmers accompanied by their wives and daughters in their old, unpainted, springless wagons, the appearance from time to time of a brilliant fragment of the coming pageant, a soldier of the village military company in the whitest of trousers, red worsted epaulettes and a high, shiny hat with a little red plume stuck in it, or a red-shirted fireman, or the great silken temperance banner, or, perhaps, even a general in chapaneau and plumes—all these attended with the firing of cannon, the ringing of bells, the popping of crackers and the eating of more custard and caudy, and the drinking of more spruce beer, was one steady, blissful ascent upward. When the procession terminated in the rear by citizens on foot, who looked very plain and insignificant compared to the brilliant uniforms in front (we did wish father would be something else besides a citizen on foot in the rear on the Fourth of July) had twisted itself around the village a few times it disappeared in the church, and we, having greedily followed it to the door, returned to our fire-crackers, custards, creams and beer. It was even then that the first declining shades of the great anniversary had commenced to appear and the fresher sparkle of the earlier day to grow dim. For the oration from that young lawyer (who, because he was a lawyer, was considered the only proper man to deliver the oration and go to Congress), and the ode from the pen of the village poetess, and the reading of the Declaration of Independence, all this was dull and tedious to us boys.

Somehow the procession from the church never quite equaled that to it. Something was lacking. The first gloss was gone. As the day waned it broke up and its glittering fragments were scattered about on the street—a soldier here, a fireman there, and even the General was on foot and talking to common folks. The dinner had been finished, save by a few intensely patriotic spirits, who were fighting and falling in a contest with a tyrant far more

powerful than old King George. The country families had commenced settling down into those straight-backed, straw-bottomed chairs in the farm wagon, while the Deacon on the front seat whipped up the sleepy horses and started for the rural homestead, his "lashed" stiff and straight against his shoulder like a soldier's musket on parade. The crackers now popped more feebly and at longer intervals. "Celebration money" was getting low. A certain dullness and weariness seemed to creep over everything. Then we commenced realizing that the Fourth of July was fast going, and, indeed, that its most brilliant hours had gone. True, it revived a little after dark. The public fireworks were to be burned, and a certain amount of our own pocket money had with great self-sacrifice been kept to celebrate with during the evening. But this was, after all, only the flicker of the expiring candle. At 9:30 the Fourth of July was over—dead! A whole year must elapse before another. A year and eternity are about the same with a boy. Tired, sleepy, black with powder smoke, clothes scorched and burned, pockets empty, stomachs full and protesting, heads aching, we went home wearied, and yet vainly trying, up to the last moment, as our last cracker despairingly popped, to realize something of the early vigor and freshness of the day.—*Prentice Mulford, in San Francisco Chronicle.*

Toy Pistols and Lock-jaw.

On summing up the casualties of our explosive holiday, the Fourth of July, the numbers of the killed and maimed rival those of some battles which have decided the fate of Empires. The majority of the injuries were inflicted by the toy pistol, using blank cartridges, the introduction of which has been followed by a general epidemic of lock-jaw, particularly in our larger towns and cities.

The toy is a cheap contrivance of cast iron, with a barrel about two inches long. It is a breech-loader, intended for blank cartridges, the powder being held in a metallic case either by a paper wad or by folding inward the slashed end of the cartridge case. There is no half-cock; the trigger catch is roughly made, and there is always danger of an accidental discharge when the hinged barrel is being returned to place after the insertion of the cartridge. At such times the barrel is held in the left hand, and the discharge inflicts an ugly wound in the palm. Other wounds are inflicted by the paper wad, or by fragments of the cut end of the copper cartridge-case, which are shot off with considerable force. In other cases buck-shot, gravel, nails or other missiles, placed in the barrel by heedless or malicious urchins, have caused severe, sometimes fatal, injuries. The more serious wounds, however, are usually caused by accidental discharges, the powder, wad or copper fragments entering the lacerated palm, and so injuring the nerves that lock-jaw is the result. There were seventeen fatal cases of this sort in Baltimore on the Fourth. Fifty cases were brought in for treatment in three hospitals in this city, with eight or ten deaths; and there is no telling how many cases were under private treatment. Other towns appear to have suffered proportionally except Philadelphia, where, in consequence of fifteen fatalities from toy-pistol wounds last year, the use of the weapon this year was suppressed by the city authorities.

Other towns will do well to follow the example of Philadelphia. Parents are often ignorant or careless, and a five or ten cent pistol offers irresistible attractions to many boys. In anticipation of next year's celebration some means should be adopted to prevent the manufacture, sale and use of such murderous playthings. Even the use of the pistol-shaped device for snapping paper caps should be stopped. No harm can result from them directly; but the habit which children acquire of pointing such things at each other in fun is not conducive to care or caution in handling real pistols.—*Scientific American.*

—The following is one of the ways in which corn is put up in canning establishments: Tin cans are first filled with fresh corn, husked and cut from the cob. They are then fastened up and set in a boiler containing enough water to cover them and surrounded with straw to prevent their striking together. The water is heated by degrees and allowed to boil an hour and a half. Then a small opening is made in the top of the cans for the escape of gases, and these openings are immediately sealed. Afterwards the cans with their sealed contents are boiled two hours and a half.

—In Japan the dead are always buried with their heads toward the north and feet toward the south. A living Japanese will never sleep in that position. In sleeping-rooms of private houses, and of hotels even, a diagram of the points of the compass is pasted upon the ceiling for the benefit of timid guests.

—A cat at Walton, Delaware County, N. Y., had three kittens, which died a few weeks ago. A boy who had found three young "wild rabbits" put them in the place of the kittens. The cat appears to be very fond of them, while the rabbits take to her and thrive excellently.

—A Nice Tomato Dish.—One of the nicest and simplest ways of dressing tomatoes is to cut them in half, lay them in a baking dish, cover each piece with some bread-crumbs, a little pepper and salt, and some finely-chopped parsley, pour a little oil over, and bake in a good oven.

Some "Hows."

How many more things there happen to be that we want than we need.

How much of the old-fashioned faith, which "can remove mountains" is to be found in a wealthy congregation?

How much of the scientific opinion of to-day is to be known as nonsense 100 years hence?

How many revolutions per minute will a lively kitten make in pursuit of its own tail?

How much real profit to humanity is there in seeing a crowd of miserable beasts and birds suffering by deprivation from their natural conditions and climates, and dying by inches while being hauled about the country for "A great moral show"?

How can a born rich man ever enter into sympathy with a poor one?

How many glasses of rum can a man take inside of an hour and keep within the bounds of sobriety?

How many ten-year old wives are now in love with their husbands?

How many husbands ditto with their ten-year wives?

How many people really live up to the golden rule, "Do unto others as ye would be done by?"

How many try to live up to it?

How many never try to try?

How many "do" others at every opportunity?

How much better a man's appetite is when he has no money to buy a breakfast.

How many ministers believe what they preach?

How many ministers preach what they believe?

How many men were ever convinced by argument?

How many men fail to be convinced through bitter experience?

How are you?

How many matches are made in Heaven?

How many in Hades?

How many rich men take any stock in the camel-and-needle's-eye story?

How many people find themselves good company for themselves?

How many pecks of dirt does a ten-cent restaurant customer eat ere he dies?

How many people think they've got money enough?

How many "half-slewed" men think no one knows they're drunk but themselves?

How many men who borrow money are certain they'll never pay it within the specified time?

How many seventeen-year-old girls believe they'll become old maids?

How many want to?

How much easier it is to spend most dollars than to make them?

How many people are there who think their luck has been the worst luck of all the luck in the world?

How many women will own up to their true age?

How many like to so own up?

How many grocers will say they have poor butter when they do have it?

How could any of us endure a man who never committed a sin of any sort in all his life?

How old Ben Franklin lied when he said, "Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise."—*N. Y. Graphic.*

What Constitutes Gambling?

The Committee on Agricultural Resources of the Detroit Lime-Kiln Club announced that it had investigated the query: "Is buying 'futures' in wheat gambling?" and were ready to report: "De committee sot down in de shade of a big wheat elevator an' gin de subject a carful curycumbin' from all stan'pints. If Giveadam Jones bets Waydown Bebee a dollar that a sartin animal up a tree am a coon, an' it turns out to be a woodchuck, am dat gambling? If Samuel Shin bets dat de Common Council will act like gentlemen at a sartin session fo' weeks ahead, an' he loses, am dat gambling? If Trustee Pullback bets two shillin' wid Pickles Smith dat when he gits home de ole woman will be singin', 'Who's Nigger Baby am You Toteing,' an' he disklivers dat she am dead gone on 'Daddy Stevens Rode a Mule,' am dat gambling? If I hold to de opinyun dat wheat will be a dollar a bushel in December, an' de Rev. Penstock cutely imagines dat it will be wort ten shillin', dat's simply a difference of opinyun. If I agree to deliver him 1,000 bushels an' wheat goes down to 95 cents, I'm ahead. If she goes up to \$1.30, I'm stuck. We each had our judgment, an' de man wid de poorest judgment am gwine to be left. When you marry a woman you runs yer chances. When you buys a boss he may make a trotter, or he may fall dead lame. When you take de kivered kyars for Toledo you may git dar or you may be left in de ditch. De committee am darfo' assured dat dealin' in wheat am simply takin' de chances, but at de same time we feel a leetle bit sorry for de 'woodchucks' who buy on a fall an' see de market climb to de top of de pole."

—What are you going to do when you grow up, if you don't know how to cypher?" asked an Austin teacher of a rather slow boy. "I am going to be a school teacher, and make the boys do all the cyphering," was the impudent reply. The next thing that boy had to sigh for was a soft cushion on the bench.—*Texas Siftings.*

—William Penn was a very honest man. He would not rob the Indians of their lands. Not a bit of it. He honorably gave them several pounds of bread and some jack-knives for the territory of Pennsylvania. Such honesty cannot but be admired.—*Boston Post.*

—Pickpockets succeed because they have an awfully taking way about them.

RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL.

—The venerable Prof. Packard has attended sixty-two commencements at Bowdoin College.

—By the new census there are in Ireland 3,951,888 Roman Catholics and 1,168,442 Protestants of all kinds.

—The English Congregational Union is preparing for a great jubilee, which it proposes to celebrate by raising a fund to pay all their church debts and increase the salaries of their ministers.

—In a recent discourse, the Bishop of Manchester said that, when he was in this country, the greatest defect he noticed in the schools was an attempt to teach too much, and teaching it imperfectly.

—Mr. John B. Peaslee, Superintendent of the Cincinnati schools, read a paper before the National Educational Association advocating the introduction of works of literature and biography into the public schools, as tending to the moral and literary advancement of pupils.

—The death is announced from Paris of Horace Monod. He was for forty-five years pastor of the Reformed Church and Honorary Chairman of the Mar-seilles Protestant Consistory. He was a member of the venerated Monod family, which has included several eminent evangelical ministers.

—The late Commencement of the Episcopal Theological Seminary of the Diocese of Virginia, which was founded at Alexandria in 1823, derived unusual interest from the consecration of a new chapel. The money, amounting to \$11,000, was largely contributed by Northern cities. The chancel-rail, which is of heavy polished rosewood, was cut from a tree felled by Bishop Penick, who brought the wood from Africa.

—Eight years will measure the actual time of missionary work in Japan, yet there are now in that Empire 100 missionaries, 50 organized churches, with 8,000 memberships, Christian community of 8,000, schools, dispensaries, colleges, thousands of religious works, translations of Scripture, and the circulation of a Christian newspaper in all parts of the Empire. The Bible has been admitted into the higher schools, and a Christian calendar has been adopted.

Refining Influences of a Well-Ordered Table.

"Order is nature's first law," and neatness is her chief cook, I was going to say, and I see no reason for not saying it. Well cooked food is as essential to health as pure air or water, but how disgusting it is to see it served in a slovenly manner. As well dress a pretty, graceful girl in fine stuff, spoiled by bad fixing and making. The neatness of a table is not necessarily dependent upon cloths, crockery and cutlery, for a bare pine table may show the skill and taste of the house-keeper, in the placing of the food and its accessories, as perfectly as the most expensive and elaborate of furnishings.

The dishes should be evenly distributed around the edge; the meats should be in their appropriate plates, arranged with a view to convenience of carving and serving; the vegetables, by their bulk, shape and color should be utilized for effect of appearance, and the *tout ensemble* plainly saying to the guests, "Please make yourselves at home." Such a spread is evidence of skill and taste in the queen of the household.

No one can take a seat before such a table, without its banishing all unpleasant thoughts; the weary enjoy their food; sociability reigns, and pleasant, lively converse ensures healthy action from the food.

Certain arrangements should be stereotyped from day to day, that awkward habits may not be fostered among the juniors, such as the placing of the plates, knives and forks, napkins, glasses, salts, etc., etc. For the rest, a pleasing variety, depending upon the character of the viands, changing daily, prevents monotony and is exercise for the artistic faculties.

Gentle surprises are pleasant here and may be produced in a thousand ways, to suit the means of the family. Tiny bouquets, neat as neatness itself—I should have said herself, for neatness is feminine—green sprays and dainty folded napkins add much to the beauties of white cloth, clear glass, bright cutlery and orderly arrangements.

No one will deny that a well-spread table conduces to, I may say compels, cheerfulness, sociability, appetite, relish and health, and is notably elevating in its influence. It is merely beauty hovering o'er the car of utility.

Each effort to improve the family table, making it a center of attraction, will, like a stone cast upon a placid lake, spread in an ever widening circle till the whole house, the household, the office, store, even the farm itself will show by their growing neat and orderly appearance that the "angel of the household" is a ruling power.

To those who are already *au fait* (*Anglican*, "up to") the niceties of the table, I need only say "persevere," but of the great majority of housekeepers I ask only a trial of a few months, satisfied that they will find that civilizing influences are always progressive.—*Cor. Rural New Yorker.*

—The *Japan Weekly Mail* states that there are 65,200 doctors practicing medicine in Japan, of whom only 504 have diplomas. This makes an average of one quack to 470 people.

—The unpleasant belief is expressed by a Niagara newspaper that the faculties of Niagara Falls for murder and suicide are employed to a far greater extent than is generally suspected.

Bicycle Exercise.

"Now, my dear," said Mr. Spoon-pendyke, hurrying into his wife's room, "if you'll come down in the yard I've got a pleasant surprise for you."

"What is it?" asked Mrs. Spoon-pendyke. "What have you got, a horse?"

"I know! It's a new parlor carpet. That's what it is."

"No, it isn't, either. I said it was something like a horse, that is, it goes when you make it. Guess again."

"Is it paint for the kitchen walls?" asked Mrs. Spoonpendyke, innocently.

"No, it ain't, and it ain't a hoghead of stove-black, nor it ain't a set of dining-room furniture, nor it ain't seven gross of stationary washbuds. Now guess again."

"Then it must be some lace curtains for the sitting-room windows. Isn't that just splendid?" And Mrs. Spoon-pendyke patted her husband on both cheeks and danced up and down with delight.

"It's a bicycle, that's what it is," growled Mr. Spoonpendyke. "I bought it for exercise, and I'm going to ride it. Come down and see me."

"Well, ain't I glad," ejaculated Mrs. Spoonpendyke. "You ought to have more exercise, and if there's exercise in anything it's in a bicycle. Do let's see it."

Mr. Spoonpendyke conducted his wife to the yard and descended at length on the merits of the machine.

"In a few weeks I will be able to make a mile a minute," he said, as he steadied the apparatus against the clothes-post and prepared to mount. "Now you watch me go to the end of this path."

He got a foot into one treadle and went head first into a flower patch, the machine on top, with a prodigious crash.

"Hadn't you better tie it to the post until you get on?" suggested Mrs. Spoonpendyke.

"Leave me alone, will ye?" demanded Spoonpendyke, struggling to an even keel. "I'm doing most of this myself. Now you hold on and keep your mouth shut. It takes a little practice, that's all."

Mr. Spoonpendyke mounted again and scuttled along for four or five feet, and flopped over on the grass plat.

"That's splendid," commended his wife. "You've got the idea already. Let me hold it for you this time."

"If you've got any extra strength you hold your tongue, will ye?" growled Mr. Spoonpendyke. "It don't want any holding. It ain't alive. Stand back and give me room, now."

The third trial Mr. Spoonpendyke am-pled to the end of the patch and went down all in a heap among his flower pots.

"That's just too lovely for anything!" proclaimed Mrs. Spoonpendyke. "You made more'n a mile a minute, that time!"

"Come and take it off!" roared Mr. Spoonpendyke. "Help me up! Dod-gast the bicycle!" and the worthy gentleman struggled and plunged like a whale in shallow water.

Mrs. Spoonpendyke assisted in righting him and brushed him off.

"I know where you make your mistake." The little wheel ought to go first, like a buggy. Try it that way going back."

"Maybe you can ride this bicycle better than I can?" howled Mr. Spoon-pendyke. "You know all about wheels! What you need now is a lantern in your mouth and ten minutes behind time to be the City Hall clock. If you had a bucket of water and a handle you'd make a steam grind-stone! Don't you see the big wheel has got to go first?"

"Yes, dear," murmured Mrs. Spoon-pendyke, "but I thought if you practiced with the little wheel at first, you wouldn't have so far to fall."

"Who fell?" demanded Mr. Spoon-pendyke. "Didn't you see me step off? I tripped; that's all. Now you just watch me go back."

Once more Mr. Spoonpendyke started in, but the big wheel turned around and looked him in the face, and then began to stagger.

"Look out!" squealed Mr. Spoon-pendyke.

Mr. Spoonpendyke wrenched away and kicked and struggled, but it was of no avail. Down he came, and the bicycle was a hopeless wreck.

"What'd ye want to yell for?" he shrieked. "Couldn't ye keep your measly mouth shut? What d'ye think y'are, anyhow, a fog-horn? Dod-gast the measly bicycle!" and Mr. Spoon-pendyke hit it a kick that folded him up like a bolt of muslin.

"Never mind, my dear," consoled Mrs. Spoonpendyke, "I'm afraid the exercise was too violent, anyway, and I'm rather glad you broke it."

"I s'pose so," snorted Mr. Spoon-pendyke. "There's sixty dollars gone."

"Don't worry, love. I'll go without the carpet and the curtains, and the paint will do well enough in the kitchen. Let me rub you with arnica."

But Mr. Spoonpendyke was too deeply hurt by his wife's conduct to accept any office at her hands, preferring to punish her by letting his wounds smart rather than to get well, and thereby relieve her of any anxiety she brought on herself by acting so outrageously under the circumstances.—*Brooklyn Eagle.*

—It is stated that the practice of putting hay in stacks is more general in Great Britain than the United States. This is so, notwithstanding the climate there is more moist, and all the grasses are of the cultivated varieties. The stacks, however, are better made. They rest on substantial supports made of iron or timber, and elevated at some distance from the ground. This insures them against moisture in the ground, protects them against vermin, and allows a free circulation of air beneath them.