

HIS BEST DAY.

"I know a boy likes Christmas best
'Cos Santa Claus comes then;
He likes to hang his stocking up,
An' take it down again,
An' count his present a cut—but I—
I'd rather have it Fourth July."

"That other boy likes Christmas best
'Cos o' the Christmas trees
To Sunday schools—an' things to eat,
An' when they're been a freeze,
He likes to slide and skate, but my!
What's that long-de o' Fourth July?"

"Christmas is good, but Fourth July!
That day's the best of all—
O my! I wish it could be the Fourth
All summer an' all fall!
No other time begins to be
So good as Fourth July to me!"

"I hope 'at when the Fourth is here,
My mother'll think it's right
To let me creep down stairs an' fire
My crackers off 'fore light,
I'll blow my horn, and shoot my gun!
An' wake up pa! an' have such fun!"

"At dark I'll fire my shooting stars,
An' set my Roman candles off—
Wh-a-a! Rush! Buzz! Bang! Pop! Flare!
Christmas is good 'nough, but my!
I'd rather have it Fourth July!
I wish 'twas always Fourth July!"
—Womankind.

A Fireworks Capture.

TROUBLE raged on the irrigation ditch. The upper gang and the lower gang were at outs. The former had lost a horse and the lower gang was supposed to include the thief.

"It just means a fight," exclaimed Mack to Simpson, as the two members of the lower gang rode over the plains one summer night. "There can't be any horse stealing around these parts and not have fighting."

"No; and the feeling isn't any too good already," added the other.

The ponies loped easily, and turning down the trail went swiftly into the thick sunflowers of a ravine. It was nearly sunset and the tall weeds seemed to be almost like young saplings. Suddenly the horses stopped; ahead was an unusual sight, a white-topped prairie schooner.

"A one-horse rig, too," exclaimed Simpson, looking at the hills that were on the front of the wagon.

"And deserted, too," and Matt drew nearer to the strange outfit.

"Well, what do you think of a man that will do this?" He pulled the curtains aside and showed the sleeping form of a boy perhaps 7 years old. The little fellow looked peaked and helpless and the sympathies of both the men were aroused by the sight.

"Well, he's a rascal," was the reply at last and the curtain was dropped.

"He ain't a rascal," came from the inside of the wagon. "My papa is good to me."

"Hello, there, what are you doing here?" asked Matt.

"Waiting for fireworks; papa has gone after them. He always gets them for me on the Fourth July."

"What did he say?" asked Matt.

"Says his father has gone after fireworks—a likely story. The boy's hungry; that is what is the matter with him."

"Well, let's feed him. I'll go over and get him something from the camp. And, say, I'll bring him some fireworks, too. I'd forgot it, but to-day is the Fourth of July, and the boss has a lot of rockets and things ready to fire off. All the men are out hunting for the horse thief and they have forgotten all about it. I can steal a few."

Away rode Matt in the gathering darkness, and although the pony went very fast, and the man did not stay in camp more than a few moments, the wait seemed a long one to the watcher in the ravine with the boy. The child was hungry and nervous and confided to the man that he had been "awful sick." Simpson felt exceedingly sorry for the little one, and was more and more indignant at the actions of the man who had forsaken such a precious charge.

"Here he comes," he said at last, when the rattle of horse's hoofs was heard on the prairie sod. Matt came down the ravine and had some difficulty in finding the wagon hidden in the sunflowers. At last he opened the package of food and laid the fireworks on the grass beside the boy.

"Supper first," was the order from Simpson, and the three ate the generous supply that had been brought.

"Good thing not to take the kid to the ranch," said Matt. "The men will have a rough time there to-night, and they wouldn't spare the boy."

"Now for the fun," and away went one of the rockets into the darkness, scattering its splendor over the level plains that spread from the edge of the ravine. The jack rabbits and the prairie owls saw it and wondered what it could be.

Somebody else saw it, for away off to the south, where its light was visible only as a faint glimmer, there was a company of horsemen, and they turned their animals in that direction.

"Hark!" said Matt, as the fun was at its height. "Somebody's coming."

The light of the last rocket had given a passing view of a man on horseback at the crest of a ravine. In a moment the man was near them and he was accompanied by a large number. In the midst of the party, with his head bound in a large red handkerchief, was seen the figure of a man tied on a horse.

"We have got the thief," said the leader of the newcomers.

"Well," replied Matt, "what are you bringing him here for?"

"We kind of lost our way and we thought this was the camp. But we are going to settle with the rascal right here, anyhow. It might not be best to take him to the camp, after all."

"Sure it is the man?"

"Bound to be—got the horse."

In the dim light of the little fire of sunflower stalks that somebody had kindled the prisoner was brought forth. He presented a pitiful appearance and the men almost felt sorry for him. Still, they knew the unwritten law.



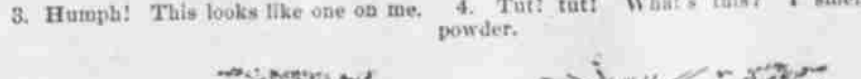
1. Jack Rabbit—Polly, want a cracker?
Polly—Not on your life, Jack. I've sworn off smoking.
Jack—Then let's have a Fourth of July race. I'm a regular crackerjack at sprinting.

2. Polly—I'll go you. But won't you have a cracker, Jack? Do have one on me.



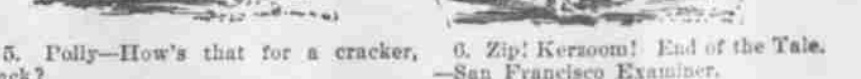
3. Humph! This looks like one on me.

4. Tut! tut! What's this? I smell powder.



5. Polly—How's that for a cracker, Jack?

6. Zip! Keraoom! End of the Tale.
—San Francisco Examiner.



"What have you there?" remarked one of the newcomers, pointing to the boy who stood by, looking with open-mouthed astonishment on the weird scene.

"Nothing but a kid that we picked up," answered Matt. "Let him alone, will you?"

"Say, fellows," went on the visitor, "what's the matter with letting the boy fire some of his rockets and make a respectable illumination for this proceeding?"

The others agreed, and the child was placed in position at the head of the two lines that had formed and had in his hand a big rocket that was to be fired at the signal, and then the hands were to be taken from the prisoner and he could be hit by any one who was quick enough. It was thought that he would get enough punishment to prevent him from ever returning to that section again. He evidently thought so, too, for he was trying his best to escape.

"All ready," called Matt. "Go!"

The bandage was dropped from the man's eyes and the ropes came from off his feet and arms. A dozen whips were raised to strike, but before they could be used a dramatic scene followed. The boy who was to fire the rocket dropped the signal in the grass and the bunches of fire went skurrying away in the tall sunflowers. For himself, the little fellow made one leap, and before a whip descended he was clinging to the man's neck with both arms around the same in an embrace that meant a great deal.

"Oh, it's papa!" he cried, and the man, instead of running, stood holding the child to his breast.

"Well, this is a go," said Matt. "What have you men been doing?"

"Make him run," called one of the more excitable ones among them. He raised his whip again, but Simpson stood between and would have received the blow on his own shoulders.

"You have captured the wrong man," said the stranger.

"But you didn't say so."

"How could I when you had put a yard of cotton over my mouth? I was looking for something to eat, and you made a rush and got me tied before I could get word to you. I tried not to let you get me, though."

"Yes, you fought like a tiger."

"My boy and I are traveling back east," went on the man. "One of our horses gave out back here a ways, and we had to get along with one. The boy's mother died in the mountains, and I must take him to my folks. We are very poor, but we are honest."

"Then how did you get the horse that belongs to the gang?"

"I did not get the horse. This is my own horse."

"We'll see about that. Come on, boys," said the leader, and they went toward the rancho house, where the men had their headquarters.

"Bring little fireworks and his playthings," called one of the men, and they gathered up the remainder of the rockets. On the way the boy fired several, and their path was thus marked with fire and shouting, for the men enjoyed the sight as well as he.

As they came into camp they saw all the upper gang men and the remainder of the lower gang employes gathered there. This unwelcome sight made them afraid that trouble was in the air.

"We have got your horse," called Matt, as they drew nearer.

"So have we," came the strange answer. Sure enough, as they entered the camp there was brought a horse with a piece of picket rope tied to his neck, and when they stood him beside the horse ridden by the stranger the two animals looked like as twins.

"But this is the right one," explained one of the men, pointing to the rope. "He

had been in the tall weeds and was tangled by his rope."

"Seems to me that we owe you an apology," said Matt, addressing the stranger. "Let's celebrate it," added the happy Simpson. "If it hadn't been for the boy we would have given the man pretty bad treatment. Let him fire his rockets."

So the remainder of the fireworks went into the dark and illuminated the scene that was so unusual on the plains.

"While we are about it," went on Simpson, "let's shake hands and be friends again."

The men of both gangs liked the suggestion and spent a happy evening together.

When the boy and the emigrant drove on east a few days afterward they were seated behind two horses, and the good wishes of both camps went with them.—Chicago Record.

TWO MEMORABLE FOURTHS.

One Followed the Fall of Gettysburg, the Other the Victory at Santiago.

THIS country has seen some sensational and dramatic celebrations of the Fourth of July, and these same go to enforce historical significance with those whose memory reaches back into the past generation.

Just 36 years ago this Independence Day, that of 1863 was one of expressive, heartfelt emotion. When the sun rose on that vivid Fourth of July and the preparations were made in the midst of devastating war to pay homage to the nation's natal day, the wires flashed the news that Gettysburg had seen the most momentous victory for the Union arms, and that Vicksburg had fallen. It was perhaps the most critical period of the war—the high-water mark of the prowess of one army, when its forces had pursued a victorious march and were actually in ripe alien territory. The whole nation quivered with excitement, and it was indeed a glorious Fourth when the news came that Grant and Meade had simultaneously won two such vital victories.

It is a singular coincidental situation that exactly one year ago practically the same interest and anxiety as that manifested in 1863 hovered about the Fourth of July, 1898. It requires brief exercise of memory to revive with a thrill the rare eagerness with which the whole people of this country were awaiting news of the naval campaign in Cuba as the month of July drifted in. It was July 3 that the most remarkable exploit ever accomplished by American arms came to fruition—on that day the United States navy met the foe long sought for, and Cervera's fleet was destroyed in Santiago harbor. The series of thrilling events that accompanied this important occurrence, the intense national anxiety of July 3 that was followed by widespread rejoicing the ensuing day, mark an epoch in ardent historical event that, being within our near actual knowledge and participation, will never be forgotten.

Racing Term.

"They're off in a bunch."

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UNITED STATES NAVY

MUCH INTEREST AROUSED BY ITS ACHIEVEMENTS.

Facts with Which the General Public Is Unacquainted—The Wages Paid to Enlisted Men Far Above the Average—Fighting Ships.

That the easy and successful manner in which the American navy disposed of that of Spain has created a revival of interest in that important and powerful branch of the fighting service of Uncle Sam is fully attested by the thousands of queries that reach the newspapers from the public requesting information about the navy and all that pertains thereto. The inquiries come principally from the interior, where a jack in full regalia is as much of a hero as Admiral Dewey, the greatest of the great. That the next few years will see the injection of more energy and intelligence into the navy—that is, among the enlisted men—and the elimination of the foreign element that is actuated more by the substantial wages paid rather than the love of country, is demonstrated by the wish of thousands of bright and courageous young Americans to enter the service in view of the conditions that prevail. The personnel of the navy is as follows:

Admirals	1
Rear Admirals	7
Commodores	8
Commanders	74
Lieutenant Commanders	74
Lieutenants	250
Lieutenants Junior Grade	76
Ensigns	157
Chief Engineers	70
Pay Assistant Engineers	66
Assistant Engineers	884
Total official personnel	1,536
Enlisted men (three years)	11,937
Enlisted men (two years)	4,472
Apprentices	2,276
Total	18,685

In the Marine Corps there are 72 officers and 3,170 men, making a total in the navy, officers and men, of 23,501. The aggregate number of these vessels in the regular navy, including all vessels in service and under construction, is 189, divided as follows:

First class battleships	12
Second class battleships	1
Armored cruisers	2
Double turreted monitors	6
Single steel turreted monitors	4
Single iron turreted monitors	13
Protected cruisers	13
Protected cruisers sheathed with wood	2
Unprotected cruisers	3
Gunboats	9
Light-draught gunboats	3
Composite gunboats	1
Training ship	1
Special class	1
Torpedo boat destroyers	16
Torpedo boats	35
Submarine torpedo boat	1
Wooden torpedo boat	1
Torpedo boats captured in last war	8
Iron cruisers	5
Wooden cruisers	8
Sailing vessels	6
Frigates	14
Wooden steam vessels unfit for sea service	11
Wooden sailing vessels unfit for sea service	6

Of the seaman branch, seamen gunners receive \$26 monthly, seamen \$24, and first-class apprentices \$21. An ordinary seaman gets \$19 a month and second-class apprentices \$15, while landsmen are allowed \$16 and third-class apprentices \$9. Of the chief petty officers the chief master-at-arms, which position any bright apprentice can achieve in time, receives \$65 per month. Chief gunners' mates and chief gun captains get \$50 each.

The petty officers are classified as chiefs, first, second and third class, each being paid in proportion to the class to which he belongs. The same scale prevails among the enlisted men. The landsman is the recruit from shore, who joins the navy with no previous experience. He does the menial work, and sometimes he attains the dignity of coal-passer. Three or four enlistments will enable him to be called a seaman. Landsmen assigned to duty as Jacks-of-the-dust and lamp-lighters receive \$5 a month in addition to their pay. The boy of robust condition and average intelligence can become an apprentice upon application, provided he is supplied with the written or verbal consent of his parents and the necessary letters of recommendation.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

EGYPTIAN ELECTRIC FISH.

Species Found in the Nile that Give a Considerable Shock.

An interesting fish that inhabits the waters of the Nile is the malapterurus electricus, which is considered about the best species of electrical fish, for, unlike the gymnotus and torpedo, its electric organs do not affect its motion. In a paper recently presented to the Royal Institution at London, the theory is advanced by Professor Gothe that the seat of the electro-motive force is the nerve-center itself, and not the collection of plates which have hitherto been considered the electric organ of the fish. These plates number about two million, and consist of a modified muscular substance separated by an albuminous composition, while each is connected by a single nerve fiber to the nerve-center. A measurement of the electro-motive force of the cells by a capillary electrometer revealed the fact that the electro-motive force was of the same order as that produced by the contraction of a muscle, and amounted to about .04 or .05 volt. Between the excitation of the

nerve and the maximum electro-motive force there is a time-lag of about 1-1,000 of a second, and an oscillatory electro-motive force is generated by a single momentary excitation of the nerve. At the lecture before the Royal Institution already referred to the electric current from two of these fish, electric fishes was shown with a telephone, and also shocks given to members of the audience. Some of these shocks were procured by the Senff expedition of Columbia University while at the Nile last summer, and are exhibited in the museum of the department of zoology of that institution.—Boston Transcript.



NATURE & SCIENCE.

The weight of a man's brain has, it is said, nothing to do with his mental power. It is a question of climate and of intellect. The colder the climate, the greater the size of the brain.

American engineers estimate that there is in sight in the South African gold district called the Rand, containing about \$4,000,000,000 worth of the precious metal. But unless more rapid methods of production are employed, it will require fifty years to put this gold into circulation and use.

W. H. Preece, president of the British Institution of Civil Engineers, in a recent address, said that speech is not practically possible between any two post-offices in the United Kingdom. Theoretically it is possible to talk between London and every capital in Europe, and the British post-office authorities are considering the submission of special telephone cables to Belgium, Holland and Germany.

An organized effort is being made to stamp out consumption in Germany by scientific methods of treatment. In ready 20 sanatoria for patients have been opened, and others are to be provided. A congress is to be held in Berlin for the purpose of making the struggle against consumption a national movement throughout the German empire.

It has been decided to establish a meteorological observatory at the top of the great cathedral spire in Ulm, Germany. The Ulm cathedral is one of the most extraordinary in existence, on account of the great size and height of its single spire, which reaches an elevation of 528 feet. Although the great church was begun more than five hundred years ago, the spire was not completed until 1890.

R. Lydekker, the English naturalist, says that tortoise-shell, which is made from the horny skin overlying the bony case of most species of turtles, possesses the property of welding so perfectly that no trace of junction is visible. Two plates to be united have their adjacent edges bevelled in opposite directions, and are then squeezed together in a metal press, under the action of boiling water. Imitation tortoise-shell is made by painting lead with a paste of lime litharge and soda, which is rubbed off after drying. The process leaves dark spots of lead sulphide in the horn, resembling the mottling of real tortoise-shell.

Youthful Bravery.

Boys from 16 to 21 make the best fighting soldiers. Their youthful ardor carries them away, and they face danger in an exalted mood, which rises war of its terrors. There were many captains in the civil war who were under 21 years of age. There were brigadier generals only 21 years old. General Grant was under 40 when he entered the war. Stonewall Jackson had won immortal fame at 38 and died at 34. General Sheridan was a general at 29. Fitzhugh Lee was a major general at 29. Alexander had conquered the world before he was 33. Napoleon became master of Egypt, crossed the Alps, and fought the battle of Marengo at 24. Young men make the best soldiers. The civil war was fought by young men and boys. There are living veterans of that war who are now only 50 years of age; yet that war began thirty-eight years ago.

A Penny Saved.

The individual who saves a dollar in one direction and immediately proceeds to spend two in another, as a sort of reward of virtue, is a familiar character. "I've stopped economizing," said the girl with the violets, as she stirred her chocolate. "I can't afford it. I trimmed this hat I'm wearing last month, and saved ever so much. I saved so much that I felt able to buy a new gown, and it will cost three times what I saved before it's finished. It's always the way. If I save a cent ticket by walking down town, I spend a dollar for violets before I get home, and I'm going to stop trying to save, and I've painted a proverb to go on my mantel to remind me of it: 'A penny saved is a dollar wasted.'"

Every time we meet a school teacher we find that we have always been pronouncing another word incorrectly.

When a boy claims to be sick in the morning it is usually a sign that he wants to go fishing before Saturday.