



### THE FIRST FIRECRACKER

There lived in China, years ago,  
An odd old mandarin,  
Whose temper was so peevy  
They called him Sin-ah-sin.

He wandered through the crowded streets  
In search of daily bread,  
And wore a garment long and straight,  
Which once was brightest red.

But worn in all the dust and rain,  
In dampness and in dew,  
It stiffened slowly with the grime,  
And turned a dingy hue;

And like a cylinder became,  
So long and straight, and round,  
It wrapped Ah-sin from head to heels,  
And in it he seemed bound.

And out upon the cellar high  
His yellow queue hung down,  
Till nothing of that mandarin  
Was seen, but just his crown.

This robe so heavy did become,  
That he could scarcely walk,  
And o'er the top of it he tried  
In vain, alas! to talk.

The boys they chaffed, and taunted him,  
And missiles at him cast,  
And called him shabby Sin-ah-sin,  
As he went dragging past.

Though Ah-sin's blood did often boil  
At cruel jest and jeer,  
The while he wore that rigid coat  
The lads had ne'er a fear.

And so, one pleasant July day,  
The gossips round Ah-sin  
Said, "Let us have a little fun  
With this old mandarin."

And stepping up applied a torch  
To Ah-sin's precious queue,  
When flashing forth a brilliant light,  
They heard a noise, and whew!

They saw Ah-sin, from out their sight  
Go up in flame and smoke,  
While o'er their heads, in tiny bits,  
Flew pieces of his cloak.

With pent-up wrath he did explode,  
That poor old mandarin,  
And far from coats, and cares, and boys,  
Went grimy Sin-ah-sin.

—Youth's Companion.

### FOURTH OF JULY CELEBRATION

On the Fourth of July, at Willow Spring,  
Rockets and rackets are quite the thing,  
For on that day the chief of joys  
Are piles of powder and heaps of noise.

That it was a hot day mattered nothing,  
Dan fired the first cracker at day-break,  
And kept up the cannonade till breakfast time,  
After this he and the girls were busy getting ready for company.

The cousins came in full force, eight  
Of the first class, all girls, and four  
Of the second degree, these, luckily,  
Hav'ng two boys in their number.

Dan led the way to Sylvan Dell, and  
The celebration, which began on the arrival  
Of the party, was worthy of the day.

A pole was set by the boys, a flag  
Run up and a salute fired by the whole party.

Louise took charge of Camp Comfort,  
With some of the lesser girls for helpers.

Ruth, who began with much enthusiasm,  
Dropped pretty soon into a sheltered nook,  
and, finding a book, which,  
by force of habit, she had tucked under  
her arm, she was soon absorbed in its pages.

The rest of the girls possessed themselves  
of Poplar Lodge and began putting  
that mansion in order.

The boys belonged to all outdoors,  
and at once began to fill their domain  
with racket.

Dan had built dressing rooms, so, as  
soon as bathing suits could be donned



**DAN LED THE WAY.**

The waters of Silver Lake received them,  
and its waves were soon anything  
but silvery, as the vigorous youngsters  
kicked and sprawled among them.  
The waters rose so high as to  
run over the dam in a threatening way,  
which caused the dripping boys to begin  
repairs at once.

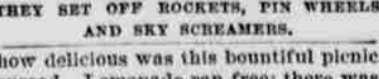
Dan was in his element to-day, and  
the sound waves produced by his voice  
seemed to interfere with all others, and  
the result was confusion.

# THE GLORIOUS FOURTH.

There was pleasant excitement for the little girls in wading the raging waters of the Gunnison River, while the older ones visited the wishing well to learn their fortunes.

By and by the mistress of Willow-spring appeared, with buckets and baskets, and the gay company, reclad and dry, sat down to a banquet at Camp Comfort.

Such a dinner! Do you know how good even the plainest fare tastes when eaten out of doors, with song and laughter? You can well imagine, then,



THEY SET OFF ROCKETS, PIN WHEELS AND SKY SCREAMERS.

how delicious was this bountiful picnic spread. Lemonade ran free; there was ice cream galore, and the cake was in big slices and often passed.

There had been mishaps, of course. Marie showed a rent frock; Almon had burned his fingers; Dan's hat was found soaking in Silver Lake, and Jennie's shoes had sailed down Gunnison River.

Nobody minded these little drawbacks, and the hours flew swiftly by and the children were surprised when told it was supper time, and they must come to the house.

Dan's sound waves spread to an appalling distance at this reminder, but as he suddenly began to turn somersaults no special result followed. So, with chatter and song the children trooped in to tea.

After this all voted to return to Sylvan Dell, where the remaining crackers were soon popping, while torpedoes added to the din.



Silver Lake had just gotten its face smooth when into it again plunged the harum-scarum boys, and the girls followed the Gunnison River to its source in the big spring. Here one of the girls, reaching too far, fell into the cold, deep water, but was drawn out, dripping, by her sisters. The sudden dip did not depress any one, however, and was not reported at the house.

While all these things had been going on in Sylvan Dell the older people had sat out at the cool rooms in the Willow-spring house, talking of old times and telling the pioneer stories grandpa had taught them, and which still have interest for young and old among his descendants.

When night came on Uncle Will sent up rockets, pinwheels and sky-screamers, while a fresh lot of firecrackers were provided and the children, roused to new vigor, made this hour the very noisiest of all.

At last it was over, the fun and the fireworks, the feasting and frolic, and Dan and the Willow-spring girls bade their guests good-by, well pleased with the success of the celebration at Sylvan Dell.

**A Memorable Fourth.**

Memorable was the Fourth of July of 1789 in New York City, when President George Washington resided in an Executive Mansion fronting Franklin Square, at the northwest corner of Cherry street. The Society of the Cincinnati then gave their first dinner at the City Tavern, now the site of the Borel Building, on lower Broadway, with its President, General Baron de Steuben, in the chair; but a slight illness prevented President Washington from occupying the seat of honor. Alexander Hamilton, however, was a guest, speaking to a toast, although fatigued by having made an address in St. Paul's Church in the morning, where, amid the congregation, sat Vice-President Adams, his wife, and Mrs. Martha Washington, amid a brilliant assemblage of Knickerbockers and public functionaries.

**Souvenir of the Fourth.**

Another souvenir of the great day is a square box daintily decorated with bow of red, white and blue ribbon and an American flag. The contents of the box prove to be chocolate wafers, which are much appreciated by the women and children of the family.

**Chocolate Fireworks.**

Packages of scarlet-coated Fourth of July fireworks offered for sale in the confectioners' windows turn out to be chocolate "works" of superior delicacy. The packages are arranged as follows: Small firecrackers, three in a bunch, or six in a bunch, costing respectively five and ten cents.



### THE STORY OF THE FLAG

How many of my boy and girl readers can tell who Betsy Ross was? How many can tell what she did that such a question should be asked? And yet Betsy Ross's name ought to be familiar to all of us, and every time we see the Stars and Stripes floating from the flagstaff we should be reminded first that this is a glorious country we live in, and second, that Betsy Ross, a modest Quakeress of Philadelphia, was the first one to make that beautiful emblem. Betsy Ross's name as a girl was Elizabeth Griscom, and she was born in the city of Philadelphia January 1, 1752. Her father was a prosperous builder, and assisted in the erection of the State House, now Independence Hall, from the belfry of which,



on a famous day in 1776, rang out the message of "Liberty to all the world and to all the nations thereof." When she was twenty-one years of age Elizabeth Griscom married John Ross, and they settled down in a little house in Arch street, Philadelphia. It was in this house that the first United States



show that the resolution for the adoption of the flag was dated over one year after it was actually created by the committee of which Washington was chief, that is, on June 14, 1777.

Before the adoption of the national emblem each colony had its own distinct flag. One of these was the "Appeal to Heaven" flag. The two upper flags in the group were used at the battle of Bunker Hill. The pine tree flag had been officially adopted by the Massachusetts Colonial Assembly in April, 1776.

**First to Sign the Declaration.**

"John Hancock was the first to sign the Declaration," says Lora S. La Mance in "New" Lippincott, "and his bold, heavy, ink-black signature is a character-study in itself. There is dash and fire, frankness and firmness in it, and the tremendous flourish at its close shows ready wit, firm nerve, and sure execution. Hancock was Governor of Massachusetts many terms. He left most of his fortune to colleges and for benevolent purposes.

"Roger Sherman died in 1793, the same year as Hancock. Shoemaker, surveyor, lawyer, storekeeper, Mayor, Congressman, Judge and Supreme Judge, Senator, member of the Committee of Declaration and of the Boards of War and Ordnance, he disapproved the old proverb about Jack-of-all-trades by being a success at all. He was sagacious, practical, and of quickest wit. Senator Randolph, proud both of his aristocratic birth and of having the blood of the Indian Princess Pocahontas in his veins, despised Sherman because of his lowly origin. Once when the latter was speaking he interrupted him:

"Can the Senator from Connecticut tell me, piped he in his shrill, sarcastic voice, 'what he did with his leather shoemaker's apron when he came to the Senate?'"

"Quick as a flash came the answer, 'I cut it up to make moccasins for the Indian Senator from Virginia!'"

**Utterly Impossible.**

Jimmy—"Dyer know dat firecrackers wuz invented by de Chinese?"  
Tommy—"Aw wotcher givin' us? W'y, de Chinks don't celebrate de Fourth!"  
—New York Journal.



**Willie Dreams of a Giant Cracker.**

with the white crosses of St. Andrew and St. George in a field of blue. This flag was unfurled by Washington in Boston January 1, 1776. It was in the latter part of May, 1776, that Washington, accompanied by Colonel George Ross, a member of Congress, and Robert Morris called upon Mrs. Betsy

Ross, a niece of Colonel Ross. She was a young and beautiful widow, and known to be an expert at needlework. They called to engage her services in preparing our first starry flag.

General Washington unfolded a paper on which had been rudely sketched a plan of a flag of thirteen stripes with a blue field dotted with thirteen stars.



**THE VAGABONDS OF EUROPE.**

A Class of Nomads Who Make Hungary Their National Home.

Fashion's fondness for Hungarian orchestras the world over have drawn the attention of two continents to those curious people called Tziganes in Hungary, Bohemians in France and gypsies in England and the United States. Hungary is the home of the Tziganes, in so far as they have any home. In all other European countries they were persecuted for centuries as emissaries of the Evil One and enemies of Christianity. But Hungary took pity on them and treated the wanderers like lost children. It was in the fifteenth century that they first made their appearance here. King Sigismund received them hospitably, and recommended to the charity and pity of the public "these poor wandering people, without a home and hounded by every one."

There are now about 150,000 of these Tziganes in Hungary. They may be divided into three classes—those who go bareheaded and barefooted, the wandering gypsies; those who wear headgear and shoes on Sundays, the semi-nomads, and those who always wear hats and shoes, and who have to a great extent abandoned the nomadic lives of their ancestors. These latter are the most civilized, and are generally musicians, who excel in the playing of Hungarian tunes. When the Tziganes arrived in Hungary they were not trained musically, but they soon appropriated Magyar music, and out of it have made a crude and weird art of their own. Their favorite instrument is the "has 'alja," as they term the violin. Some play the harp, but they have a marked aversion for the piano, for the reason that it cannot be easily moved about. In Hungary, no fete or festival takes place without a Tzigane orchestra. At election times a Tzigane band always heads the electoral processions, and no wedding is considered complete without their music for the dance. The Tziganes have become natural musicians, playing from inspiration and generally being unable to read music. Liszt, who made a study of the Tziganes, says that music is to them a sublime language, a mystic song, which they often make use of instead of conversation, and that they have, in fact, invented a music of their own.

**Electric Train Lighting.**

The Prussian State Railways, after a long and exhaustive series of tests of electric train lighting systems, have come to the conclusion that a separate dynamo carried on the locomotive or tender, immediately under the supervision of the engineer, and operated by a direct connected steam engine, drawing its steam from the locomotive boiler, with a regulating storage battery, is the most efficient and practical system.

The scheme of carrying a dynamo mounted on and geared to the axle of each passenger coach, with an individual storage battery to carry the lights during the time the train is at rest, has been abandoned in favor of the central concentrated plant.

The system of carrying storage batteries of sufficient capacity to carry the entire lighting load during the train run, and charged at the electric plants at the principal terminal stations of the lines has the serious disadvantage of the great weight and costly installation, and serious delays due to the time lost in charging the batteries.

The system outlined in the initial paragraph has now been adopted as the standard of all Prussian railways, and the most important trains are being equipped with this apparatus.

**Ancient Submerged City Found.**

Leopold Batres, conservator of national monuments, has returned to Mexico City, from his explorations of the ruins of Zapotecan cities in the State of Oaxaca. He found the ruins of ancient city on Monte Alban which show unmistakable indications of having been submerged, perhaps 3000 years ago, for traces of extinct marine life were uncovered.

In the ruins is an obelisk, similar to those of Egypt, which was found placed to the entrance to a tomb, exactly as was the custom in Egypt. Senor Batres will make a detailed report of this remarkable prehistoric city to the Government.

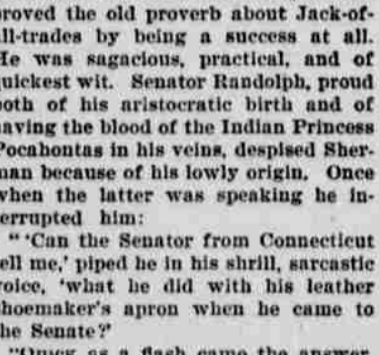
Monte Alban was visited some time ago by Professor Colmae, of the Smithsonian Institution, at Washington. It stands 1800 feet higher than the city of Oaxaca, and its central square was surrounded by great temples.—Philadelphia Record.

**Oak Versus Iron.**

A writer in the Engineering News calls attention to the relative durability of cast iron and oak timber under rather destructive conditions. He refers to an old cannon, which has stood since 1850 on the high ground of Point Bonita, at the entrance of San Francisco Bay. An examination of this old piece, which was used as a fog signal for many years, reveals the fact that the oak carriage on which it is mounted, is in practically perfect condition, notwithstanding its fifty years' exposure to the winds and moisture-laden atmosphere. The spokes, hubs and fellows, even where they have sunk into the ground, are in perfect condition, while, on the other hand, the smaller pieces of iron, such as the gun axle, nuts, bands, etc., have completely rusted away, and the gun itself, which is of the toughest cast iron, is attacked to a depth of nearly one-half inch.

**Cab Calls.**

There are now being constructed in front of New York theatres automatic cab calls, numbers in electric lights being shown. A similar device has been designed to show the names of stations on railroad trains.



**Chain Canal Towage.**

On a number of Continental rivers of Europe the Rhine in particular, a system of canal power towage is employed which has not yet received any attention in this country. A heavy chain is laid along the canal, lying usually at the bottom when not in use, and a powerboat, provided with a steam engine and necessary gearing, picks up the chain forward and passes it out at the stern, the effect being the same as pulling in hand over hand on a securely fastened line. A similar system is to be tried experimentally on the Erie Canal by the New York & Western Transportation Company.

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Great Clouds of Dust Blown Into Dust Clouds by Cyclones.

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**LABOR WORLD.**

Montreal is the best organized city in Canada.

San Francisco police will have an eight-hour day.

Sioux City, Iowa, has elected a union printer for Mayor.

There is a lull in the reports as to the labor troubles in Spain.

Memphis (Tenn.) master plumbers refuse to employ union men.

Kansas has passed a State law for the enforcement of an eight-hour work day.

From the first of the year up to May 10,000 Japanese laborers had been sent to Hawaii.

It is likely that the American Labor Union will adopt the referendum system of electing officers.

Laborers have been granted \$1.25 a day by the City Council of Charlotte-town, Prince Edward Island.

The Executive Council of the American Federation of Labor recommends mass meetings to protest against the injunction abuse.

Baggage smashers of Chicago, Ill., have organized and the next thing will be union labels on freight and baggage to insure safe transportation.

Toledo, O., has something unique in the way of a labor union. The insurance solicitors of the city have formally organized, and will be granted a charter by the American Federation of Labor.

Action which probably will bring the Western miners into closer touch with the United Mine Workers of America was taken when the Western Federation of Miners voted for interchangeability cards between the two organizations.

A summer camp for the striking metal polishers, buffers, platers and brass workers of Cleveland, Ohio, is being planned. The camp is to be situated in the green fields, just outside the city limits, and will be run on the co-operative plan.

**NEWSY GLEANINGS.**

There is a serious revival of piracy in the Red Sea.

Automobiles are to be barred from the busier streets of Berlin.

Forty per cent. of the potato crop in Germany is used for fodder.

It cost over \$35,000 to police the British houses of Parliament last year.

General S. B. Buckner has presented Munfordsville, Ky., with a water works.

The Rev. Sam Jones is going to build a \$25,000 business block in Cartersville, Ga.

The United States furnish about seventy per cent. of the population of the Klondike region.

The anti-clerical crusade in the eastern provinces of Spain is meeting with great success.

The State of New Jersey is about to build a sanatorium for indigent sufferers from consumption.

The suicide death rate in European armies far exceeds the rate of the country to which the army belongs.

The charter of Waco, Texas, has been declared invalid because the city boundaries are not clearly specified.

Louisiana cattle are to be barred from South Africa because of Government's action on mule shipments.

In the mill town of Ballards, Wash., eight families have adopted the merger plan of living. No "kickers" are allowed.

John D. Spreckles contemplates establishing communication by wireless telegraph between the Hawaiian Islands and San Francisco.

Henry Cole, of Denver, started to covet his estate of \$400,000 into cash for the poor, but was halted by his wife, who reminded him that half of it was hers.

New York's Health Department is making a special effort to suppress noisy street cars. Those with flat wheels will be held up and sent back to the barns.

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