The INDEPENDENCE DAY HORROR AT KILLSBVRY

ASENATH
CARVER
COOLIDGE

The Project Gutenberg EBook of The Independence Day Horror at Killsbury, by Asenath Carver Coolidge

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org

Title: The Independence Day Horror at Killsbury

Author: Asenath Carver Coolidge

Illustrator: Cassius M. Coolidge

Release Date: April 19, 2012 [EBook #39479]

Language: English

*** START OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK INDEPENDENCE DAY HORROR--KILLSBURY ***

Produced by The Online Distributed Proofreading Team at http://www.pgdp.net (This file was produced from images generously made available by The Internet Archive.)

The Independence Day Horror at Killsbury

BOSTON HARBOR STYLE.

The Independence Day Horror At Killsbury

By Asenath Carver Coolidge
Author of “The Modern Blessing, Fire”
and many other short stories
and poems

Illustrated by
Cassius M. Coolidge

Watertown, N. Y.:
Hungerford-Holbrook Company.
1905

Copyrighted 1905
By Asenath Carver Coolidge

Published April, 1905

HUNGERFORD-HOLBROOK CO.,
WATERTOWN, N. Y.

Dedicated
To my Grandmother, Asenath Carver Townsend
a descendent of John and Mary Carver
who came to America to escape persecution
for their religious belief
which would not permit
them to countenance war
or its vain-glorious
celebrations

Preface

THE world is a dangerous place to live in, especially for helpless and innocent children. Wise parents are sadly aware of this fact and have always been striving to make it less dangerous. That this was no small task even in the beginning is easy enough to be seen; for there were poison fruits and reptiles and savage beasts to contend with; but it was light indeed compared with the parental task of today, when the monsters of militarism and greed are abroad, planting their danger-traps in the pathway of unwary feet.

In our own country Independence Day has proved to be their golden harvest. The freedom given to small boys on this day makes them easy victims to the tempters' wiles, who under the treacherous guise of patriotism have seized upon them more and more every year, until the list of the dead and wounded has assumed appalling proportions. Still there is little talk of doing away with this hideous slaughter; while there is "big talk" about "race suicide," and an appeal to mothers to bring forth more sons to supply the nation's need.

The nation's need! What need, we ask in God's name, has this nation of three or four thousand boys to sacrifice annually on our country's altar? Let the mothers answer. Let them demand that this country be made a fit place for children to live in. That the ten million now spent annually for their destruction, be used for their benefit. If only one half of this amount were used rightly what a change would come over the face of this continent! Every town, however small, would have its pretty park for the children to play in without fear and trembling. There would be flowers and music—true and gentle music that takes the savagery out of the human heart instead of filling it with savage impulses. Music that would not drown the voices of the birds, but inspire them to sing their rarest songs. Music that would not wound the ears of the tenderest babes but seem to them like a mother's softest lullaby; to which it is easy to fancy that God's birds, the angels, are delighted to listen.

ASENATH CARVER COOLIDGE.

Antwerp, N. Y., April, 1905.

CONTENTS

Illustrations

The Independence Day Horror at Killsbury

CHAPTER I.

THE CORNWALLIS COTTAGE.

IT was Independence Day. The sun rose gorgeously. The air was electric and inspiring. Blossoming plants were exhaling rare fragrance. The forests and rivers were palpitating with glad, soft sounds and gentle fervor. The birds were singing jubilantly, and various forms of living things were alert and antic. Yes, it was "Independence Day in the morning" as the Killsbury boys called it. It was full of glorious promise—the list of the dead and wounded had not as yet come in!

Apparently there were not half a dozen people in the town who would have admitted that there would be any casualties on the day that had dawned so beautifully; although there had been an increasing number of them every year since Millionaire Schwarmer had come and built his mansion on "The Hill" and decorated its brow with a big-mouthed cannon.

The cannon began to boom as soon as the sun appeared above the horizon. It continued to boom industriously as though it were determined to wake up every citizen in Killsbury and the surrounding country to the important fact that "Independence Day had really and truly and unmistakably dawned," as Captain Dan Solomon facetiously remarked. It was a fact that would have been well known and appreciated, at least by every inmate of the Cornwallis Cottage, even though there had been no cannon on Schwarmer Hill to vomit it forth; for the reason that the sole son of the house, Laurens Angelo Cornwallis, had been born on that day.

Little Laurens Angelo Cornwallis was the most beautiful boy in Killsbury, "or the whole world," averred the Reverend Dr. Normander, who had baptised him and had traveled the world nearly enough over to make a correct estimate with regard to the part that remained. Yes, and he was as good and bright as he was beautiful—the joy of his mother, the pride of his father and to his sister Ruth the "dear angel," as she called him, so it goes without saying that his birthday would have been celebrated with due love and honor even if he had not been born on Independence Day; although there might not have been such a showing of red, white and blue—probably no more than one American flag, with an English and

French flag lovingly intertwined (for Mr. Cornwallis was of English descent and his wife of French descent) whereas now there were flags on the four corners of the cottage, and over all the doors and windows both inside and outside and a generous display of bunting everywhere.

“A double quantity” as Mr. Cornwallis was wont to ask for when he bought a new supply of colors.

“One half to celebrate our boy’s birthday and the other half to celebrate our Nation’s birthday. You see we don’t intend to be partial.”

And when the shopman, who inclined to think that love of one’s own country meant hate of all other countries, remarked “there are some who say that we should love our country more than our wives and children,” Mr. Cornwallis replied:

“I haven’t got to that point yet and I doubt if I ever shall. I don’t intend to make burnt sacrifices on any altar.”

While he was arranging the flags the Reverend Dr. Normander called.

“You see, Doctor, I love Mother England and Sister France very well indeed, but I love America supremely.”

“Yes I *see*,” replied Dr. Normander, “and I know it is very easy to love our own country; but to love other countries equally well—in other words to love our neighbors *as* ourselves—there’s the rub, Mr. Cornwallis.”

“I recognize the beauty of equality, Doctor,” laughed Mr. Cornwallis, “and I think I might be able to love other countries as well as my own country after a great deal of practice and very possibly, my neighbor as well as myself, but I fear I could never love my neighbor’s boy as well as I love my own boy. I hope I am taking a step in the right direction when I pay equal honor to my country’s birthday and to his.”

Little Ruth caught her father’s spirit as by infection. Every Fourth of July she arose as soon as the cannon began to boom and running out into the dewy or rainy garden, whichever it happened to be, she picked two great bunches of red and white flowers and arranged them in two blue vases and put one at the end of the table where mamma sat and the other at the end where papa sat in honor of the two birthdays.

Mrs. Cornwallis made a new patriotic suit for her darling boy each year. This year it was a quaint George Washington suit in red, white and blue with a cute Can't-tell-a-lie cap, all spangled with stars.

After breakfast was over, she spread the suit out on the bed in her room. She was going to give her boy a bath preparatory to putting it on.

The cannon on Schwarmer Hill began to boom again just as Laurens was stepping into his little bath tub. The boy shivered.

"What makes you shiver so, Laurens? Is the water too cold?" asked his mother.

"O no, mamma! It's the cannon I'm shivering at. It made the house shiver. What makes them have it so awful loud?"

"So as to be sure and make everybody hear, Laurens."

"I think a bugle would be better, mamma."

"So do I, my boy, but I suppose Mr. Schwarmer doesn't."

"I'm afraid of Mr. Schwarmer, mamma. He gave Benny Horton something that blew his eye out last Fourth."

"So am I, my boy. Fireworks are not fit for little boys to handle. They smell bad, they are bad, dangerous and noisy."

She was rubbing his white satiny skin with her soft hands. She stopped short and added:

"If he ever offers you any, you will refuse to take them, and you will tell him what mamma says about them, won't you darling?"

He threw his arms around her neck and kissed her.

"Yes, mamma, I will. You don't want your little boy to have his eyes put out, do you?" he said pathetically.

"No indeed, Laurens," cried the mother turning around to get his new pants and brush away a tear.

"Mamma, the gardener said my old pants were holy. What did he mean?"

"He meant you had worn holes in them, Laurens?"

“What did the Sunday-school teacher mean when she said the war we are going to celebrate today was a holy war? Did she mean we had worn holes in it? Worn it out?”

“No,” laughed Mamma, “she meant it was a war to make the English give us our own things just as you would fight if a dog should try to eat up your dinner.”

“O mamma, I would give poor doggy my dinner if he were hungry,” said Laurens, with tears in his eyes.

“Yes, I know you would, my darling, but if you were hungry and he would not let you have any, what then?”

“I would pet and coax him, mamma, until he let me have some.”

Mrs. Cornwallis gave up the argument and hugged and kissed her boy to her heart’s content. But Laurens did not give it up so easily. When she was fastening his ruffled shirt front with her beautiful sapphire buttons which were a part of his father’s wedding gift, he touched her on the forehead and said:

“Please tell me, mamma, what kind of animals the English are? Bridget calls them ‘Johnny Bulls.’ Do they look like our bulls?”

“No, no, my child. They look like ourselves. Like your papa. Your grandpapa came from England when he was a little boy about your age.”

“O mamma! You don’t know how s’prised I am. I thought the English were a sort of bulls—dangerous bulls, that pitched into our grandpas with their horns and they had to kill them or be hooked to death.”

“No, Laurens, they were men, but they wronged us.”

“I think it would be awful to kill anybody just for that, mamma.”

“So it seems to you now, my boy, but when you have grown to be a man—” she hesitated. A sudden fear shot through her heart. Was it that she was not teaching him quite right, or was it that of an impending sorrow? Then she added with a sigh: “The Lord only knows, Laurens. I hope you may think the same; but I fear you will think quite differently.”

Later on his toilet was finished and a miniature George Washington stood before her looking up into her face with the Can’t-tell-a-lie expression so dear to her heart.

“There, you may go now and get your kite. Ruth must have gotten the streamers all tied on by this time.”

He ran to his sister’s room, and she put the beautiful new kite that Ralph Norwood had made on purpose for him, into his chubby little hand and watched him in an ecstacy of admiration as he ran down through the garden and out into the big sunny field where he was going to make it fly.

Then she went into mamma’s room; for they were going to take each of them a sweet, sweet bath and make everything ready for the beautiful home celebration. The table was to be loaded with refreshments that were truly refreshing for a hot day, and little Laurens was to have a birthday cake with eight roses (to tell how old he was) circling around a tiny flag on a tiny staff made of a goose-quill in imitation of the famous one with which the American Declaration of Independence was signed.

The Reverend Dr. Normander and family were to be there and Ralph Norwood and his brothers. They would have music and singing and the children might play at fort-building out in the fragrant garden; but they would have no “nasty fireworks,” as Mrs. Cornwallis called them.

She was a true Frenchwoman in her tastes, although truly American in education, and would not have the sweet smelling plot of ground on which she had spent so much of her spare time, turned into a pit of vile-smelling powder and brimstone. She resolutely maintained that she could show her intense patriotism in better, safer, and more odorous ways. And she did it to the entire satisfaction of everybody in Killsbury unless it might be Millionaire Schwarmer who came to his mansion on The Hill every Fourth of July, boomed his cannon and distributed free fireworks among the boys of the town, “in grateful remembrance,” he said, “of the fact that he was born there.”

Mrs. Cornwallis said to her husband that it was a pity he could not show his gratitude in more agreeable and useful ways, but she did not say so in public or brood over it in private. She was a very busy housewife and devoted mother and had no time to cultivate even the necessary grievances.

Mr. Cornwallis was in sympathy with his wife’s opinions; but as yet it had not occurred to him that free fireworks, (like free whiskey) were any worse for the town than those that were regularly bought and paid for. As to the legal restrictions necessary with regard to the sale and manufacture of explosives for the celebration of our national day, he was beginning to be very outspoken.

CHAPTER II.

THE ROUND ABOUT ROAD TO SCHWARMER MANSION.

THERE were two roads leading up to the Schwarmer Mansion from the town of Killsbury. One of them was called “The Straight Way” and the other “The Round About Road.” The latter followed the steep declivity that led down to the river’s edge and passed the big lot that belonged to the Cornwallis grounds.

“Guess I’d better take the ‘Round About’ with all that heavy baggage of yours, Mr. Schwarmer,” said Captain Dan Solomon, the expressman at the station. “There’s a loose board in the bridge on the ‘Straight Way’ that my filly don’t exactly approve of.”

“Just as you choose, Dan,” replied Mr. Schwarmer. “It doesn’t make a cent’s worth of difference to me, most assuredly it doesn’t. How long before you’ll be around?”

“As soon as I can. Things are a little irregular today, you know.”

“Certainly! certainly Dan! Independence Day is every dog’s day, most assuredly it is; and business concerns are apt to move rather circuitously. Fons,” he added, turning to a youthful looking lad at his side, “suppose we take ‘The Round About,’ since there’s no carriage and we have to walk. We might as well make it worth while, you know. I haven’t walked around that way for years, most assuredly I haven’t.”

Fons assented and they walked on at a brisk pace.

“How many of those patriotic packages have you, Fons?”

“If you mean my improvements on ‘The Sacred Mandarin,’” laughed Fons, “I have enough yet to hold up the town, although I left a good sprinkling of them at every station and sowed them about six deep among the employees while you were hunting up Dan. I’m going to advertise in earnest this time.”

“Well, I’ve got half a dozen. That will be enough. We won’t be apt to meet more than one or two boys after we branch off if we do any. They didn’t expect me on this train. Most assuredly they didn’t; but they’ll flock up to the gates in due time —by the time Dan gets there I reckon.”

They went on, distributing fire-crackers and blank cartridges to every boy they met and every poor looking fellow also.

When they got to the Cornwallis lot Fons espied little Laurens in the distance flying his kite.

“Heigho! what gay little patriotic bird is that?” exclaimed Fons. “He’s worth the ammunition.”

Schwarmer stopped and put on his gold-rimmed magnifiers.

“That’s little Laurens Cornwallis—the handsomest boy in Killsbury or the world, they say. You’ve heard me speak of the Cornwallis’s, most assuredly you have. They are not eminently patriotic, I suspect, though they display the colors. We’ll see how the eaglet stands affected toward his country this morning.”

Schwarmer went to the fence and beckoned the boy to come to him.

Laurens came on a little distance but stopped when he recognized Schwarmer.

“Come on, my pretty” said Schwarmer, “I will give you a nice new box of powdered crackers to help you celebrate. You can make them go off without the aid of the fickle wind.”

Laurens shook his curly head vigorously. “I don’t want any. I told mamma I would not touch Mr. Schwarmer’s fire-things.” Then he turned and ran away from them as fast as his little legs could carry him.

“How’s that for frankness?” sneered Fons as they moved on. “It beats you who are a professional, ‘all the way to Buzzard’s Bay,’ as the boys say.”

“Yes, and it looks rather dull for your trade, Fons,” laughed Schwarmer rather derisively. “Perhaps you had better put your inventive genius into some other business. It’s pretty poor encouragement when you can’t even give away your productions. Most assuredly it is.”

“It’s doubtful policy to begin at the church door,” said Fons. “More stars and stripes and fewer fireworks is the church idea. I never see such a boy as that—

with a regular Sunday School look and eyes rolled up—without wanting to call him down. The most beautiful Laurens needs a giant firecracker and a dynamite cap and cane to bring him down to the proper altitude. They don't teach fire and brimstone in the churches now, so it's necessary for the youngsters to get a smell of it from the outside."

"Military slang aside, Fons. His mother is cosseting him and making a sort of an inspired idiot of him, most assuredly she is. He *is* a beauty—too much of a beauty for a boy; but he will never be fit for business. But mothers never think of things in a business way and Mrs. Cornwallis is the main spoke in Cornwallis' wheel, most assuredly she is."

"A wheel of domesticity all around I should judge," laughed Fons. "Cornwallis is no business man."

"No, Fons—only a counter of other men's gains—no independent money-maker, so to speak. He would refuse to make money in your kind of business or mine either. He makes a terrible hullabaloo every time a little ragamuffin gets hurt with blank cartridges or toy pistols. He wants the manufactories shut down at once. He'd rather take the risk of having six youngsters starved to death, than to have one die of lockjaw."

"I should say he ought to have the lockjaw himself and any other man who uses his jaw for the repression of legitimate trade. Faugh! we've no use for such effeminates on this end of the planet where more big manufactories are needed to keep it well balanced. I should like to see *his* jaw locked up."

"O no! not quite so bad as that, Fons."

"Yes, worse than that," continued Fons angrily. "Shut up our own manufactories and send abroad for Fourth of July fireworks! That's the kind of business fiend or fool he is—send to the English for things to celebrate our victory over them. Bah!"

"But we never have, Fons—that is to any ridiculous extent—any alarming extent, so to speak?"

"But we will if the idiots that would *shut down* our Pyrotechnic manufactories are not *shut up*. The London Pyro-king is trying to king it here now by catering to the Independence Day sentiment. He hates it, but he is going to coin money out of it all the same—the viper!"

“Head him off, then! Rule him out! We ought to manufacture our own implements—especially the patriotic ones and handle them too and teach our boys how to handle them. If we would teach them how to *be* brave and do brave things—really dare to do them, it would be better all around—the planet included, most assuredly it would.”

Fons made no reply to Schwarmer’s rather ragged reasoning, but when he got to the top of the hill he broke out:

“Excuse me. I’m going back to see if I can’t put a little of the dare devil stuff into that all too goodish boy. I must have a little fun out of him anyway.”

“Don’t be gone long, Fons. You must be here when your patriotic stuffs are unloaded. I don’t care to be near enough to smell powder if they should be handled too roughly or by the wrong end.”

“It’s the little idiot that sits down on my trade that will be likely to smell of the powdered beauties,” laughed Fons sardonically.

“Have a care, youngster. You can’t cut up here as you can in the city without having it known.”

“O! it’s only a little scare I’ll treat him to. Boys like to be scared, you know. That’s the secret of success in the money end of the Pyrotechnic business.”

Before he got back to the Cornwallis lot, he saw the baggage-man coming up the hill.

“Heigho,” he exclaimed, slapping his leg—“just in the nick of time! Providence permits! Now I *will* have some fun. Stop a bit, Dan. I want an assortment of that patriotic fervor. I am going to have a little picnic with some boys right here if nothing happens.”

After he had selected the things he wanted, he slipped a dollar into Dan’s hand, saying, “you may go on now, but you’d better stay up with us today, you and your nag, and help us celebrate. The women folks didn’t come and you haven’t any of those ‘pull backs,’ Schwarmer tells me, so we can have a very free time.”

Dan laughed and moved on. Fons carried his boxes to a shady nook on the steep bank just opposite the lot where Laurens Cornwallis was still flying his kite. After he had arranged them he stopped and looked at them with a satisfied air. Then he selected a thing with spiral stripes of red, white and blue.

“This will take the boy’s eye at once,” he said to himself as he climbed the hill to go to the Cornwallis lot. “I must have invented it for his kind of eye—a sort of Aaron’s rod—yes, that’s what I’ll name it—a bible name. That will be ahead of King Pang’s ‘Sacred Mandarin.’ It’s just the ticker for a little Sunday school chub like Laurens.”

When he got to the fence he saw that Laurens was having trouble with his kite.

“Providence permits again,” he muttered as he jumped over into the lot.

“Hello there! my dear fellow,” he called out. “I see Mistress Kite has gone back on you. They are always doing that sort of trick. I had about a hundred when I was your age. I know all about the pesky things. I can doctor it for you.” He left Aaron’s rod by the first tree he came to and went on.

Laurens shied off a little when he saw he was the lad that was with Schwarmer, but Fons paid no attention to the “*instinctive dodge*,” as he had heard his military professor call it. He marched boldly up, took hold of the kite and began to fix it as though it belonged to him by right of superior knowledge concerning kites. Laurens watched him with that kind of fascination which a young boy invariably feels for an older one, and especially one who has had an experience with so many kites and had so many implements in his pockets to fix and do things with it; for therefrom, during the process he took all sorts of beautifully made instruments, ranging from a gold toothpick to a silver match-box and gave them to him to hold while he was diving into the depths for his sharpest jack-knife. Besides, he had a diamond ring on his finger of dazzling brightness and a little jewelled watch in his vest pocket, which he pulled out to see what time of day it was. After he had fixed the kite and sailed it across the field several times, he stopped short and exclaimed:

“There, it sails beautifully; but I’ve had enough of it! Say, little ‘*Can’t tell a lie*.’ I should think you’d be awful tired of the kite business. I quit it long before I was as old as you are. Why don’t you play with something more patriotic—something like what George Washington used to lick the English with? I don’t blame you though for not wanting Schwarmer’s cheep truck; I’ve got some things that I brought from the city—things that I helped make for our school celebration. They are daisies! stars and stripes of just the right color! Come on and I’ll show you one. I’m going to have a picnic down by the river this afternoon.”

“I’m afraid mamma wouldn’t like to have me go out of the field.”

“O you needn’t be afraid. It’s liberty day. She won’t care, take my word for it. I’m older than you. Come on, you’ll never have another chance to see my prettiest piece. I haven’t but one left and when it’s once let off there’s an end of it; there it is leaning against the tree. Aaron’s rod, I call it. Your Sunday school teacher has told you about Aaron’s wonderful rod. Come and see how you like its namesake.”

Fons started off with the kite in hand and Laurens still had the beautiful implements.

“Come on,” shouted Fons, seizing Aaron’s rod and swinging it gayly. “Catch me if you can.”

It was a lively chase. Over the fence, across the road and down the steep bank! When they stopped they were side by side and both were laughing. They had enjoyed the race.

“Now,” said Fons, “we are here and if you don’t want to see my patriotic piece you will have to shut your eyes.”

Laurens opened his eyes still wider instead of shutting them, for Fons began to show off at once. It was a very pretty show. The place was in deep shadow and the effect was almost as vivid as it would have been at night.

“That’s the style of them,” laughed Fons after he had finished the piece. “I see you like it. Now you stay here while I run up to the house and get some lemons and candy; and don’t let any bad boys run off with my things.”

What Fons really did was to go up to the Schwarmer stables, where he found an army of small boys to whom Schwarmer was distributing packages of Fourth of July fireworks. He watched them and saw a squad of four rough little rascals who were trying to get a double or perhaps a quadruple supply. They were changing caps with each other and holding each other’s boxes.

“Here boys,” he said, calling them aside, “I know what you want. You haven’t got your share and some others have more than their share. I can fix that for you. I was a boy myself only a little while ago. There’s a boy down by the river just opposite the big Cornwallis lot who has a great lot of the very best kind of fireworks—stars and garters, Johnny-jump-ups and Yankee-doodle-doos. You go down there and make him divide up. You can swipe him easy enough. He’s a little Sunday-school angel, who wants to celebrate all by himself. You’ll know

him. He is rigged out in the *Can't-tell-a-lie* George Washington style."

Fons' intention was to go down to the river's bank, secrete himself where the boys couldn't see him and watch them while they fought it out; but his plan was baffled by an unexpected event.

CHAPTER III.

THE ALARM.

"IT'S ten o'clock already!" exclaimed Mrs. Cornwallis as she finished her bath. "But everything is in perfect order now except ourselves. There's that dreadful cannon again! It made *me* shiver this time." Then she added anxiously, "Where's Laurens? Have you heard him come in? I never knew him to stay out so long."

"No, I haven't," replied Ruth, taking the alarm. "Please help me on with my dress and I'll go after him."

"He must be having a high time with his new kite this morning," said Mrs. Cornwallis as she put on Ruth's pretty white frock. "Here, wait a moment, then you can stay out with him as long as you like."

She tied the blue sash into a graceful knot and fastened a cluster of red roses on her corsage with a resolute hand, for she would not believe that any harm had befallen her boy.

Ruth hastened out and Mrs. Cornwallis proceeded to finish her own toilet. A few moments afterwards she was smiling at her foolish fears and saying to herself, they are having a lovely time now, playing together-the blessed children!

She was going to wear white, pure white just as she did when she was married, but she had a red, white and blue knot for her throat and she was fastening it on with a sapphire brooch that belonged to the same set of the sapphire buttons with which she had fastened little Lauren's George Washington ruff, when Ruth burst into the room, crying:

"O mamma! mamma! I can't see him anywhere."

"I've looked all over the field! I've called and called but he did not answer! O! he's lost! he's lost!"

"No! No! Ruth. He must be somewhere about the premises." Hand in hand they went all over the house and grounds, but they did not find him.

“O I’m so afraid,” sobbed Ruth! “Where shall we look now?”

“Perhaps he had trouble with his kite and went over to Ralph Norwood’s to have him fix it. He did that way with papa last year. We will go and see what he thinks about it.”

Mr. Cornwallis was of his wife’s opinion.

“Don’t be frightened,” he said. “Go home and look the premises over again and wait for him there while I go to Norwoods.”

The Norwoods lived at the opposite end of the town fully a mile away. The most direct course ran through the public square. Mr. Cornwallis went on in that direction, making his way as rapidly as possible through streets that were already strewn with firecrackers and torpedoes. It seemed to him that he had never before seen so many of all sorts and sizes in the town of Killsbury. Wherever there was a boy there was a fusilade of the evil-smelling things. Wherever there were several boys, small cannons and cartridges added to the noise and danger. Was it his anxiety about his own boy that made it seem so much worse than ever before, or was it a day of unusual horror in Killsbury? When he reached the Public Square the question was answered. The scene beggared description. The air was full of stench, smoke, hisses, cries of fright, hurt and brutal laughter. Horses, dogs and babies were fired at indiscriminately. It seemed as though all the boys in Killsbury and the surrounding country must have assembled there and were trying to do their worst—as though they had made a concerted attempt to seize the Public Square in army fashion and fire upon every one who attempted to enter it from any of the streets; for squads of them stood at every corner.

Mr. Cornwallis saw that it would be impossible to cross the square safely and he was in haste to reach Norwoods’ and find out if his boy were there. His boy! Had not a monster seized the town and swallowed up his boy already? He pushed his way desperately to a side street hoping to avoid further delay. As he turned the corner he saw a large load of people headed for the square. He looked again and recognized the Rundels—a family of hard working farmers—eleven in all, counting the aged grandfather and grandmother and an uncle and aunt. They were accustomed to driving into town on Independence Day to help celebrate and have a little pleasant diversion. They were in holiday mood and array and were coming on at a lively pace.

“Good God!” exclaimed Cornwallis, “It will not do for them to drive into that

infernal place.”

He ran after them and called on them to stop; but he called in vain. They were on a down hill grade and before the driver could check the horses, a fusilade of fireworks struck them and they rushed madly into the square. Women with young children sought refuge in the nearest shops. Men and boys fell over each other, trying to get out of the way of the infuriated beasts. The helpless family by some sort of loving instinct huddled together in the bottom of the staunch old hayrack—the children and grandparents in the center and the others on the outside encircling them with their strong arms. When the crash came, which was caused by running against the town pump, they were all thrown out in a heap, the horses wheeled about and stood gazing at them apparently aghast at the deed they had helped to commit.

Fortunately, none of them were killed. One of the girls had a sprained wrist, one of the boys a sprained ankle, the aunt a dislocated shoulder, and the father and mother were badly bruised; but after the cheering report of the Doctor, they inclined to take their misfortunes resignedly and thank the Lord they were no worse—quite as though they had been necessary martyrs to the noble cause of American freedom, instead of the sport of mischievous boys, and victims of an outrageous custom.

“O! what a terrible world this is getting to be! Too terrible for any innocent child to live in,” Mr. Cornwallis repeated to himself again and again as he continued his way to the Norwoods’. Without being distinctly conscious of it he was preparing himself for the disappointment and grief which awaited him.

Laurens had not been there and they had seen nothing of him.

“Come with me, Ralph, and help me find him. It’s a terrible day down town.”

“So Police Haggard told father. I’ll go and see if he can help us. He has just driven in the stable with his horse.”

He returned, saying that his father would drive over to the cottage and see if Laurens had returned and if not he would see Haggard and have a regular search instituted.

“But the Police are in full force at the Square and a horse is not safe in the street.”

“Never fear, he will manage with gentle Bess. He thinks we had better go back

by the river. He may have been chasing his kite and—”

Ralph broke off crying, “O I shall never forgive myself if the kite has been the cause of his death.”

They hastened on making inquiries of everybody they met. They met Dr. Muelenberg as they were turning from the road to go down the bank.

“O Doctor! do you know?” gasped Mr. Cornwallis.

“Yes, yes, I just came from your house to hunt for him. I went there to celebrate his birthday and the dear little fellow was not there. We must look well to the river.”

They started down the bank.

“O the kite, the kite!” exclaimed Ralph! “See! see! over there by the pine trees! Perhaps he was tired of chasing it and has fallen asleep!”

He rushed on crying “Laurens! Laurens wake up! wake up!”

The next moment he stumbled over a strange distorted, discolored figure. When the Doctor and Mr. Cornwallis came up he stood looking at it in a dazed way.

“It can’t be Laurens! It can’t be possible he could be so changed! Tell me it can’t, Doctor,” he pleaded.

The Doctor shook his head. “Not a trace! Not a feature! It may be some other boy, but how shall we decide?”

“God only knows,” said Mr. Cornwallis turning away from the unbearable sight.

The Doctor drew nearer as he felt it his duty to do, and looked at the frightful figure more closely.

“If it’s your son, Mr. Cornwallis, perhaps you will know him by some mark. I think the back of the head has not been much burned. I see the remnant of a cap.”

He paused a moment to gather new courage. Then he raised the head and removed the bit of cap. Underneath it were Laurens’ beautiful curls!

Ralph fainted and the two men fell upon the ground, clutching each other in agony.

“Mien Gott! Mien Gott,” exclaimed Dr. Muelenberg at last. “You have one thing to be thankful for. Death was instantaneous. He was not saved to die in the awful toils of *Tetanus*.”

CHAPTER IV.

RISUS SARDONICUS.

BEFORE night—yes, even before the cannon on Schwarmer Hill had ceased to boom, everybody in Killsbury knew of the terrible sorrow that had befallen the Cornwallis family. Little Laurens had been brought home dead and disfigured beyond recognition. His father and mother were wild with grief and his sister Ruth was stricken down with brain fever. Neighbors and townspeople came and saw and went away shocked and silent. It was plain to be seen that it was one of those mysterious Fourth of July accidents that will happen now and then, and few indeed were brave enough to ask just how it happened or why such accidents should be made possible. The majority of the people of Killsbury would as soon have thought of questioning the ways of Providence or the rights of the whirlwind as they would of questioning the doings of “the small boy,” or denying his right to go whithersoever he listeth on our free and glorious Independence Day.

The Reverend Dr. Normander, however, was not exactly of this stamp. He was beginning at least, to think seriously about the matter. Passing strange it seemed to him that the day which should be the most beautifully and joyously free, had become the most fearful to the best and most truly patriotic citizens of the town; and that said citizens should consent to it and encourage it as so many did. Mr. Schwarmer, at least, encouraged it most decidedly by distributing fireworks to the boys. He had been thinking of speaking to him about it for some time. Whether he had given Laurens Cornwallis the fireworks that had caused his death or not, he felt that the time had come to utter his warning against such a practice and ask him as a citizen of influence to make his gifts of a harmless nature. He called on him the next morning for that purpose.

“You have heard of little Laurens Cornwallis’s terrible death I suppose, Mr. Schwarmer?”

“Yes, I heard of it last night. It was very, very sad, most assuredly it was, Dr. Normander.”

“The mystery is where he got the fireworks, Mr. Schwarmer. He went out into the field to fly his kite. He had no fireworks and no money to buy any. His parents do not approve of putting such dangerous things into the hands of children. His mother thinks he must have been seized upon by older boys and compelled to take part in, or witness their sports. However the case may be, I have been asked so many times by friends and acquaintances if it were true that he came up here and you gave him the fireworks, that I felt it my duty to ask you personally.”

“This is my answer for one and all, Dr. Normander. He did not come here and I did not give him any firecrackers. You may set that down as gospel truth, most assuredly you may.”

“I am glad to hear it and be able to refute the rumor; still I feel that I shall not have done my whole duty without telling you that I fear your custom of distributing fireworks to the boys is having a very bad effect. I have noticed an alarming increase of Independence Day accidents since you inaugurated the custom. Yesterday was the worst of all. I was told that the Public Square was a more dangerous place than if it had been invaded by a foreign enemy—that the boys really took possession of it and fired at everybody who attempted to enter.”

Mr. Schwarmer laughed. “Well that’s no fault of mine, Dr. Normander. Any sensible man knows that there isn’t enough powder in one of my little packages to hurt any child. He couldn’t more than scorch his fingers were he to let them all off at once—rest assured he couldn’t. He couldn’t more than learn ‘The burnt child dreads the fire’ adage, which every child has got to learn sooner or later.”

“But if a large number of boys should club together and every one had a box, Mr. Schwarmer? What then?”

“O that would be another affair, Dr. Normander. The parents and the police should regulate a thing of that kind—most assuredly they should—the parents primarily.”

“But parents can’t always stand on guard, Mr. Schwarmer.”

“I thought that was what parents were for—to guard their own children, Dr. Normander. If I should attempt to guard other people’s children I should expect to be told that my services were not wanted, most assuredly I should; and if I give a boy a box of firecrackers to honor his country with, I consider it’s his parents’ business to see that he makes the right use of it, just as it would be their

business to see that he made the right use of a Sunday School book that you might give him to honor his God with! No knowing but he would take a notion to set a match to the one thing or the other, or the whole thing, if left to himself long enough—in which case he would be apt to burn his fingers and perhaps burn himself up and the whole house too; but neither you nor I would be to blame, I take it," laughed Schwarmer.

Dr. Normander was amazed at such levity and reasoning or lack of reason; but he replied with becoming patience: "Not for what we could not foresee or avoid, Mr. Schwarmer. Every mature individual knows that all kinds of explosives are more or less dangerous. There is a lurking devil in them that it will not do to play with. They should not be used unless it is absolutely necessary and then only by experienced hands. Surely, it would be very easy for you to withhold your gifts to the boys, or make them of a non-explosive character. You might try it next year and note the results in the death and accident list. I think it would not only be right for you to do so, but the part of wisdom, as quite a number, especially those mothers who have had their boys seriously hurt by the explosives which you have given them, are being very much exercised about the matter."

"Bless their hearts!" exclaimed Schwarmer reddening perceptibly, "I suppose they think I own the Fourth of July and must run it and be responsible for everything that goes amiss. Now I suppose they'll try to blame me for old Dan's death. You know old Captain Dan Solomon—the expressman. He came up here yesterday and insisted on letting off the cannon. I couldn't refuse him. It was Liberty day, you know. The day didn't belong to *me* any more than it did to anybody else, nor the cannon either. I dedicated it to the town to begin with, so old Dan did as he chose. He was careless with it at the sundown charge and it burst and killed him. Come and see him. They have him all nicely laid out in the coachman's apartment."

"Indeed! I had not heard of this," said Doctor Normander. He arose in astonishment and followed Mr. Schwarmer to the stable. One look was as much as he could endure. He turned away in silence and went wearily down the hill. He was convinced that Schwarmer did not give little Laurens Cornwallis the explosives that caused his death; but he was still more thoroughly convinced that he was responsible through his influence and example for the alarming increase of accidents in the town; but beyond all lay the dread conviction that the evil was coexistent with our body politic and that the parents and people in general had become so inured to it—so dead to its enormity that it would be well nigh impossible to bring about any essential reform.

The Saturday after the burial of Laurens Cornwallis, Dr. Normander rose feeling quite ill, but he would not give up. He seized his hat and went out to walk.

When he reached the first avenue he looked up and saw Father Ferrill crossing the street at a rapid pace.

“Father! Father!” he called out involuntarily, “has anything happened—anything more?” He held out both hands. He had never before felt so keenly the need of a brother worker, or rather a father worker. The aged priest came up, took his hands tenderly in his own and said:

“I have just been summoned to the bedside of the Widow Pressneau’s little boy. I fear it is a case of *Tetanus* beyond hope, it has developed so rapidly. On the Fourth he shot his hand with a toy pistol which was given him to celebrate with.”

“O Father! and yet another! Let me take your arm; I feel faint. The torn face of poor old Dan Solomon and the terrible death of Laurens Cornwallis have been too great a strain.”

They walked on in silence. As they neared the widow’s house, Father Ferrill said:

“If you have never witnessed a case of *Tetanus* I advise you not to go in, my son.”

“I never have, but I think I ought to know what is going on about me, Father, and perhaps I can help. I feel better now. I will hunt up Doctor Muelenberg if he is not already there. He has had a large experience in such cases.”

“That is very kind, my son; but I hardly think his services will be of any use. When the case develops so rapidly there is little chance of recovery. Besides, I know how to apply the usual remedies. Our people are so poor as a class that it is necessary we should be physicians to the body as well as the soul.”

“Still, I would go with you, Father. I must learn the needed lesson. This terrible thing is closing in upon us more and more. Why is it, Father?”

“War! War! primarily my son. This vile disease used to be the aftermath of battlefields in the old countries. Here it is the Independence Day disease; but the brute-elements are being let loose all over the world. They are growing too strong for us and we cannot hold them in leash,” whispered Father Ferrill as he opened the Widow Pressneau’s door noiselessly, pushed Dr. Normander in

before him and shut it quickly. His next movement was to pull down the shades through which the hot July sun was streaming. The dexterity with which he performed the three essentials for the comfort of the patient afflicted with this fell disease was admirable, although it was of no use for the moment as the boy was in the throes of that species of mortal agony, before which the curtain is drawn all too often for the enlightenment of suffering humanity.

“Father! Father! what have I done that my child should be so tormented?” cried the mother as she sank down by the bedside with broken sobs and words of supplication.

The priest took her place and waited with crossed hands through convulsion after convulsion, each of which was more terrible than the former one until nothing worse could be imagined. The muscles were strained to their utmost tensity. The body was bent like a bow but the most unbearable of all was the drawn face and the awful semblance of laughter that has been fitly called *risus sardonicus*. Dr. Normander closed his eyes and the mother cried out again in direst agony:

“Father! Father! what have I done that the evil spirits should take possession of my child?”

“Poor mother, thou hast been more sinned against than sinning I perceive; but hasten now and get hot cloths ready for the next attack; for there will doubtless be another and another, although his face shows signs of relaxing and he may be able to speak to thee and answer thy questionings.”

The mother went out and the boy lay as still as a stone under the Priest’s treatment for a few moments. Then he gave a great gasp and cried:

“Mother! Mother! Forgive me before I go. I minded the rich man. I should have minded thee. The rich man said the little play-pistol would not hurt me. It did hurt me, mother. It was a foul fiend.” He took the cross in his little wounded hand and clasped it like a vise against his heart and even into the tender flesh until it left its mark there. His lips twitched and quivered as though they were being drawn again into the awful laugh.

“*Risus sardonicus*,” cried the priest, “Jesus have mercy!”

“Jesus have mercy!” cried the mother.

“Jesus have mercy!” whispered Dr. Normander.

“Jesus have mercy!” cried the boy in a note of triumph. The strained lips relaxed and parted with a heavenly smile and the widow’s child had gone to meet the widow’s God.

CHAPTER V.

INSANITY OR EXILE.

FOR weeks and weeks after the terrible death of Laurens Cornwallis, the life of his sister Ruth hung on a thread. She was delirious. She cried out incessantly. “O Laurens! Laurens! beautiful angel! Come back! come back! Speak to me Laurens! Kiss me, Laurens!”

They feared her brain was going.

“If we could only make her think he *had* come back,” said the perplexed doctor —“create a sort of counter delusion.”

They tried it each in turn with no effect—the mother at last.

“Oh, she does not even hear me,” sobbed the mother. “Her sense of hearing must be already gone, only her sight remains. Her eyes were fixed on the door in the far end of the room, as though she expected to see him come through that door, when she calls.”

This gave the doctor a new idea.

“Then we must *have* some one that looks like him come through that door, in response to her call—some one that knew him and loved him and would be in full sympathy with her in regard to his death.”

“Ralph Norwood!” exclaimed Mr. and Mrs. Cornwallis in the same breath.

“And he must have the kite in his hand,” said Mr. Cornwallis.

“Yes, and I must make him a George Washington cap and whole suit if necessary” said Mrs. Cornwallis. “Ralph is older but he is small of his age and Laurens was large. Besides he is resourceful. He might make himself look younger than he is.”

Ralph was sent for at once. He too, had been ill from the shock of Lauren’s death but he aroused himself and came to the rescue. He dressed himself in the George

Washington suit. He donned the *Can't-tell-a-lie cap* which Mrs. Cornwallis had made the crowning glory, by adding to it Lauren's beautiful curls, which had been clipped from his head by the thoughtful undertaker.

He took the kite in hand and waited by the door until Ruth called out:

"Laurens come back! Come back! Speak to me angel! kiss me!"

Then he opened the door and responded to the call. The effect was magical. She fancied it was Laurens. She talked and laughed and slept in that belief. When she awoke, she took her food and medicine from his hand. She did whatever he asked her to do. She was finally saved, brain intact.

But this was not the end of little Ruth's misery and the anxiety of her parents. She was in a state of nervous wreck that required fully as much watchfulness, if not quite so much solicitude as that of the mental stress. Sudden noises, especially those of an explosive nature, such as the firing of a gun or pistol, would cause a nervous shock, from which it would take days and often weeks to recover. But worse than all was her horror of Independence Day. She looked forward to its coming with a dread, akin to terror.

"O what *shall* we do now, Doctor? What *can* we do?" asked her mother.

"Take her away out of sight and sound of it," replied the doctor, "and give her immediate assurance that you will do so."

"But where to go, Doctor? This terrible thing is everywhere more or less."

"Out of the country. To Europe or Canada, where they don't pretend to have an Independence Day," replied the doctor, smiling grimly.

"O Doctor! What cruel mockery is this—this being compelled to go away from our home! It seems such a shame—a positive disgrace!"

"They are not to be weighed in the balance," said the doctor seriously. "It is a matter of life or death, nerve or no nerve, to your child. If you will begin promptly and continue to take her away every year as long as the present symptoms remain, she may get well in time. Otherwise I will not answer for the result. Another Independence Day as full of racket and accident as the last, would be likely to bring on a mental lapse, for which there would be no hope. The only really safe thing to do is to take a month's vacation—that is, go out of the country three weeks before Independence Day and stay until two weeks after.

That would cover the time which is usually seized upon by the independent and ignorant boys and hoodlums of the community, to put the rest of the people in chains and agony—or exile."

"O! O! Doctor! Is there no better way? Could we not go among them and talk to them and tell them just how it is with us and ask them to be quiet?"

The doctor shook his head. "I have tried that without effect more than once in the case of very sick patients. It will take years of talk and legislation and education to silence the loud-mouthed monster—and you can't wait for that."

"Lord help us to do it then and bring us out of it with health and strength to fight against this terrible evil!" sobbed Mrs. Cornwallis. "O, it seems to me there is no place in this world for the sick, the helpless, and the afraid."

"Not even in your beautiful new world," said the doctor. He was a German but he was honest and the reply struck home with double force. She held a long consultation with her husband that evening and they decided to carry out his instructions faithfully. Consequently every year before the Independence Day racket began they sought out a quiet spot on the Canadian border—or rather a place where the American citizen freighted with children and firecrackers was never known to come. It was not always an easy or an agreeable task, to find just such a place; but it had to be found, else the going away would be of no avail.

Ralph was invited to go with them at first and did go as a matter of course, until one fateful year when the parents suddenly awoke to the fact that Ralph was growing a mustache and Ruth was developing into a rather shy but pretty young maiden. The next year they went without him; and the next. Then the unexpected happened. Ruth was disinclined to go, to begin with; but the doctor shook his head and they went. They had been there only a few days, however, when the long avoided American family made a descent on the boarding house.

"Yes, here they are at last," said Mr. Cornwallis, as soon as he had given them a thorough looking over—"the pestiferous boys, the rackety firecrackers, the indulgent mamma and the blindly patriotic papa, if I mistake not. I fear we shall have to move on."

"No! no, papa! Let's stay. I'm sure I can endure it now. I'm so much better and perhaps we can talk to them and tell them about our experience with the dangerous things and make them more careful. Let's try it, papa. I hate the idea of running away from our own people. I begin to think it isn't quite right."

“It’s far safer to stay here than to go home,” remarked Mrs. Cornwallis, “where there are hundreds of armed boys to the four that are here.”

Mr. Cornwallis gave it up and they stayed.

Ruth lost no time in making the acquaintance of the American family, at least of Mrs. Bearington and the boys, nor any opportunity of impressing upon them the danger of playing with fireworks. She gave her own experience as proof. She told them of the terrible accidents that had happened in her own town and of her little brother’s mysterious death that had wrecked her health, broken her father’s and mother’s hearts and made them fugitives from home.

“Do you hear that, Robbie,” said Mrs. Bearington to her oldest son. “You know that mamma has always been afraid you would get hurt, handling those dreadful things.”

“Papa bought them for us and I want mine now,” said the boy bluntly. “I know how to handle them.”

“Have a care my boy. You may not know as much as you think you do. If you should have an accident, your papa would never buy any more for you, and mamma would never forgive herself,” said Mrs. Bearington in her soft-hearted, unreasoning way.

“But the accident!” gasped Ruth. “How can you risk it? It might be of the kind that could never be repaired—the loss of a hand or an eye!”

“Oh! dear, dear! it’s too horrible to think of,” exclaimed Mrs. Bearington, nervously.

“Perhaps if you should think of it, you would see your way out,” persisted Ruth. “There are so many beautiful things made for children now-a-days.” Then, she turned to the boys and asked:

“Can’t you tell me of anything you would like better than those evil looking, nasty smelling, dangerous fire crackers and things? Something that you could keep instead of burning up?”

The three older boys maintained a dubious silence while Teddy the youngest cried out: “O mamma! I’d rather have a bugle! A real nice big bugle!”

“He makes me think of little Laurens,” said Ruth turning to Mrs. Bearington

with a sob. “He asked mamma ‘why they didn’t have a bugle instead of a cannon on Schwarmer Hill,’ the very morning before he was killed.”

They looked at each other for a moment in sympathetic silence. Then Mrs. Bearington turned quite bravely to the boys.

“See here, boys, mamma is going to ask papa not to buy you any more fireworks. Mamma is going to hunt the city over next year and find you some things that you will like better—bugles! tambourines! trumpets! bicycles!”

CHAPTER VI.

THE FUNNY FOURTH RACKET ON ENGLISH SOIL.

RUTH hoped that her talk, painful though it had been to herself, would have a good influence with the Bearingtons. She would have been quickly undeceived, had she heard a conversation that occurred later on when Mr. Bearington came in from his “smoke walk,” as his wife called it.

“Papa,” said Mrs. Bearington, “I wish you hadn’t bought the fireworks! Miss Cornwallis has just been telling me the particulars of her little brother’s terrible death. I begin to be awfully worried for fear the boys will hurt themselves.”

“O nonsense, Tishy! You needn’t worry. I will attend to that racket. The Cornwallis’ are cranks on the subject, you may set that down. I have heard Cornwallis talk. He thinks because his little boy got killed other boys should be denied the privilege,” laughed Bearington.

“Privilege, papa!” gasped Mrs. Bearington, looking at him in a way as helpless and childish as her style of addressing him warranted.

“O, you never *can* take a good round joke, Tishy; but you can stop worrying and you must. You must remember that I paid for this vacation and I am bound you shall not take it out in worriment.”

“Perhaps you could dispose of the fireworks papa—then I could *not* worry about them.”

“No, he won’t!” shouted Robbie bristling up. “He bought them for us and we are going to have them.”

“Down there! Young America!” said Bearington. “And you Tishy! You forget that we are on English soil. There isn’t any demand here for Independence Day jubilators.”

“Nor for Fourth of July celebrations either, papa. There’s Colonel Jordan. I know he wouldn’t call for one.”

“He can’t help himself though. That’s where the fun will come in. I reckon we will teach this English boarding house that if they have us and our money, they will have to take us, Fourth of July racket and all.”

“But the Cornwallis’, papa. I know how I should feel if we should lose one of our boys in that fearful way.”

“That boy didn’t know how to handle fireworks, you bet,” put in Robbie.

“He may have been a natural born idiot for anything we know,” remarked Bearington. “He was too good and beautiful to live anyway, according to their account.”

“Papa, how *bu’ful* do I have to be to be too *bu’ful* to live?” asked little Teddy coming up and laying his curly head lovingly on his father’s knee.

“Like a lamb for the slaughter,” thought his mother. She broke out afresh:

“Powder and dynamite are always more or less dangerous, papa.”

“Never you mind, Tishy. They are safe enough if rightly handled; and right enough, too, when they are put to the right uses.”

“What’s the use of powder and die-a-mite except to celebrate the Fourth with, papa?” asked Joey.

“*Die-a-mite!* do you hear that Tishy?” laughed Bearington. “Well sonny, they are good to blast the rocks with and the English too and send them flying up hill and down, if they should meddle with our affairs as they did before the revolutionary war and have tried to do, two or three times since.”

“Keeo!” shouted Robbie. “Skippetty hop! Hoppetty skip! Bow-wow! Bow-wow!” In response to his call, the three other boys joined him and they went “skippetty hop” into the back yard to worry Colonel Jordan’s English terrier.

Query. Was it the inward cussedness of the boy nature that led them on to this species of brute torture, or was it their father’s injudicious talk?

Mr. Bearington had been all suavity when talking with Mrs. and Mr. Cornwallis about the coming celebration. He even intimated that they might go over to a neighboring island and have their little picnic all by themselves.

“One day is enough for my boys,” he added. “I make them do all their

celebrating on the identical day. I don't believe in drizzling along in such matters more than in others."

Whereupon Mr. and Mrs. Cornwallis thanked him heartily and rested in the belief that he would not allow his boys to indulge in any annoying demonstrations on their daughter's account, even during Independence Day; but they like Ruth were greatly mistaken. The day had scarcely dawned when the racket began; and a big racket it was for four small boys to make. But that was not all of it. When they sat down to breakfast they found a firecracker under each plate and the boys were not in evidence, which showed that more mischief was brewing.

"The good for naught imps!" exclaimed the landlady as she cleared away the stuff; "they have been trying to be funny all the morning—throwing torpedoes under my feet and snapping firecrackers in my face. I am glad I don't live in an independent country if that's the independence of it."

There were twenty firecrackers, one for each boarder. She put them into the cupboard to get them out of the way and thanked her stars that she had been able to do so before the rest of her boarders came in—especially Colonel Jordan who inclined to be violent if anything went amiss. He had cursed her roundly once upon a time, because a spider had invaded his napkin. What would he have said had he found that insolent reminder of the American victory over the English, underneath his plate?

Colonel Jordan was the last to make his appearance. He was in a ferocious mood, but he softened a little as he took his accustomed seat opposite Ruth.

"A beautiful day Miss Cornwallis—that is right here, but I perceive they are having a right smart thunder shower on the American side. A volcanic or patriotic eruption so to speak. The killed and wounded will not all be brought in before tomorrow, possibly."

Ruth made no response. Mr. and Mrs. Cornwallis looked anxious. The Colonel felt that something was amiss.

"Beg pardon, this ridiculous Independence Day racket has cost me my morning's nap; but I ought not to be in a rage I suppose. I fancy you have not enjoyed it either, Miss Cornwallis, although it is one of your country's choicest exports."

Ruth began to show signs of nervous distress and Mr. Cornwallis hastened to

explain as well as place and time permitted, their attitude on the subject and the sad experience that made them fugitives from home. He closed with a significant look at Ruth, which would have been sufficient for a more impressionable man —a civilian rather than a soldier. Not so, however, with Colonel Jordan. He thought it was the mother's health that had been effected by the loss of her son, as very naturally it would be. There was nothing in that which appealed especially to his sympathies. Besides, his sympathies were tough. He turned to Ruth as though he had discovered a good joke.

"Beg pardon, Miss Cornwallis; but it would appear from latest advices that the American victory over England is being turned into a most ridiculous defeat. If the Mother Country had only known her wayward children's fondness for the firecracker and toy pistol all that she would have needed to have done when they turned against her, would have been to have furnished them with a generous supply of those dastardly things and they would have destroyed themselves."

"The London Pyrotechnist is shrewd enough to take advantage of the situation," laughed Admiral Larkins. "He has surrounded the country with his manufacturing tents and is said to have sold $10,000,000 worth of Independence Day fireworks to Americans to celebrate their victory over the English, last year —American casualties for that day footed up to about 3,500 in killed and wounded. It's a good scheme from a financial point of view."

THE FUNNY FOURTH RACKET ON ENGLISH SOIL.

Another Englishman who had still less understanding of the Cornwallis matter, but was aware of the annual higeria of Americans to foreign lands to escape the noise and danger of their national day, remarked: "It's a providential thing though for the Americans of today that their forebears did not push their victorious hordes up to the north pole, else they would have no near-by place to fly to, while their own country is being made too hot for them."

How long this conversation would have continued it is difficult to say had it not been for the distressful barking of Colonel Jordon's English terrier, who rushed in with a long string of firecrackers tied to his tail.

His first dash was toward Ruth, probably for the reason that she had taken his

part one day when the boys were tormenting him. He would have leaped into her lap had she not warded him off with the vacant chair by her side. He leaped into the chair, however, then across the table toward Colonel Jordon and down on the floor and off to the lower end of the dining room where the landlady was cowering in mortal terror, as well she might; for she had on a thin muslin dress and was completely cornered. By that time the firecrackers were in flame and the result was inevitable. They set fire to the poor woman's dress and pandemonium reigned. The boarders rushed to the rescue with cups of tea and coffee, pitchers of water and milk, rugs and top-coats. She was finally saved with only one leg burned; Colonel Jordon's dog was so badly hurt that he had to be shot to end his misery. Little Teddy Bearington who came in unobserved while the confusion was at its height and was trampled down by hurrying feet, barely escaped death by suffocation.

But the Bearington boys had enjoyed their celebration. Mr. Bearington paid the bill the next day and the whole posse beat a retreat across the Canadian border. They showed signs of disorganization during the remainder of the heated season; but when the fall political campaign came on, they were in high feather again—at least Mr. Bearington and the three older boys. Hardly a day passed that they did not tell how they had celebrated the Nation's Glorious Day on English soil.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DOUBLE ENGAGEMENT.

RUTH and Ralph were alone on the cosy little veranda of the Cornwallis cottage. It was a beautiful evening in June—full of moonlight, star-light and rose-fragrance and so heavenly still that they could have heard the beatings of each other's hearts; and very likely they did, for they were sitting side by side in lover-like proximity. There was an indefinable but easily understood something about their movements and attitude that said as plainly as words could have told it: "We are engaged and are going to be married before many a day goes by."

"O, these perfect June evenings!" exclaimed Ruth in a voice of soft rapture. "But how swiftly they are flying! Only think of it, Ralph! a week from next Tuesday will be the Fourth of July! The dreadful, horrible Fourth! I heard the first shot today. It went straight through my heart. O, the fright and agony! How I wish it were all over with and yet I dread its coming as I would that of a monstrous bloodthirsty army."

"Where shall we go to be rid of it, Ruth, and celebrate our own independence? To Star Lake, Moon Island or Canada?"

"Never again to Canada, Ralph! I haven't told you our experience there last year —that is, not all of it."

"You told me about the Bearington boys and the fireworks that were not funny."

"Yes, but I did not tell you the talk at the breakfast table before the fracas began. Papa begged me not to talk about it, but I feel as though I *can* tell you now, and will."

"Of course you can, and you will tell me everything," laughed Ralph. "We are all one now, that makes a delightful difference." But she had no sooner told him of Jordan's joke at their expense than he exclaimed angrily:

"Ridiculous defeat! O the brute! How I wish I had been there to answer him. He insulted you and the country at the same time."

“But you were not there, Ralph, and I don’t know but I’m glad of it; for there is something ridiculous about it. Only think of it, Ralph! Fighting for freedom—and then deliberately turning the day that commemorates it over to careless children and irresponsible criminals, and flying away from it as though a legion of devils were let loose! You see, Ralph, it hurt me more to think that it really was ridiculous, than because Colonel Jordon said it was; but I had to keep it to myself.”

“You could have talked to me, if I had been there, to your heart’s content, you know you could, Ruth, and I would have talked to the insolent Colonel to *my* heart’s content. He must have had the epidermis of a rhinocerous or he would have known better.”

“Papa had a long talk with him after the Bearingtons left. I don’t know what was said, but his manner changed entirely and for the worse—that is, I mean, he was more disagreeable to me than before—in a way—”

“I understand,” said Ralph in a passion. “He pitied you and made love to you! The impudent rascal!”

“Yes, Ralph; but I will say this to his credit. He had the good sense to retreat when he saw that his attentions were disagreeable.”

“Humph!” said Ralph.

Ruth knew that “*humph*” was a sign that his jealous wrath was effervescing and that she might continue to pour out the feelings which had been shut away from him for three distressful years. She had a whole heart full of them now.

“Do you know, Ralph, I begin to think there’s no use of going away any more to get rid of the horrible Fourth. It goes with me or comes to me, wherever I go—this terrible monster to which my little brother was sacrificed. Every year counts thousands of victims and every year more and more! O, how many homes will be made desolate on the day that is fast coming! How many beautiful and precious mothers’ sons will be defaced or disfigured for life? Between three and four thousand was the death and accident roll last year. How many will it count this year and who and how many of our little circle will be among the hurt or slain?”

“The Lord only knows, Ruth; but I mean to know something about the why and wherefore of the increase of the Independence Day death roll in *this* town. I have

been looking it up and it is something appalling."

"O Ralph! Ralph! let us stay right here then and see if we can't do something to prevent it—something to stay this cruel, cruel slaughter. It seems to me we might talk to the boys and watch over them and save now and then one at least."

"You are right, dear. We *could* do it if we could go to work hand in hand, with nobody to hold us back. It *would* be better and braver to stay here and wrestle with the monster than to try to hide away from it; and please God we *will* do it—after, you know when. We can't hope to accomplish much if we go to work single-handed, eh? We will be doubly armed for it before another year comes around."

The hand that lay in his gave a quick pressure in response and he went on manfully:

"We have been fools and blind in this matter long enough. Something is going to be done about it before long. I have talked with a great many with regard to it since Lutie had his fingers shot off, and I have gathered some astonishing statistics—statistics that ought to set us to thinking and acting too."

"O Ralph! Ralph! Tell me all about it! Tell me everything! I will work for it night and day. Bless you, Ralph. O, how good it is to hear you say that we *can* do something and *will*."

Ruth was fairly wild with joy. She kissed his hand and cheek and brow, over and over again with a fervor that was new to him and very, very delightful. The betrothal kiss was nothing in comparison. Compliments on her grace and beauty had failed to call forth any such expressions of love.

"To begin with," he said at last, "I have found out that we have more Independence Day accidents in this town than in any other town of its size in the state. What do you think the reason is?"

"O! I know, Ralph. It's because Millionaire Schwarmer comes every Fourth and distributes a carload of fireworks. I know it is; and I believe he gave Laurens the package that cost him his life, though he tried to make it appear that he did not. How does he know who he gives to when he is distributing his death-dealers right and left!" sobbed Ruth.

"He doesn't know," said Ralph, "and he doesn't care or think about it; but he ought to be made to think. We know he gave Lutie the box of cartridges that tore

off his finger. He ought to have been prosecuted for it and I am going to tell him so some day. I am not afraid of his millions. The trouble with people here is that they have got in the habit of bowing down to him and worshipping him—the golden calf! and being a calf instead of a wise man he fancies that he owns us all—body and soul—and may do anything he chooses with us."

"I believe it, Ralph. He has taken it into his stupid head to pat my shoulder and call me Miss Pretty when he sees me of late."

Ralph was furious again and threatened dire things. After he was sufficiently molified Ruth continued seriously: "O Ralph! Ralph! How can a man of mature years—a man like Mr. Schwarmer—put such dangerous things into a boy's hands? If he were young and thoughtless and dazed by custom; but a man of his age and experience! How is it that this Independence Day saturnalia has been let to grow into such enormous proportions? If all the fiends of the lower regions had been employed to make a plan for the destruction of the youth of our land, they could not have done worse. Only think of it, Ralph, taking powder and dynamite, the most dangerous of all substances and making them into attractive forms for children to play with—play with as freely as though they were carts or doll babies! O! O! what are we coming to? What idiocy—worse than idiocy—how Satanic!"

"Yes, Ruth, and it does seem to be growing worse and worse every year—as though we were sinking down to the level of the brute. As though Satan had gotten a lease of a thousand years and was trying to see how many children he can destroy—yes, and young men, too; for there are the deadly games for the finish. Another century of such brutal sports and celebrations and there would not be a sound man left in the community. We would be as hideous as the brutal, battle-scarred Saracens. But I cannot think we shall have another century of it. The climax will come before that and there will be a turn in the right direction."

"What makes you think so, Ralph? As I see it we shall have no homes—sweet homes with happy healthy families. We shall have hospitals instead—hospitals and hospitals, full of the crazed, crippled, idiotic and beastly. If anything can be done to prevent this dire calamity, why don't we begin at once."

There was silence for a few moments. The full moon sent its searching rays through the veranda vines. The stars twinkled brightly and a pair of eyes brighter than stars were looking into Ralph's face appealingly.

"Let us begin now, Ralph—this very Fourth and see if we can't do something to

save our boys from this terrible King Schwarmer. He's a worse king for us than old King Herod was for Israel. Let's dethrone him."

"We will," said Ralph in a voice of quiet determination. "You have given me an inspiration. The time is ripe for action. Our new President is a Golden Rule man. A professed follower of the original Golden Rule Mayor. He comes of the same good old Quaker stock. He sings the same songs. He has the Golden Rule in a frame of silver, ornamented with apples of gold, hung up in his office, and he practices that rule as nearly as any man can."

"Let us go and see him, Ralph; he will help us if he believes in that rule."

"Yes, Ruth, and if we can manage to steer our own Fourth of July craft so no one is hurt this year, we shall have done something that will make you happier than you have ever been since Lauren's death; shall we not?"

"Yes! A thousand times, yes, Ralph."

"One thing more, Ruth—one more sacrifice for the cause. Can you guess what it is?"

"Tell me, Ralph! Tell me quickly."

"We must be married before that frightful Independence Day monster comes. We must be married at once."

"Go ask papa and mamma, Ralph. They are in the west room with Dr. Muelenberg. I know what they are talking about and I want you to promise me one thing."

"A thousand if you like, Ruth."

"No, Ralph, only this one. Promise *me* that you will not promise *them* to take me abroad for a wedding trip."

"Remember," she added, as she turned laughingly away, "if you do I will break the engagement."

CHAPTER VIII.

DR. MUELENBERG’S PRESCRIPTION.

AS RALPH entered the west room, Mr. Cornwallis was saying:

“You see how it stands, Doctor. We can’t afford to go to Europe; and Canada, the poor man’s abroad, is no longer effective.”

“Here’s Norwood,” said the Doctor, looking quizzically at the young man. “There was a time when he helped us out splendidly with Miss Ruth.”

“Yes, indeed,” said Mrs. Cornwallis, “and she has always felt so grateful and wanted to do something to repay you, Ralph. She thinks now if she had been here instead of in Canada when your little brother was hurt, she might have entertained him and kept him out of Schwarmer’s way.”

“Bless her heart; but I am the one that ought to have kept him out of the way of that superb idiot,” said Ralph with a glow of feeling. He was thinking that Ruth’s objection to going away might be grounded in a desire to be near himself, although he was aware that she had not been conscious of it, so quick had it been to expand and reach out into more generous motives.

“Now she thinks she might be able to save others by getting up picnics and things of that sort;” said Mr. Cornwallis shaking his head, “but we fear she is not strong enough for that yet—that it would bring on the old terror and do no manner of good. She doesn’t realize what it would be to fight against such a custom—a custom that was inaugurated when our New World began. It has grown to be a monstrous evil, but like many another serpent it has become so mixed up with business interests that it will be almost impossible to eliminate it. I have talked with more than one manufacturer, feeling there was no other way to rid ourselves of the vile Fourth of July abominations than by stopping their production and importation, but they will not give in. They will employ noted scientists to analyze their wares with the understanding that no germs of *tetanus* are to be found. They will throw dust into the eyes of the governing powers. They resent fiercely the least intimation that they are responsible for the killing

or maiming of three or four thousand boys per year. They charge it to parents and teachers. One man swore at me when I approached him on the subject and asked if I didn't know that there were danger traps all over God's world and that a boy should not be let to plunge into the river until he knew how to swim. You see how it stands, Doctor—the powers of light against the powers of darkness. It's a thing for the strong hand of government to take hold of instead of our frail little Ruth. It will take a long pull, a strong pull and a pull all together to accomplish anything of consequence. You remember the efforts made last year. They began with the Decoration Day slaughter. The 'Divine alarm' was sent all over the country and yet the list of the dead and hurt was beyond all precedent."

"And this good old Quaker state," replied the Doctor, "consecrated by the good old saint, William Penn, exceeds all others in Independence Day accidents, and this town appears to be the storm center of the whole. The gentle '*Friends*' he left to carry on his work must be asleep and the fierce spirit of the '*Lord's Committee of Colonies*' must be awake and armed with the explosives which he tabooed with such good effect. The cases of *tetanus* I had here last year nearly drove me mad. I wanted to throw anti-toxin to the winds and turn mayor or missionary myself and take this beastly and idiotic custom by the horns. Call it patriotism! It's bad enough to bring children into this dirty world, but to furnish them with instruments to introduce the worst kind of dirt—the baccili of *tetanus* into their sweet young flesh is deviltry or insanity, at least. It's of no consequence so far as results go whether the wads in the blank cartridge are *boiled* or not. It is a fiend incarnate. No instrument could be more cunningly devised for the injection of poison into the human system. The flat head is like the head of a serpent. The small boy gives it a starter. It hisses and carries everything before it—pieces of flesh or clothing, soiled or unsoiled, but usually soiled. It buries and burns them deep in the flesh. The gash shuts up and they are left to fester there. Mien Gott! These are the things that are invented, manufactured and sold for innocent boys to play the deadly game of patriotism with. They are good for no other thing—they nor the toy pistol; and the wretch who invented them ought to be put into a house of correction and be kept there and preached to until he learns to set his wits at better things. The people ought to see to these matters. There are laws and laws shut up in your statute books. They want the spirit of flame put into them and the spirit of enforcement back of them."

"I was advised when I first came to this country, to take lessons in American patriotism. Mien Gott! The lesson I have learned is that missionaries are needed

in all the fields around about. I should say let Miss Ruth turn missionary—that is, if she has no longer a fear of that dreadful work."

"Her fear of going away seems to be greater than the fear of the Fourth itself," said Mrs. Cornwallis. "That's the perplexing thing about it. That's why we doubt the expediency of going at all. Whether the evil we fly to is greater than the evil we fly from, is the question. She is all we have left and we have been so very, very careful—afraid to mention the subject almost."

"I have been expecting this puzzle in Miss Ruth's case and I incline to take it as a healing sign," said Dr. Muelenberg looking keenly at Ralph. "To engage in the work of stamping out this monstrous horror would be far better than ominous silence and the annual flight from it, for you, for her, for the people of the town and for the world, no doubt! But it will not do for Miss Ruth to go out alone. She must have some one with her, in heart and hand."

"Here am I," exclaimed Ralph, rising to the occasion and making his errand known. Mrs. Cornwallis was affected to tears when he promised to try to be a good son. She was thinking of her beautiful boy. Mr. Cornwallis gave a dignified consent and Dr. Muelenberg grasped his hand vigorously, saying:

"O! I suspected you, young man! I suspected you and I am glad my suspicions have proven true. I believe it will be for the betterment of all concerned."

And so it happened that Ruth's engagement proved to be a relief in more ways than one. It was a relief to herself because she could talk freely to Ralph. She could let her enthusiasm have full rein on this subject without arousing his fears for her sanity of mind. Any nervous symptoms that she might betray in so doing would not cause him the undue fright and solicitude that they did her father and mother. He would know that they meant she must be doing something for the cause so near her heart. It was certainly a relief to her father and mother, who had begun to admit at least to themselves (especially after Ruth's disaffection for Canada) that the annual going away from home was taking the form of a cruel necessity. Yes, and it continued to be a relief in spite of the little flurry into which they were thrown a few evenings later on when Ruth and Ralph appeared before them hand in hand with the Rev. Dr. Normander smiling benignly in the background. They knew what it meant, although there were no wedding garments and the wedding feast was not prepared. Ruth pleaded that there was important work to be done. Ralph declared that he was "following Doctor Muelenberg's prescription in not allowing her to go forth single-handed."

It was enough. The two hands were joined then and there and before another morning dawned the bride and bridegroom had planned their Independence Day campaign.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BRIDAL TRIP.

WITH a roll of statistics in hand and Ruth on his arm Ralph proceeded to the Golden Rule President's office the next morning after the marriage.

As they entered the hall they heard some one singing in a deep, melodious voice.

"That's the President," whispered Ralph, crushing Ruth's arm to his side. "It's his morning matin. I think he composes it as he goes along. Sometimes he sings the Golden Rule mayor's songs."

"Did you ever hear anything so quaint and touching, Ralph?"

"Never, Ruth, outside of '*Friends' Meeting*,' where I used to go with Grandma when I was a kid. They sang their sermons and sometimes they were very touching."

"O, listen! He's singing plainer now, Ralph!"

"As long as you please, dear," said Ralph. The rascal was only too glad to listen, with Ruth's pretty head leaning against his shoulder and her fair cheek within kissing distance, while the following words came rolling forth in a heartful voice:

> "Co-workers with God! What a mission for men.
> What a promise! What glory awaits us then,
> When once we awake and our destiny see!
> The angels I'm sure might envious be.
> All hail to God's workers! Our race they will save
> From the foul name of 'master,' or 'idler' or 'slave.'"

"O, I like that, Ralph," whispered Ruth, after the singing had ceased. "It sounds so hearty and helpful—better than cathedral music for poor mortals like ourselves. I know he will help us. Let us go in now."

Ralph was in no hurry; but Ruth pressed him eagerly forward. She would not

wait even for the proffered kiss. She rapped at the door.

“No need of ceremony here,” laughed Ralph. He opened the door and they walked in.

The President was at his desk swinging his pen as vigorously as he had been using his voice a moment before. He did not stop until he came to a period. Then he arose quickly and extended both hands.

“Glad to see you, Norwood, and twice glad to see—”

“My wife,” stammered Ralph—the words were new to him and the sound was new to Ruth. They both blushed and the President asked as he shook a hand of each:

“How long since, Norwood? I didn’t know you were married. It must be newly. I see you haven’t gotten used to saying ‘*my wife*?’”

“Only since last evening,” replied Ralph.

“And you brought her to see me early this morning,” said the President, slapping his shoulder while he retained Ruth’s little hand in his powerful grasp. “Bless you! You are a good fellow, Norwood. You are giving me a rare treat. It’s seldom a man brings his wife to call on me and never a newly-wedded one. I like the idea, though. It shows you are thinking of others’ pleasure as well as your own. That’s the right kind of love to have even in the beginning.”

“She chose it for her wedding trip,” laughed Ralph confusedly. Then he recovered himself and added seriously: “She was very anxious to see you and speak with you, and she would not wait a moment longer.”

“Come and sit down,” said the President. “We will talk. We will reason together if need be.”

After they were seated Ruth took a little miniature from her pocket and handed it to him.

“Please look at the picture so you will understand exactly how I feel and why I appeal to you,” said Ruth.

“That’s right! just right! People don’t half understand each other. That’s the reason why they often seem so hard and unsympathetic.” Then he put on his glasses and looked at the picture.

“What a beautiful face! How spiritual! It almost seems as though I had seen one that looked a little like it.” He gave her a keen glance.

She shook her head. “You never saw him surely—my beautiful little brother Laurens Cornwallis. He died seven years ago this Fourth of July—Papa and Ralph and Dr. Muelenberg found him lying alone in the woods on the river bank, all torn and mangled with fireworks. It was a dreadful sight and an awful mystery! but probably you never heard of it.”

“I was abroad then but it strikes me that I read of some such accident. Probably an outline of it and that there was something wrong about it; but I want to hear more. I want to hear all about the wrong things that have been, or are being done in this town. My belief is that private wrongs are too often hushed up. They ought to be talked about in the open, as a rule, and even where they are of a private nature they should be talked of in the right way and to the right persons.”

Thus encouraged, Ruth told more fully than she had ever done before, the effect of her brother’s death on herself—of the visions she had when the brain fever was at its height—of the colossal shadow of Millionaire Schwarmer looming into the sky scattering implements of death and destruction everywhere—of the white-winged figure of her brother flying along with the upward look, toward a pit of writhing, fiery, serpents—how she fancied that she ran after him and really did call and call for him to come back; and how Ralph came instead and made her think he was Laurens and the delusion saved her.

“And so you have married your delusion. Bless your heart, you have done just right,” laughed the President, but there was a suspicion of tears in his eyes and Ruth went on:

“I was only eleven years old then. My brain was saved, but I was a physical wreck. Year after year for seven years papa and mamma took me to Canada to save me from the horror of our National Day! Only think of that. Flying away from it and trying to hide my fears of it. You are right about ‘*speaking out*.’ I think now if I had been encouraged to speak of it freely and do something to remedy it, I need not to have gone away, at least, so many times; but poor mamma and papa! They were so broken down they couldn’t bear to talk about it —papa especially; but I know now that it would have been better for him if he had. His hair was a beautiful brown when little Laurens died, but now it’s as white as snow! And there are others that ought to speak out plainly. There have

been a great many accidents here since Mr. Schwarmer's advent. None of them have been quite so bad and mysterious as my little brother's, but they have been too bad to pass by and have been increasing every year. Ralph will show you that it is so."

After the statistics were read and commented upon, Ruth broke out: "It's coming again. It's almost here. We know dreadful things will happen if we don't watch and watch and do everything we can to prevent them and stir everybody up to do the same. You can help us, I know you can."

"Bless your heart! That's just what I'm here for, to help everybody. I can help you stir up the people. I will call a mass meeting for this very evening, and you and your delusion will be there in the front row—and the curtains will all be torn away from this beastly Fourth of July business. He will read the figures and you will tell your story and encourage every hurt soul to do likewise. This is what I believe in. What I don't believe in, is *forcing* people to do things. But I *do* believe in warming them up to do right things. I don't believe in masterings, bossings, tie-ups or hold-ups; but I do believe in explainings, urgings and entreatings."

"The Rev. Dr. Normander tried the gentler method with Schwarmer at the time of Lauren's death," said Ralph, "and he declared that Independence Day was a sacred day and that he had as good a right to distribute free fireworks on that day as a minister had to distribute free religious tracts on the Lord's Day, or words to that effect."

"O the idiot!" exclaimed the President. "I would *not* punch his head and make more of an idiot of him; but if I could get my eye on his free fireworks I would destroy them as I would a nest of rattlesnakes. I would let him see that I know the difference between good and evil—between God and the devil, by an illustrative example."

CHAPTER X.

A PUBLIC MEETING—STATISTICS AND RESOLUTIONS.

EARLY in the afternoon there was a big poster on the Town Hall, with a proclamation, or rather, invitation from the President, asking “the citizens one and all, without distinction of sex, race or color to assemble together in order to discuss plans for the saving of life, limb and property during the forthcoming celebration of the Nation’s birthday.”

They came—old men and young men, women and girls. The hall was packed with an expectant crowd. The President opened the meeting by saying:

“Dear Friends and Townsmen:

“I did not invite you here to listen to a speech. I don’t believe in cornerings of any kind and surely not in cornering anybody and talking him to death. I invited you expecting you would talk to me and each other. I am a new man in civic affairs; but I don’t want to stay new. I want to get at the heart of the interests of this town. I did not come among you to make millions. Like my brother mayor over in Ohio, I should not know what to do with a million of money; but unlike him I am not afraid I shall ever be a millionaire (applause). But I begin to fear that I have neglected my civic duties. You know I was averse to having the yoke of office put upon me. Now I thank you for your kindly insistance. I have had proof this very day that the yoke is good for me and may prove to be good for the people of the town also (cries of ‘why’ and ‘how’).

“Before I tell you why or how I want to give thanks right here before you all to one who is not here—one who has crossed over—my dear Quaker mother, who taught me the Golden Rule and how to apply it. I loved that rule, but I hesitated about putting it up in the office, just as my brother mayor hesitated about putting it up in his manufacturing establishment. I had very much the same feeling about it, but I conquered it, thank God! It resulted in this meeting (cries of ‘hear!’ ‘hear!’)

“Yes, you shall hear. I don’t believe in keeping matters of this kind veiled. Early this morning a young woman came to my office. She brought no axe to grind but she brought what was infinitely better, a heart full of love and solicitude for the youth of this town. Years ago her little brother had fallen a victim to a terrible and mysterious Fourth of July accident, and she wanted to do something to save others from a like fate. She thought that if I believed in the Golden Rule I would help. God bless her.” (Cries of “God bless her!” “God bless her!”)

The President wiped his eyes and continued: “Yes, God bless her! She brought no axe to grind but she brought her husband with statistics to prove that this town has more Independence Day accidents than any town of its size in the state.” (Cries of “shame on the town.”)

“Yes, shame on the town and every individual of the town—especially those who profess to represent it. I am ashamed of myself—mortally ashamed that I have let such a monster grow and fatten right under my nose, without doing a thing to prevent it. I don’t know how the rest of you will feel about it, but I feel that I have very little excuse for my stupidity in this regard; for the same mother that taught me the Golden Rule also taught me that war and its instruments and all its vain-glorious celebrations such as our Independence Day has grown to be, are wrong and that we should lose no opportunity of speaking and acting against them.

“She taught me all that and I accepted it or thought I did. I proclaimed myself to be a man of peace, an enemy to cannons, battle-ships, swords, guns, pistols and all the implements made for the killing of men; while I have had nothing to say against the little murderous, viperous implements that are put into the hands of innocent and ignorant boys.” (Cries of “hear!” “We are all in the same boat!”)

“Then let us get out of the boat and go to work in earnest to destroy the evil, root and branch. There is nothing more sure than that this Fourth of July slaughter is a branch of war—a terribly crooked branch and a poison one—one that can be easily made to grow into another deadly Upas tree. We have all heard of that exasperating old Upas the very fibre of which if woven into a garment produces a constant itching to the wearer. The same thing happens to the small boy who indulges in Independence Day customs too freely. He gets an itching for war and brutal sports. Ralph Norwood will now give you the statistics of our annual Independence Day slaughter for the last ten years, which will show you, I trust, into what a fatal fetichism we are rapidly descending.”

Ralph came forward with an immense roll which he accidentally let slip. As it trailed on the stage there were whispers of excitement from all parts of the house, such as “See.” “See.” One rough fellow blurted out:

“That’s all right, Norwood, let’s have it sled length.”

“The first accident on his record was at the laying of the Corner Stone of the Schwarmer mansion. He explained that he had begun there because the disasters that had occurred previous to that date had not been noticeably large. On that eventful day Mr. Schwarmer had come from the city and brought a carload of fireworks, cannon included. His hostler was killed while firing off the cannon. There were several minor accidents the same day. But little account was made of them in face of the greater accident. I believe one of the boys who had his fingers shot off is in the hall now. If so will he kindly raise up his maimed hand in proof of the statement?”

The hand was raised and sighs of pity were heard from various parts of the house.

“The next year the worst accident was caused by a boy who threw a bunch of firecrackers at a horse. It ran away throwing out a mother and child. The child was killed and the mother’s back almost broken. She lingered until the next Fourth and died in a paroxysm of fear, piteously begging to have the terrible fireworks stopped. I see that Dr. Muelenberg is here. We would like to hear his testimony.”

The doctor arose promptly and confirmed Ralph’s statement. He also said “that in his opinion there should be no temporizing with this matter. Everybody knew that explosives were dangerous, especially those that were gotten up on purpose to explode and that they should never be put into the hands of the young or ignorant or evil disposed.” He added sarcastically:

“There is no need of appointing a lumbering committee to go around the world and investigate the injurious effect of powder and dynamite on the human system. It is well known that a very small quantity of either is sufficient to put a boy’s eye out, tear off his fingers or produce one of the most horrible diseases, lockjaw—a disease which boasted antitoxin fails to cure in nine cases out of ten. I don’t see how any man in his right senses would dare to put such explosives into a young boy’s hands. Surely such a man must be afflicted with what the Germans call ‘*Precocious Imbecility*.’ Permitting boys to kill themselves and each other is almost worse than they do in Germany. Boys there are carefully

protected until they are old enough to serve some purpose or to be killed in the service of the King, while the American small boy has almost no protection and does not seem to be reared for any purpose unless it is to be killed in the service of the King of Commerce. I speak advisedly for I perceive that he is already being caught in the net-work of at least two great business interests—those of Pyrotechnics and Antitoxin, to say nothing of the lesser interests of hospital nurses and doctors. What will come next to entangle him and hold him there it were vain to forecast. As to the doctors I am one of them, and ought to know what I am talking about. I know it's money in my pocket to have the beastly thing go on; but I hope you will believe me when I say that I don't want it to go on." (Cries of "Yes!" "Yes.")

"I came to this country straight from the German University, with high hopes, but I have had to let them down fully half way. Not quite down to the lethargic German level but lower down than I could possibly have imagined: for what do I see, in this new-born land? A nation of freemen, courting self-destruction! Arming their ignorant young boys and hardened criminals against themselves! What do I see the next day and the next after the glorious Independence Day of which I heard so much in my own country? I see the dead, the mutilated, the dying, the weeping mothers and trembling sisters! I landed in New York the last days of beautiful June eager to grasp my brother practitioners by the hand and help them to make this people as strong and healthy as they were prosperous and free. But *what* did I hear in this free land? A voice from the high seat of a great City Government saying: 'Prepare the way! Prepare the way! (Not for the "Prince of Light") but for the prince of darkness, death, din and disorder! Stand by with lint, bandages and antitoxin! Have an ambulance within call; for the prince that rules this day is sure to leave hosts of wounded and dying in his track.' When I stood still and asked why they allowed this thing to be, they looked fierce at me and warned me to take lessons in American patriotism. Certainly '*precocious imbecility*' must be at the bottom of this whole business."

Dr. Muelenberg sat down amidst a storm of applause and Ralph continued:

"The next year a terrible accident occurred and a very mysterious one. A beautiful boy of eight years was brought home with his clothes burned off and his face scarred and torn beyond recognition. Nobody ever knew to a certainty where he got the supply of fireworks which caused his death. His parents certainly did not give them to him. The father is in the house now and will no doubt tell you so if you should desire to know."

Cries of “yes, yes, yes, let the father speak!” were heard on all sides.

Mr. Cornwallis turned pale and hesitated.

“O! do speak father,” whispered Ruth, who was sitting by his side in the front row. “If you don’t *I must*, but I had rather *you* would speak. I know it would do you good. Tell them just how you feel about it. You may be the means of saving some other boy’s life.”

Ralph waited serenely. He knew well enough what Ruth was saying, although he could not hear her; for they had talked the matter over and she had promised to be as near as possible, to spirit him on and urge her father to speak instead of speaking herself.

He was so elated with the consciousness of the one presence that he hardly realized that her father was on his feet until his agonized voice rang out:

“Yes, it is as Mr. Norwood has said. My boy was brought home unrecognizable beyond any words of mine to describe—as though all the agencies of hell had been employed to hurt and disfigure his little body. His once fair face was so gored with powder and blotched with colored fires, that not a vestige of likeness remained.”

Mr. Cornwallis paused and closed his eyes. The room was deathly still—as still as though the audience had been actually looking at little Laurens’ mutilated face. His wife clasped his hand and Ruth whispered: “Have courage, Father! Have courage!”

Then he went on more calmly than before:

“We never knew where he got the fireworks. They must have been given to him; nor does it seem possible that one person could have given him all that he appeared to have had. Mr. Schwarmer distributed fireworks very freely that day but he insisted that he did not give any to Laurens and not enough to any one boy to injure himself with. My idea is that some one who was assisting Schwarmer in his distributions, must have given him some of the colored pieces intended for evening display; and that he was seized upon, or induced by other boys to go into the woods and stack them together, in order to have a big explosion, and that he was the victim of that explosion. Facts and circumstances have since come to light which have confirmed this belief. Schwarmer brought a lad with him from the city to help him celebrate. There were a great many

strange boys in town. They came from the surrounding country, walking in on the railroad tracks or rowed down the river in rickety boats. There was a rumor that one boat load of boys went over the falls and were drowned. Be that as it may, there were undoubtedly a large number of rough characters attracted to this place by Mr. Schwarmer's free distribution of fireworks, and by the alluring advertisements that appeared in all the country newspapers hereabouts, with regard to it."

Mr. Cornwallis paused again, and again there was silence—the silence of expectancy. He went on:

"I have only one word more to say. The Lord help me to say it. I charge no man with the death of my son, still I believe we are all more or less to blame. We are surely to blame for allowing our National Day to be turned into a fiery Moloch for the sacrifice of the youth of our land. I see it as plain now as though it were written in letters of fire; and I ought to have seen it before. I ought to have been doing something to guard our little ones from this dreadful monster all these years while I have been mourning for my boy; but the misery was so great, the mystery so incomprehensible that I could not bear to think of it. It seemed as though I should go crazy. Besides I had great fears for my wife and still greater for my daughter. But all that has passed by, thank God, and I am ready now to join you in the good cause."

He sat down amidst cries of "Amen" and "Amen!"

Ruth leaned back in her seat and looked at Ralph radiantly. He continued his statistics:

"The next year two boys died of lockjaw, caused by the blank cartridges known to have been given them by Mr. Schwarmer. Several others lost fingers and eyes. If there are any of the latter present will they please make it manifest?"

Three young men rose to their feet. One was totally blind and the others partially.

Every eye in the hall was turned toward them and expressions of sympathy were heard from all sides. These object lessons had a good effect, but there was no time for more and Ralph hurried on with the statistics, confident that no more were needed. The list being completed, then came the question—Why was it that this town of Killsbury contributed the largest quota to the Fourth of July death roll of any town in the state? He sat down amidst cries of "why" and "shame on

the town."

"Yes, shame on the town," said a man rising promptly in his seat; "and shame on Mr. Schwarmer. I think we all know that he is responsible for the surplus of accidents in this town. That it is directly due to his distribution of free fireworks among the ignorant and irresponsible classes; for I happen to know that he doesn't always draw the line at the small boy. I saw him on one occasion throw boxes and boxes of firecrackers and cartridges among a crowd that had collected around, just as kings do money, and then stop and laugh to see the scrabbling after them.

"Still I suppose we ought to go slow in the matter of fixing the blame on Mr. Schwarmer—a valuable man and one who is supposed to have done or is expected to do so much for the town though I can't just tell what he has done—can't give the statistics, not having lived here always, as friend Pollock who sits by my side has. Perhaps he can tell you."

"I'll be plagued if I can think of a plaguy thing he's done for this town," said Pollock testily. "The fact is, he was born on the Town and our fathers fed him and clothed him and gave him a good send-off as soon as they saw that he had spunk enough in him to go. After he turned up in the Stock Exchange, he paid them off by tom-fooling their sons and taking every spare dollar from them to gamble with and lose for them and finally win back again into his own pocket. I know *that* well enough for I knew one of the tomfools. There were lots and lots of others, but they never told how they got sucked in. It leaked out little by little though and more than one spoke out plainly before they died; but it seems as though we were determined to be blind, deaf and dumb in the matter and all because he coddled us boys—giving us—what? Things to kill and disfigure ourselves with. You see this crippled hand, don't you?" he added, holding up his right hand, which had three stiff fingers. "Well I am indebted to *him* for that and I've cursed him for it many a time in secret, but I've never been honest enough to out with it 'til now. That's all he's ever done for me. I can't say as to the carpenters that built his house. I never heard that any of them got rich out of his carpentering though he built a big house for himself, then a big stable for his horses, and then an addition to the stable for more horses. All he's ever done for the town is to make a big show up on the hill, with his sky-scraper and sky rockets. He has never benefited the people except with the kind of benefit that a cat may get by looking at a king."

"That's about it," said a man in the back end of the hall, addressing his remarks

to those immediately about him. “There was a time when the boys could go a fishing in the river and get a nice mess of Bull-heads for Fourth of July dinner. But now he owns the river and all that’s in it. He had Ben Hawley arrested last Fourth for fishing in *his* river. Humph! It won’t be long before he will own us as well as the river. He thinks he has more right to us now than the Lord Almighty.”

“Keoo!” shouted an overgrown lad. “The river is his and all that’s in it. Let’s dump some more of his traps in the river. I’ll help, by gar, I will!” At that moment Father Ferrill came in and took the noisy boy in charge.

CHAPTER XI.

APPEAL INSTEAD OF PROHIBITION.

THE matter of responsibility for the increase or rather surplus of Independence Day accidents in the town of Killsbury, being settled the question was, what should be done about it?

Alderman Spofford proposed that “a paper—a smooth kind of paper such as Lawyer Rattlinger could write should be gotten up and sent to Mr. Schwarmer asking him to desist from distributing fireworks among the boys of the town. He said he would like to hear Rattlinger’s views on the subject.”

“As I understand it,” replied Rattlinger, “the main object of this meeting is to save our town from this year’s slaughter—a slaughter that will surely take place if free fireworks are distributed here as usual. The day is at hand. The peril is imminent. The question is what would we do if we had word that the king of Spain had sent arms and munitions of war to this place and that he would be here to-morrow to distribute them or arm the irresponsible classes?”

“We would say he was the devil in disguise and we would have none of his works,” said a white-haired man rising slowly in his seat. It was Philip Daycoy, the oldest man in town. He had the reputation of being one of the thirteen men who (painted and disguised as Indians) boarded the steamer, Sir Robert Peel; and yelling their war cry—“Remember the Caroline,” put the passengers to flight, plundered it and sent it ablaze down the river.

“My proposition is that we do just about as our forefathers and the Emperor of China did with the tea and opium that England tried to force upon them.”

There was a round of applause from the crowd that had gathered in the back part of the hall and cries of “how! how! Tell us just how, Patriot Daycoy, and by gorra, we’ll do it!”

Was the brutal instinct being stirred up? Philip Daycoy, who was sitting by the Reverend Dr. Normander, looked at him appealingly. Many a year had elapsed since he had thought of himself as a patriot or of the burning of the Sir Robert

Peel as a truly patriotic transaction.

“Help me out, for God’s sake, Doctor. I don’t like that brutal howling back there. There must be a *way* and a right *way* to do this thing—a way to do it without using muskets and bayonets and setting the cars on fire.”

The reverend gentleman arose quickly and stretched out his arms as though to still a rising tempest.

“Our aged brother Daycoy has authorized me to answer the question for him. I know perfectly well how he feels about matters of this kind. He doesn’t feel exactly as he did when he was young and inexperienced. He was only 18 years old when he boarded the English steamer, with his revengeful cry. He has learned a better and higher wisdom since then. He wants the right thing done every time. He believes in extreme measures in extreme cases but he does not believe in savage measures. That is, he does not propose that we should disguise ourselves as Indians, arm ourselves with muskets and bayonets and seize the patriotic stuff which Lawyer Rattlinger has likened very aptly to arms and munitions of war. To dress like a savage and use the war implements of the civilized man would be making a composite of the worst features of both. He simply means that we must act promptly and with sufficient energy to avert the horrible annual slaughter so near at hand. I am with him in heart and soul. I believe the shortest way would be the surest way and I, like the President, would take it if possible; and I believe we all would. For instance, if by some miraculous event, there should be a load of these dangerous explosives standing in the street as we go out of this hall I believe we would seize upon them with divine accord and proceed to throw them in the river or put them where they could never harm any one. But as nothing so miraculous is likely to occur I propose the next shortest way—that is that the common council take the matter in hand and act promptly and to the full limit of its power. My impression is that the City Fathers have a reserve of power vested in them for such emergencies, and my belief is that the great trouble with those in authority everywhere is that they fail to use the authority when it is needed the most. If I am wrong on these points I hope Lawyer Rattlinger will correct me.”

“You are right in the main,” replied Rattlinger. “The City Fathers have a reserve of power for just such cases and now is the time for the people to call on them to use the reserve. It is needed now, every inch of it; and the whole moral force of the people back of it. Begging the reverend gentleman’s pardon, I think generally that the great trouble with the people is that they do not come out as strongly as

they should and make their grievances known."

"That's as true as Gospel, Mr. Rattlinger—at least as far as I am concerned; and I wish, as a representative of the moral force (supposedly so) to confess right here, that I have not done my whole duty with regard to our Independence Day peril; for while I have lost no opportunity of warning my church people against it, I feel that I have done very little outside of the church and ought to repent, not exactly in sack-cloth and ashes, but by doing double duty hereafter—working outside of the church as well as in it. I therefore propose that a notice be drafted prohibiting the selling or giving away of any kind of explosives to any person within the corporation and that said notice be printed and posted up early tomorrow morning in all of the most conspicuous places. I don't know as to the legal efficiency of such a notice in suppressing the nuisance at once, but I think it would help very greatly. Am I right, Mr. President."

"In view of the shortness of time and more especially of the ease with which prohibitory laws are evaded," replied the President, "I propose that instead of a prohibitory notice there be a short but stirring appeal to the people, one and all, to refrain from buying, selling, using or giving away any of the iniquitous Fourth of July implements. According to the doctrine of love and trust that I have been taught, a good strong appeal is far ahead of prohibition. Prohibition savors of tyranny and kingliness. It is American bossism. It is squarely against human nature. Tell a child he shan't do a thing and impose a heavy penalty, and he is sure to do it, if possible. It's the same with children of a larger growth and more especially so with the makers of millions. They care nothing for fines and even imprisonment is being made delightful for them; but they have a lot of human nature in them and they can be ruled by love as well as the rest of humanity.

"As to Millionaire Schwarmer we should love him for the good he *might do,* and probably *would* do, had he been brought up and educated in an Ideal Town and under an Ideal Government. We should love *him* and hate his *fireworks* and rid ourselves of them as soon as we can get hold of the infamous things. I see that Editor Parnell is present. I think he could get up the right kind of an appeal—an appeal that would be so truly loving that it would reach every heart and yet be as urgent as it possibly can be without antagonizing the will. We would like to hear from him at all events."

The editor replied "that he did not come to express his own opinions but to report and publish the opinions of others, but he would say that he thought the President's idea of an appeal in place of prohibition was an excellent one; and

since he had given such a luminous idea of it, he was willing to undertake it and would make it as urgent as possible without distancing the party for whom it was chiefly intended."

He also begged leave to say "that although he was not quite up to Thoreau's idea of Civic disobedience, still he believed it necessary at times to act quite contrary to government rules, or at least give the governing powers a few instructions in civic procedure. As the matter now stands we have two national days on our hands that have become public nuisances to say the least. The one is Independence Day and the other is Decoration Day. In my opinion they should be reformed, abolished or merged into Thanksgiving Day and re-baptised.

"But as this meeting under Golden Rule leading has added a sort of civic confessional department, I am obliged to confess, like my aged brother, Daycoy, that I did not feel that way when I was eighteen or thereabouts, which leads me to suggest an educational department, or a return to the old-fashioned Town meeting which contained the bud of the '*referendum*' that has borne such good fruit in far away Oregon and Switzerland."

The editor sat down amidst cheers, laughter and cries of "Draft the appeal, Parnell." "Make it urgent."

The appeal was drafted, read, approved and handed back to the editor for printing and posting. Then the President made the closing speech in which he said:

"I believe we have done all that it is expedient to do at this time in this direction. But we can work in a great many other directions—just as many as there are persons in this hall. Everybody can do something individually toward preventing Fourth of July accidents. As to Schwarmer I hope the honest scoring he has had at this meeting will make a new man of him. It may have been a little too *hard*, but formerly it was surely too *soft*. In fact it is difficult to treat a millionaire exactly right.

"We incline to think that because a man is worth millions, he must have every other good quality. This is absurd. He lives in the same world that we live in, and if he does not live in a glass house, he *does* live in a house with large plate glass windows in it, and is exposed to the same surveillance and temptations. He has the same need of honest treatment. He is drawn by the same chords of love and sympathy.

“As to the children, I believe that one of the greatest obstacles in the way of this reform is the inclination of the older people to shut their eyes to the doings of the youngsters on this day. This will not do, my friends. It is not until we have taught them the higher lessons of love and right action for every day of the year, that we can hope to accomplish a pure and permanent reform. Like Brother Parnell I believe in the old-fashioned educative Town meeting, but I would not have it too old-fashioned. The city mothers as well as fathers should be in it, just as they are here tonight.”

The meeting closed with the doxology. Father Ferrill and the Reverend Dr. Normander went out arm in arm—and the miraculous happened! The overgrown boy who shouted “Keeo! Let’s dump ’em in the river,” was sitting in his express wagon under the strong light of the street lamp. As soon as he saw the clergymen, he called out:

“A miracle, Father Ferrill! Explosives unguarded, Dr. Normander! Shortest way out of Fourth of July racket! I would like to know the sense of this meeting. Will it have sense enough to order me to drive on to the river? I’d like to drive on. Will the folks surround me? I’d like to be surrounded. Will they help me dump this patriotic stuff into the river? I’d like to be helped.”

Father Ferrill went to the lad and spoke to him in a low tone of voice, after which he rose up in his seat. The lamp flared full in his face. He raised his eyes and made the sign of the cross.

“This is the sign that his words are true,” said Father Ferrill turning to the crowd. “It would seem that miraculous things do happen even in these sinful days. The logic of it is this (You see I understand that the real Yankee always wants a reason for everything): When a very important matter agitates the community, no knowing where the wave will end or what it will bring back to us. It is then that a miracle happens. Dr. Normander wished for a miracle and something very like it has happened. The history of it is this: This lad through whom the so-called miracle has come, was the foster child of Captain Dan Solomon, who was killed several years ago by the bursting of a cannon on Schwarmer Hill. He has always thought that Schwarmer was to blame for that accident. He had an order from him this afternoon to deliver the Fourth of July goods at his mansion on the Hill. He stopped in to this meeting on his way to the train. When Dr. Normander expressed a desire to get his eye on those explosives he hastened out. Now he is here with the atrocious things and has given me the bill to read for your enlightenment:

200	boxes	of	firecrackers (common)
100	"	"	" (giant)
100	"	"	blank cartridges
50	"	"	Toy pistols

Express Agents please handle with care.

J. E. SCHWARMER.”

“Yes! yes! We’ll handle them with care—on to the river!” shouted a chorus of voices.

“Where’s the President?” asked Father Ferrill.

“Inside with the aldermen;” cried Ralph, “but we need not wait for him. We will go on at once. He will approve. He believes in the people. He sings a song about them. Come on Dick Solomon! Come on everybody! I will sing his song for you while we go.” He burst forth in a beautiful tenor voice:

> “O I’m a man without a party—a free untrammeled soul!
> An undivided atom, within a mighty whole!
> I believe in all the people; in them we shall be blest,
> It is through the common people we shall find the promised rest.”

They went on, Ralph and Ruth, arm in arm, and the crowd followed. The moon came out in regal splendor as they reached the bridge. It was Schwarmer’s bridge that the corporation had built for him. It had a lamp on each end, making it light enough to read the names on the boxes without difficulty. There was a large assortment of patriotic death-dealers such as the bill had shown—and more too. In a bundle tied up separately they found some choice specimens such as Powdered Crackers, Sacred Mandarins, Aaron’s Rod, Yankee Doodle Doos, and Giant Torpedos.

“These were for the large boys,” said Ralph. “Truly Mr. Schwarmer was going to give every boy in Killsbury a glorious chance to kill himself this year.”

“Do you suppose that any of those boxes could possibly be fished out?” asked Ruth after the last box had gone over the falls.

“Hardly,” laughed Ralph. “I never heard of anything being fished out that went over the falls into the deep hole at the foot. Some say it goes through to China. If

it did it would be serving old China right—sending their vicious wares back to them."

"And a curious reminder to John Chinaman if it be true that he uses the American Missionaries' tracts in the construction of firecrackers for the American market," said Father Ferrill. "At any rate we have the consolation of knowing that this batch of powder will be too wet to do any damage this Fourth. The City Fathers can get their ordinance in perfect working order before the next—so perfect that no miracle will be needed to help them out. Cromwell's order to his soldiers was to 'trust in the Lord and keep their powder dry.' Lord grant that we may trust in His Holy Name and keep our powder wet."

It was a reversion of the brutal saying that has been taught in military schools for more than a century, and it sounded like a benediction to Ruth as she took Ralph's arm and turned away with a thankful heart.

They walked on in lover-like silence until Ruth broke out in her enthused way:

"Do you know, Ralph, I just love Father Ferrill!"

"Hold on there! Not too much of that, Ruth!"

"But I *do* love him very much! He's so good and wise. Wasn't it splendid his reversion of Cromwell's order?"

"Yes, Ruth, it was very apt, but you are not to love him."

"Hush, Ralph! you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

But it was honey-moon time and Ralph was not ashamed either of his words or actions on that charmed occasion. He finally admitted, however, after sundry concessions from Ruth that Father Ferrill was a very fine man, and that his reversion of the old Cromwellian adage had given him a new idea on the subject of adages.

"What is it, Ralph?"

"Tell it not to the professional litterateur or the dusty book-worm, Ruth; but the idea is that all those brutal old sayings that have been handed down to us from warring ages need to be revised or done away with as badly as the old brutal customs of which they were born. 'In times of peace prepare for war,' is another old serpent."

“It should be, ‘In times of peace prepare for more peace,’” said Ruth.

“And love,” added Ralph.

As to the rest of the crowd that wended their way homeward that night it is safe to say that there was not a soul among them that did not feel elated with the thought that they had done a deed that would save more than one mother’s heart from anguish on the day that was fast approaching, and might be the means of saving scores upon scores in the years that were to come.

The Golden Rule President was more than pleased when he found that the shortest way had been made available, and that the people, “the blessed people,” had caught the inspiration of Divinity and had done their own work.

Editor Parnell’s report was a luminous one; but whether it hit the conscience or pride of one of the passengers on the Killsbury train the next morning will be revealed hereafter.

CHAPTER XII.

A GOOD CELEBRATION—ADELAIDE SCHWARMER AND RUTH'S DOG.

RALPH learned that the Schwarmer Pyrotechnics and the agent employed to show them off had come as usual on the midnight train. His wife and daughter had also come, so as a matter of course there would be an extra display. They did not come every year as Schwarmer himself did.

"They were in London last Fourth and were royally entertained by a celebrated Pyrotechnist, who invented a patriotic piece called Eagle's Screams on purpose for them," said Ralph.

"Perhaps they brought one home with them." laughed Ruth.

"And will bring it to the Hill to show off," added Ralph. "Well it will be better and less dangerous than those abominable rockets."

"I thought rockets were not very dangerous, Ralph."

"There are rockets and rockets, sky rockets and war rockets and the Satanic inventors are getting up new and worse ones every year. No knowing what kind they have on the Hill. I have known of their having one at least that travelled a much longer distance than from here to the Hill and then went swooping down to the earth like a thunder bolt from the sky; but how stupid of me to tell you so, dear. Forgive me if I have made you afraid."

"Not a bit, Ralph! I am never going to be afraid any more—that is, if you will tell me all about those fiendish inventions, so I can keep out of their way and help keep others out also. O how dreadful though to think that such horrible things are made! Surely they never ought to be. They are made to kill. They are a menace to human life on a prodigious scale and the men who invent them are no better than would-be murderers and should be arrested and treated as such."

"That's true, Ruth, and yet the governments of the world approve and hasten to buy the murderous inventions. There's an inventor in this state who has made a

gun for this government that will throw a shell thirty miles and crash a boat into kindling wood and kill every soul on board. And now he is trying to invent one that will throw a shell one hundred miles—one that can reach from the coast of France across the English channel and rip out the heart of London!”

“O how hideous!” exclaimed Ruth. “He must be a fiend incarnate; but what about the Schwarmer rocket?”

“Here it goes,” said Ralph.

“Mamma came within an inch of having her arm gored by one of the rockets sent down from the Hill only last year. She cautioned me not to write to you about it. I thought it foolish not to; but perhaps it was right not to tell you then. Now it is different. You have grown so brave—so suddenly brave. It seems to me you are growing braver and braver every hour. It’s like a miracle! Explain.”

Ruth’s explanation set Ralph into raptures. Presently, however, she called for an explanation in turn.

“There isn’t much more to explain,” said Ralph. “We all sat on the piazza watching the sky-rockets that were being sent up from the hill, at least the rest were. If I remember rightly I wasn’t paying much attention to them. My imagination had ‘crossed over’—you understand gone over the border—across the river—you see?”

“Yes! yes Ralph, you foolish fellow—go on.”

“All at once up went a splendid rocket—ever and ever so high—‘up out of sight,’ papa said; but he was mistaken, for a second after it came whizzing down close by mamma’s arm and crashed into the ground. Mamma was sitting very near to the edge of the veranda. If she had only been an inch nearer it would have gashed her arm frightfully without doubt. I dug the thing up the next morning and am going to keep it in remembrance of Millionaire Schwarmer.”

“How did it look, Ralph? I never saw one except in air; tell me.”

“A conical shaped piece of lead, Ruth—worse than a cannon ball, because it has a pointed end. I’ll show it to you to-morrow.”

“We must tell the President about that and see if something can’t be done before another Fourth comes to stop him from showering such things upon the town,” said Ruth with decisive emphasis.

Then they went to the grove and worked like heroes. Ere long there was a great army of them. Tables were spread as if by magic and laden with fowls, fruits, cakes and candies of all description. The brass band played its best music. Flags fluttered in the breeze—mottoes were every-where and over the arched entrance was the unique invitation—"A feast is better than firecrackers. Come boys and girls. Save your eyes and your pennies."

They came in overwhelming numbers—hand in hand with their fathers, mothers and teachers and with looks of eager interest on their young faces. They enjoyed themselves and each other's society as they never had before on their nation's birthday.

In fact the whole community seemed to have been taken suddenly off its feet ("out of the pit and miry clay" as the minister expressed it) and whirled up to a higher plane. He preached the best sermon of his life, if it could be called a sermon. It was short and to the point—well adapted to the higher plane on which he was standing with all the rest.

Among the good things that he said was that "our National Day should be a day of tender memories, regrets and righteous resolves—tender memories of those who had died that we might have a free country in which to live. Regrets that such death and bloody sacrifice should have been essential or seemed so—deep regrets that we did not have a court of arbitration in the pre-revolutionary times, such as we now have; and resolves to appeal to it and abide by its wise decisions for all future time. As to this community which has been so providentially turned God-ward, or lifted to a higher plane let it be further resolved that we will maintain that high position with our whole might and main—that we will go ahead in this good fight until all these devil-caught celebrations, life-destroying games and brutal amusements are done away with—or the devil in them cast out."

Ralph seconded the minister's resolution and it was carried amidst manifestations of great joy.

It was afterward averred that the church people really kissed each other according to the biblical instruction and it is true that many mothers kissed their boys and that Ralph kissed Ruth fervently, whereupon those who did not know of their marriage became suddenly aware of it and there was a general rush to kiss the bride and congratulate the bridegroom.

“And so they have got their wedding reception after all, Angeline,” laughed Mr. Cornwallis, “and without any fussery or finery of the tiresome cut and dried pattern.”

Then the brass band played a wedding march. Lawyer Rattlinger and President Hartling dropped in and made excellent, “higher plane” speeches—that is, speeches delightfully devoid of brutish war-sentiment and silly spread-eagleism—after which the Sunday-school children sang, “God Bless Our Native Land,” with great vigor and were rewarded with a delicious finish of ice-cream and lemonade.

They went home as happy as larks, although their pockets were stuffed with nuts and candies instead of baneful firecrackers and deadly toy-pistols—a lively protest for their elders who have been too ready to say that a boy will not be satisfied with anything that does not possess the elements of noise and danger.

As Ralph surmised, the Schwarmers were making great preparations for the evening display. It was to be a splendid one. A select party had been invited from the city to witness it. They came on the afternoon train while the celebration was at its height; so their advent made no sensation. The shops were closed and the streets were quite deserted, greatly to Mr. Schwarmer’s chagrin, for in making his plans for a brilliant gathering he had counted on a background of gaping people and corruscating fireworks. The deficiency was so noticeable that Mr. Alfonso Bombs, the rising Pyro-spectacle King of the city—the guest par excellence whom he wished to honor in an appropriate manner, exclaimed derisively:

“How’s this, Schwarmer? Have they exhausted your huge supply already and annihilated themselves in the performance? I thought this was your kingdom (so to speak) and we should be treated to a triumphal entry.”

Schwarmer would rather have had the matter unnoticed, but it was not and he would not imperil his reputation for bluntness by keeping silence.

“You’ve been in England too long, Alfonso. You’ve forgotten that we don’t have things of that sort as they do on the other side of the pond—that is, except in a way, you understand—an irregular sort of way. Consequently we never know

just what will take place at a given point, you see—or just when a triumphal entry will materialize, so to speak, most assuredly we don't. It's never been at all like this before; most assuredly it hasn't. There have always been plenty of racket, plenty of fireworks and things of that sort from dawn to dark and fore and aft—variegated with a run-away horse and excitements of that kind; but the fact is a great moral wave has struck the town—a very large one. You see, even a moral wave is liable to be of very large dimensions, this side of the pond."

"Moral wave! Mr. Schwarmer," drawled one of the ladies. "Re-al-ly you must be joking. I have been educated to think it was an exceedingly immoral procedure not to celebrate our Independence Day in an appropriate and impressive manner."

"Impressive—yes truly impressive, dear lady; but you see it's too impressive sometimes—too largely impressive, as everything is apt to be in this country—that is if it's impressive at all, and now and then it impresses the wrong boy. Last year a lawyer's little boy had a finger broken and an alderman's boy had an eye hurt."

"Ah indeed! That was most unfortunate," replied Miss Drawling; "and they were people of consequence—that is, in this small community."

"Certainly! certainly—that is of the 'toad in the puddle style'" laughed Schwarmer. "So you see they called a meeting, a sort of grievance meeting and resolved not to let their children have any more fireworks. Now I believe they are having a pious celebration in the church grove or graveyard, I don't know which."

"Whew! oh whew!" whistled Mr. Bombs; "and so you have all that patriotic fervor on your hands! Shall we make a bonfire of it tomorrow as a starter to their lagging patriotism?"

"Not unless we go a-fishing," laughed Schwarmer, beckoning him aside. "You know how a thing of that kind turns when the sediments are all stirred up so to speak. A lot of cranks seized the fireworks and dumped them all into the river! They fancied they were our forefathers, I suppose, dumping the English tea into Boston Harbor—the knaves!"

"Zounds!" exclaimed Mr. Bombs. "That was a steep proceeding. How high do you suppose it will climb?"

“K. K.,” replied Schwarmer. “Probably until the attention is called off by some new thing—very new and of more dazzling proportions—like those new inventions of yours—for instance.”

“I understand! Good! Good! Nero is himself again. The siege of Yorktown! The Battle of Gettysburg! and Johnny Bull’s Bellows to offset Pang’s Eagle Screams! Eh, Schwarmer!” added Bombs in a low tone, giving him a sly poke in the ribs; “and money made out of them. That’s better than giving away things to an ungrateful public. They can’t throw Yorktown into the river if they should try. You are a trump, Schwarmer.”

That ended the business for Schwarmer. There was nothing that pleased him better than being called a trump. He had not really intended to make a business proposition; but the shrewd would-be million-maker and son of a million-maker had construed it into that meaning, and it was understood to be an unwritten bargain between them.

Thereupon a great silence fell upon the spirit of Alfonso Bombs. He was resting in rich security—the kind of security he liked. The $10,000,000 that for a few brief moments seemed jeopardized would eventually flow into the great Bombs’ coffers and the time would come when he would be more envied than the President of the United States; and his old-time victor would be beaten back to the place from whence he came.

“Bah!” the thin lips parted with an ironical smile, and the word of contempt came very near falling out. He congratulated himself on having checked it in time, for turning aside he saw a pair of clear but rather penetrating eyes looking directly at him, and a gentle voice asked:

“What is it that pleases you so dreadfully, Mr. Bombs?”

It was the voice of Adelaide Schwarmer.

“O! Ah! Beg pardon, Miss Adelaide,” said Mr. Bombs, in the flurried way which was usual with him when she asked him a sudden question, although she was only a chit of a girl, barely fifteen years of age.

“For the smile or the style of it, Mr. Bombs?”

“For both if need be; but where did you come from so suddenly? I didn’t see you at the train.”

“No, I wasn’t there, I stopped to shake paws with—guess who?”

“The baker or candlestick-maker or some stick-at-home fellow. Most of the folks seem to have gone away.”

“No, it was a dog—Ruth Cornwallis’ dog. He’s funny. He always wants to shake paws with me when I come. I haven’t been here in two years, but he was on hand to *shake* all the same. I wonder why?”

“Can’t say, Miss Adelaide. All I know is that dogs were on hand to bark at us when we got off from the train, quite a number of them and there was one that led the band.”

“I wonder if it was Ruth’s—he came running from that way. How did he look?”

“Can’t say. They looked so much alike; but I think this one had a new white collar on, as though there had been a wedding in the family.”

“O that’s the one, Mr. Bombs. I wonder what made him bark at *you*?”

“None but a dog could tell, Miss Adelaide, and they are dumb.”

“I wouldn’t blame him if you had that dreadful smile on, Mr. Bombs.”

“It wouldn’t do any good to blame him anyhow, Miss Adelaide. Dogs know what they are about as well as folks.”

“Don’t you think it does any good to blame folks when they do wrong?”

“Not much, not much. Sometimes it does harm—almost always to contrary people.”

“Well, I’m going to blame them any way every time I see them doing anything I *know* is wrong after this and take the chances. I’ll be fifteen years old tomorrow.”

“Better put it off until you are of age, Miss Adelaide.”

“No, I will not, Mr. Bombs. You needn’t smile that smile—I’m going to begin tomorrow at the very hour.”

They walked slowly up the hill while the rest of the party dashed by them in the Schwarmer turnouts; but they did not speak to each other again until the party had gathered on the broad veranda to witness the evening’s entertainment.

CHAPTER XIII.

ALFONSO BOMBS' PYROTECHNICS AND ADELAIDE SCHWARMER'S BLAME.

MR. BOMBS had brought with him some of the most elaborate and artistic works known to the trade. He had in mind works of a much grander and more instructive nature—works that would be truly great and high and far reaching (so he said); works that would be fit for the greatest king on earth to look at; that would startle and vivify the entire world and make the family name illustrious. He had been collecting material for his works throughout his college course—historical events, especially the burning and storming of cities and such of the battles and conflicts as lent themselves readily to pyrotechnic delineation. He was busy experimenting with his material. He expected to have his first historical piece finished by this time next year, and he was happy to think he had secured so good a place for its representation.

He thought the people of the town would like it—this new and higher development of pyrotechnic art; but that it did not matter much whether they liked it or not. There would be a big crowd from the city of invited guests and others, for Schwarmer would be in it heart and soul as well as purse. He had given him efficient aid in getting his pieces ready for the evening.

"I wonder if those idiots down below will disdain to watch our performance," asked Bombs, as he was about to begin.

"Undoubtedly not—that is after they've spanked the children and sent them to bed," laughed Schwarmer. "That's the extent of the moral wave with that sort of people. It generally stops with the youngsters. After they are disposed of they'll sit on their door stones until the last flare, most assuredly they will. Shall we send a searchlight after them?"

"No! no! Schwarmer. We can't afford to waste time and timber, hunting up such light-quenchers. We can't begin any lower down than '*mosaics*' if we do full justice to '*Tourbillions*'—that is get in all the inventions and improvements which I have made the last year."

“Go on, then, Alfonso. Let’s have the improvements life-size and inventions too, all of them, though the heavens should fall and the nearest stars have to be knocked out, so to speak?”

“O papa! papa!” exclaimed Adelaide in a tone of reproach, “true stars are so much prettier than manufactured ones can possibly be, and they don’t tire anybody to death.”

Bombs winced but he went about his mosaics and was soon receiving flattering comments and profuse compliments from the guests.

“Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Bombs,” said Miss Drawling. “Your mosaics are truly splendid, especially the designs of your own invention. They are quite beyond the artist’s dream. I saw a great many pieces of mocaic work when I visited the galleries of Greece and Rome. They were supposed to be very wonderful but commend yours to me.”

“Thanks and thanks for such kindly appreciation,” replied Bombs, bending low and glancing aside at Adelaide. She had not retired, and was looking as though she were trying to be amused.

“I never cared much for mosaics,” remarked Mrs. Shannon—“the real ones. They are so small and look so trifling and dull; but yours are bright and sizable and so charmingly changeable, Mr. Bombs.”

Even while the shower of compliments was in process the many colored pieces gave a sudden toss up as though in disdain and came down in the form of letters —at least the letters were there dancing along on the dusky background and arranging themselves into words; and the words were “Welcome to Schwarmer Hill!”

It was pronounced “a charming welcome.”

“Written in all the colors of the rainbow and without the tiresome pen and ink,” remarked Miss Drawling. It was a surprise even to the Schwarmers. They were highly delighted—at least Mr. and Mrs. Schwarmer. Miss Adelaide was inhaling the fragrance of a rose which she had brought in from the dewy garden. She said nothing; but the guests were enthusiastic in their praises—especially of the dexterity which had been displayed.

“A warm welcome, indeed,” was the fiat of the college bred Miss Hannibal —“written in letters of fire; and such letters! So graceful and serpentine! and

some of them quite new! Your own invention or modification without a doubt. Surely I have never seen anything in the shape of letters so perfectly unique!”

After the fiery welcome there was a fountain.

“Guests are supposed to be thirsty,” remarked Dr. Orison. “That was a happy thought of yours, Mr. Bombs.”

“And you must have patterned it after the famous old Italian fountains,” added his wife—“the royal ones that were filled with wines of all kinds and colors and sparkle and spirit also. You are a genius, Mr. Bombs.”

After that there were palm trees and Highland tartans, which were duly praised and commented upon.

Then came the sun—the last of the fixed fireworks. Then the rotating ones—the firewheels and finally the whole solar system. After this there was an intermission of half an hour during which the guests were regaled with rare wines, cakes and cigars.

Young Bombs shied away from the flattering spectators and went over to the secluded corner where Adelaide was sitting. He had a full goblet of wine in one hand and a choice Havana cigar in the other. He did not go because he was especially or magnetically drawn or wanted her society, but because he wanted no society. It had been something of a strain on his nerves to see that everything went off right and was effectively and harmoniously arranged, and the end was not yet. He was in no mood to listen to extravagant praise, and he knew where he would not get it.

Adelaide still had the rose in hand and was enjoying its beauty—bestowing loving looks and lips upon it as well and inhaling its fragrance.

“Nothing but a rose,” said Bombs, after he had seated himself leisurely at her side and taken a sip of wine.

“Nothing but a rose,” repeated Adelaide; “but a rose is a great deal, Mr. Bombs. It is beauty, fragrance and color—soft and restful color.”

“O! I understand. I know you don’t like fireworks, nor much of anything as yet —that is in the line of human invention.”

“I like human inventions but I don’t like inhuman ones that dazzle my eyes out. I

think they would make me stone blind if I *had* to look at them long at a time."

Mr. Bombs looked at her fixedly while he continued to sip the wine. He noticed for the first time that her eyes were of the palest blue and her hair of the palest gold and wondered if there was anything in her physical makeup that made it naturally antagonistic to fiery display. "Did the doves hate fireworks and did the serpents like them?" was the question he asked himself.

"Perhaps you will like my new piece better," he remarked after he had finished the wine. "Tourbillions are a higher form of Pyro."

"When is your new piece going to be spoken?" laughed Adelaide.

"At the end, of course. You hadn't better *retire*—it might wake you up. It will be huge, Miss Adelaide."

"The bigger they are the more I don't like them, Mr. Bombs. The little ones tire me and the big ones scare me. You know how I screamed when that horrid London Pyro-King sent off his biggest rockets. They looked so dangerous—as though a terrible comet or electric storm were crashing into the earth to destroy it. Is your new piece dangerous, Mr. Bombs?"

"Not very, I hope, Miss Adelaide."

"You mean that it *is* a little dangerous, Mr. Bombs. Now I want to know if you don't think there are dangerous things enough in the world without inventing any more?"

"I think you are mightily like old Pythagoras, Miss Adelaide."

"Why so, Mr. Bombs?"

"He was said to be an '*assiduous questioner*', Miss Adelaide."

That ended it. He lighted his cigar and went out into the garden.

Soon afterwards the Tourbillions began to ascend; and the heavens, at least that portion of them that belonged to Schwarmer Hill, was soon filled with jets and coils of flame and stars of many magnitudes and colors. The spectators appeared to be highly delighted—all except Adelaide. She was growing tired. Her eyes burned, her head ached and she was thinking of going to her room, when suddenly the sky cleared and she heard the voice of Bombs announcing the closing piece—"his new contribution to Pyrotechnic art."

He said among other things that he had invented the piece especially for this occasion; that it had as yet no name; that he had left it for the ladies to name—that is, if it proved to be a success, or materialized as he expected it would. Otherwise it might better be nameless; for if it were mentioned at all it would be called “The light that failed.” However he would say this much as to its composition and intention. It was intended to be a sort of cross between the girandole and the war-rocket. The girandole proper was getting to be rather monotonous, having been used as the end piece to pyro-spectacles for fifty years or more. He thought it was high time to have a new one. It was also necessary that the new one should be superior to the old one, both in size and splendor of coloring. There was no such thing as going backward in this matter. We might as well talk of the decadence of American institutions or the annihilation of “The Fourth of July.”

“As to its composition,” continued Bombs, “I think you will believe after you have seen it, that it was no slight thing to get up a piece of this kind—so many points had to be considered. As an example there was the one thing of garniture. The ladies will appreciate this very readily. If I mistake not, a lady would think a week spent in selecting the proper trimmings for her dress was a long time. What then would she say if I told her that I spent two months selecting the most effective garniture for my piece—two months to get it entirely out of the region of commonness—the region of gold and silver rain and of the ‘Peacock’s Tail!’” The ladies waved their fans and clapped their hands, during which commotion Mr. Bombs disappeared from view.

While Adelaide was wondering where he had gone to so suddenly, a huge stream of serpentine fire issued from the Engine House. It grew larger and larger every moment. It lifted itself into monstrous coils. It hissed and sent forth tongues of flame. It vomited forth all sorts of hideous shapes, in all sorts of lurid colors, ever increasing in size and horror until no more could be conceived—then there was a loud report and a great globe of fire plunged downward and disappeared behind the brow of the hill!

The gentlemen applauded. Bombs had said in the beginning that the piece was a cross between a war rocket and a girandole and they supposed that the report and the ball of fire was the war part of it, but Adelaide knew that it was an accident and she thought of the gardener’s cottage with a thrill of fear.

A moment afterwards a sheet of light and flame came streaming up from that direction, a woman’s voice cried “Fire! Fire!” and a woman’s form clad in white

appeared on the fiery background. The spectators were startled for the moment; then they broke out in wild applause.

Dr. Orison said “It is ever thus after war.”

The woman was standing still with her arms twisted about her body, as though in mortal agony. They thought she was there advisedly to represent the realistic finishing of Mr. Bombs’ piece. But they were soon undeceived. Another cry rent the air.

“It’s Mary, the gardener’s wife! Help! help! Her house must be on fire.”

It was the cry of Adelaide Schwarmer as she ran to her assistance.

“FIRE, FIRE!” CRIED A VOICE.

“O my baby! My baby!” moaned the poor woman stumbling along toward her.

“Where is it, where?” asked Adelaide.

“Lost! Lost!” she cried, sinking down in a dead faint.

Mrs. Schwarmer divined the situation and was soon at her side. She threw her magnificent shawl over the prostrate figure. Her husband was sent for. He was in the kitchen helping the servants. They came and carried her in. Dr. Orison offered his services and the rest of the men hastened to the fire; but a stream of water was pouring down on it from the Engine House and their aid was not needed. They returned and reported that “the fire was a trifling affair.”

“But where is her baby!” asked Adelaide. “She said she had lost her baby. We must find it for her.”

“Adelaide,” said her mother sternly, “go to your room at once. It is not proper for you to ask questions about such matters. Your father and Mr. Bombs will make whatever search the doctor thinks necessary.”

Half an hour afterwards Dr. Orison returned to the guests and reported the woman to be out of danger. His silence with regard to the baby was understood to mean that it had never lived and that it was a matter of no earthly

consequence.

A matter of much greater interest to one and all of the gay people assembled there, appeared to be Mr. Bombs' ingenious explanation with regard to the failure of his piece and his prompt action in turning on the hose for the quenching of the fire—for the last of which he received many compliments.

On the contrary Adelaide could think of nothing but the gardener's wife and her lost baby. She could not sleep. She was in an agony of suspense—to know how it had fared with them. She thought the guests would talk it over at the breakfast table; but she was mistaken. Not a word was said about it and all seemed as lively as though nothing at all had happened. She did not dare to ask them any questions on the subject after her mother's rebuke, but she knew she could ask her father. She saw him out on the hill and ran after him.

"Mary! poor Mary! how is she, father?" she gasped out.

"O! she's all right Addie, only a little scare. She'll be all right again in a few days the doctor says."

"And the baby. Did you find the baby?"

"Yes we found it, Addie, and took it to her. Bombs found it just over there by that clump of milkweeds—but it wasn't much of a find—most assuredly it wasn't. It was dead of course; and I guess it was a Providence for they've got two little tots now and they're not very forehanded. If they kept on at that rate they'll have a swarm of them soon, and I shall have to turn them off."

"O don't say that! It's dreadful. She loved her baby and she was in such agony when she lost it! O I never saw such agony! You must not turn them off—never, never. It would be wrong, I know it would after this awful fright! We ought to give them something to make up for it. I know we had, father! I know it! And I'm going to give her all I have got in my purse and I shall remember her as long as I live!"

"Softly Addie! Softly! Don't let any of the gentry over there hear you. They'd think you were crazy. We'll fix it between ourselves—we won't be hard on them if they do have a big swarm. We'll see that they don't starve. Most assuredly we will."

"They ought to have good big wages. They make the flowers grow so beautifully."

“Yes Addie the flowers are all right; but where’s the lawn, the green velvet lawn that your mamma raves about so much. The grass can’t grow with so many little feet trotting over it.”

“But little feet are of more consequence than grass, you know they are, only you don’t stop to think. And little children are better than fireworks. I wish all the ugly old fireworks were at the bottom of the sea. You ought not to have let Mr. Bombs send off his piece over the gardener’s house.”

He had not told her about the fireworks that were at the bottom of the river and he hated the idea of doing so. He turned away and she went to the engine house. Bombs was there. She was going to blame him for what had happened—that is all that he deserved to be.

“Was your piece more dangerous than you thought, Mr. Bombs?”

“Well, rather, Miss Adelaide—that is I didn’t expect it was going to burst up—or down I should say.”

“But you knew it was dangerous enough to set things on fire if it *did* burst and strike them, Mr. Bombs.”

“Yes, Miss, I knew enough for that.”

“Then you are to blame for sending it off where you *did*, Mr. Bombs, and father is to blame for letting you do it. I have just told him so.”

“There was no other place—that is handy—where the ladies could see it and be comfortably seated, Miss Adelaide.”

“Then there ought to have been a place made, Mr. Bombs, and if there couldn’t have been, then you ought not to have sent it off at *all*. You know you had not, and I shall always blame you for it. It was very, very wrong.”

“I see!” laughed Bombs. “You are on your blaming expedition this morning, Miss Adelaide. You are right about having a place made, though. There ought to be for large works; and when I get my historical piece done there will be a place on purpose for it—a large place—a sort of a grand amphitheatre something like the old Roman but Americanized and more enjoyable. That’s my ambition. I have got through even with tourbillions.”

CHAPTER XIV.

SCHWARMER'S THREATENED ARREST.

MR. SCHWARMER was a man who talked very bluntly, so he admitted, but he expected to give his hearers the impression that his bluntness was simply a species of noble frankness. The next day but one after Independence Day, he informed the few acquaintances whom he happened to meet at the depot, that he was obliged to return to the city at once for two reasons. The first was a rise in stocks and the second was to see his family off on the steamer, but that he would return on the fifteenth of the month and arrest and punish the chief leaders in the plot which had resulted in the destruction of his property.

For once or rather for the first time in his dealings with the Killsbury community, his bluntness was taken literally and turned to good account. A mass meeting was not called but there was a great deal of calling and consulting among the women of the town. Ruth Cornwallis Norwood was very busy during the interval of expectancy. She set her own wits to work and inspired others to do the same. The result was that rather a novel plan was proposed—"So novel that it was funny," said the President's wife; but the more they talked and laughed about it, the more they thought they would try it. They assumed to begin, with that they instead of their husbands were the chief leaders or instigators in the destruction of the Schwarmer property. Ruth was duly charged with and promptly confessed being at the head of the whole affair. Therefore it was resolved that when the dread day came and the dread form of Millionaire Schwarmer was apparent on the Hill, they would not wait to be arrested. They would call on him in a body and deliver themselves up. They reasoned that it would be a pity to put him to the trouble of arresting them singly; besides it would be a great expense to the town. They supposed that the citizens of the town would have to pay for all the arrests and they felt sure that they couldn't afford to—or at least that they had a right to cut down their own expenses wherever they chose. They had other ideas in their heads also. Some of them could make speeches and delivering themselves up to Mr. Schwarmer gave them a chance.

In an interview with President Hartling, he said:

“I agree with you. There’s many a truth spoken in jest and my opinion is that women excel in this direction.”

Then he stopped and hummed a tune that wound up with the words:

> “I believe in all the people
> ’Tis through them we shall be blest.”

“Yes,” he added, “I believe especially in the women people and my impression is that the women of this town can settle this business with Schwarmer. You know what the town needs and what he has always been promising it. After the arrests are settled you might extend your wits and get him to ‘fork over’ as the boys say. I can’t tell you just how to do it. I don’t like the bossing business and I’m sure you will know how to act better than I can tell you. The work of the Common Council is to get their ordinance in good working order before the next Independence Day comes. Father Ferrill’s miracle and the appeal brought us through safely this year. The educational and moral waves which are the only true preparation for good laws were set in motion; but something more may be required next year for the scourging of the money-changers. There are signs in the air that prohibitory measures will have to be resorted to.

“Schwarmer’s determination to distribute fireworks in spite of the appeal is a sign,” said Ralph. He repeated the whole story, not even leaving out Ruth’s experience with Mr. Schwarmer in the matter.

“I see,” said the President. “Many kinds of effort will have to be made to squelch this many-headed monster. More and more laws may be called for but it makes me sad to think of it. I am prejudiced against law—its autocracy, its insulting enforcements, its perplexing entanglements. As to celebrations when they grow to be such dangerous nuisances as to require the interference of law to any great extent, it is a sure sign that they ought to be done away with.”

“How I wish this savage old Fourth which is so full of boasting and danger, *could* be done away with!” said Ruth. “It will be so hard to make it entirely harmless—especially for the children—the little innocent children who are born into the world so helpless, and have to live in it so many years before they can learn how to avoid its dangers—the simple every day dangers, to say nothing of the complex and deadly ones that lie concealed beneath attractive forms. Who have to be taught, denied, imprisoned and punished every step of the way almost. O what a task for loving parents!”

“And what a shame,” said Ralph, “that people should go on inventing and manufacturing more and more of those horrible things and almost forcing them onto the community and into children’s hands! What can we do about that?”

“There’s a place for strong prohibitory laws and a call for the enforcement of those we have. Appeals are all right for sensible grown-up American citizens; but the young and innocent should not be permitted to walk into the fire, the idiotic and mercenary should not be allowed to furnish the fire for them to walk into, and the devil’s imps should be prohibited from pushing them into it. Yes this is a good place for prohibition. Prohibition that *does* prohibit—not as it now stands. I believe that the whole system will have to be overhauled to make it largely effective. That the general government will have to take it in hand and appoint earnest ununiformed watchers for all perilous times and places.”

“O that would be splendid,” cried Ruth—“like having guardian angels, invisible but earthly, for the young and innocent!”

“They are not here yet, dear,” laughed Ralph, “except for the President of the United States and others in authority, but I’m sure they are needed. It’s a sorry spectacle to see the small boy dodging the policeman and the hoodlum intimidating him with stones. I am glad we did not have a prohibitive notice on that account, besides Schwarmer’s hand would not have shown up so plainly.”

“And so am I,” said Ruth. Then she thought of the hand that had tried to pat her shoulder and blushed while Ralph grated his teeth and the President said in a serious voice:

“And I was just beginning to be sorry that we did not accept Dr. Normander’s wise prohibition to back the appeal since I perceive that lack of it has caused you needless trouble, insult and expense.”

“O we did not care about that, our hearts and souls were in it,” said Ruth and Ralph in chorus.

“But I care about it. It was not right. I perceive it would grow to be a grievous burden, *it* must not go on,” he added in a pre-occupied way as though speaking to himself. “Providence has helped me through this time but I almost know He would not do it again. He has shown me the way. I will strive to walk in it. There are many lights by the way. I believe they are all essential and will be suffused at last into the one great light—the eternal verity.”

A moment later Dr. Normander came in.

“You are just in time, Doctor. I was going over to confess that your way was better than mine; or that my appeal needed your prohibitive crutch. Why didn’t you argue me down—down to the practical level at least? They call me a Golden Rule Man, but I am only a President—a figure-head, a blundering mortal and too much afraid of having more laws than are necessary, or than will be obeyed without hatred and strife.”

“Because I am prejudiced in favor of the loving appeal—the higher way, I suppose,” laughed Dr. Normander.

“But you did not propose it, Doctor. Did you think that the higher way—the way of appeal, was too high to be largely operative?”

“Yes, I could hardly help thinking that, for I have been preaching it for years; but I had a glimpse of the immediate good that a wise prohibition might do.”

“And the one you proposed covered Schwarmer very neatly, I noticed,” laughed the President, “but I don’t remember the exact wording.”

“It was not reduced to legal form but the idea was to prohibit the sale and giving away of all the dangerous Independence Day Fireworks,” said Dr. Normander.

“That will help, and we will have it put in legal phrase and made ready for use without delay; for I begin to think that Schwarmer is not to be trusted in this matter. He may need as many as two or three chains to hold him, that is, unless some sort of miraculous conversion overtakes him. You know miracles do happen now and then, Doctor, and I am rather expecting one from The Woman’s Educational or Missionary Department before the next Independence Day begins,” laughed the President. “There is no greater pest to society than a millionaire idiot, and there is no better way to get him to use his money rightly than to hand him over to the best women of society.”

“One more question before we are arrested, or arrest ourselves,” laughed Ruth.

“Can a law be made to prohibit Schwarmer or his guests from showering rockets on the town?”

“After he is through with the arresting business, we will see about the showering,” replied the President. “I fancy he will not be so much enamored after that, with fiery showers as with those of a gentler kind, and really I don’t

know as any laws could be made to prevent a man from having fireworks on his own premises, but he could be arrested for damages to the property or persons of others."

"But we want him arrested from *doing* damages and burning up money," said Ruth.

"Then I believe you women will have to do it," laughed the President. "The law isn't premature enough. However if you fail I will study it up and see what it will do. I think the way is being prepared on the banks of the Hudson, by the Yale graduate who is dying at the house of a millionaire, from an injury received by a flying rocket."

CHAPTER XV.

THE KILLSBURY WOMEN ARREST THEMSELVES.

ON the fifteenth of July Schwarmer came as he was expected to do; for besides being a blunt man, he was known to be one who rarely broke his promise. He arrived on the morning train and in the afternoon while he was sitting in his beautiful office with the Golden Rule President on one side of him and Lawyer Rattlinger on the other, the door opened suddenly and disclosed a very pretty sight—namely a procession of ladies tastefully hatted and gowned. The ribbons which were fastened daintily on their shoulders fluttered like wings in the strong breeze caused by the opening of the door.

He had been informed that a delegation of ladies would do themselves the honor of calling upon him to ask a favor, the nature of which was not apparent, so he arose to his feet at once, with his broad smile and blunt speech.

“Bless you ladies! Really ladies! This is a great and unexpected surprise. A truly great and truly happy one. Bless you all. How lovely you look. You do me proud, most assuredly you do. Ask me any faver you choose. I almost know what it will be before you open your pretty lips—pardon or excuses for your husbands or sons for the destruction of my property. Ladies are always doing something of that kind, God bless them! I feel like accepting even before you ask me to, most assuredly I do. I know it wasn’t your fault. I know ladies don’t approve of such violent doings or go into them, unless dragged in by their husbands or sweethearts. I understand that. I shouldn’t be my mother’s son if I didn’t, ladies. You may make your requests without fear or trembling. I am blunt in my speech but I trust my treatment of ladies is exactly the reverse.”

The lawyer winked at the President as much as to say that exactly the reverse of blunt would be sharp; but his wife was among the crowd and as she was a lady who laughed easily he felt obliged to keep his countenance of the usual length.

“The ladies, God bless them,” Schwarmer continued in his closing peroration. “They are all angels—all except those that are very strongly tempted to be the reverse.”

The President's wife laughed this time in spite of her husband's long drawn face. Several others caught the infection. No knowing where it would have ended had not Mr. Schwarmer sat down suddenly. They knew that their time had come and the thought sobered them.

Mrs. Muelenberg was the first to speak. She said:

"We know you are very kind, Mr. Schwarmer, and we have come to make our confessions and ask you for substantial proofs of your kindness. We all had a hand in the destruction of your property—a free hand, and we are going to tell you why and pay the damages. We are averse to the technicalities, expense and delay of the law, so after we have made our plea—that is, all the plea we *can* make, we trust that you will make out your bill. We have brought our purses and wish to settle the damages on the spot."

"Damages against the ladies!" gasped Schwarmer, looking with dismay at the purses conspicuously displayed. "My intention is to settle this little matter with the men who had a hand in it. I don't want any pay for my property, dear ladies. Rest assured I am not that sort of a man. All that I shall insist upon is to have the law respected—the rights of property regarded."

"And all that we shall insist on, if it goes to the courts, is that the rights of mothers be respected and the lives of their children properly regarded," said Mrs. Rattlinger. "I am not a lawyer but I am a lawyer's wife and I think I know about where we should stand in such a case."

"Of course you do," replied Schwarmer, "and being a wife and mother, very naturally you would, as one and all thus situated. I shall see to it that no harm comes to you, rest assured I shall. I have an almost unbounded respect for mothers and a great tenderness for children and would be more than willing to do all I could to prevent them from injury on our natal day, without interfering with its proper enjoyment, most assuredly I would. I am very fond of them all. I lament with our *lamentable* President that there are not more mothers and more children. There can't be too many of them to suit me. It takes a great many to keep up the supply, as they are more prone to accidents than grown people, especially on and around our glorious Fourth—for the reason that their little hands and pockets which patriotism requires us to fill with firecrackers, are so much nearer their little eyes than ours are. Most assuredly they are. For these and other reasons of a similar nature, there can't be too many children born into the world. They make it lively. Truly, ladies, I am a very blunt man and I must say

that I think mothers should have many more children than they do have. Yes, a great many more and be happy to do so. Very happy indeed, ladies. There is no sight on earth so perfectly lovely in my estimation as that of a mother surrounded with her children. Completely surrounded I should say—north and south, east and west—surrounded as with a halo, so to speak."

Schwarmer's pronunciation of *halo* sounded so much like *hello* that Sybil Bolt, whose little boy had lost a finger three years before, in consequence of his Independence Day gift, whispered to the woman who stood next to her:

"Yes a fine hello—young ones with their fingers blown off, eyes blown out, and faces scarred."

She whispered loud enough to be heard across the room and Schwarmer may or may not have heard her. He continued:

"Don't be alarmed, my dear ladies. I wouldn't have the heart to hurt a hair of your heads, nor a hair that belonged to your children. Be assured I shall lay up nothing against you, and I'm not going to be hard with your husbands and lovers either, rest assured I am not. Go in peace."

He waved his hand as though waving them out; but they did not "follow the wave."

Mrs. Normander came to the front and gave the list of accidents as Ralph had done at the mass meeting. She also repeated the statement that the list was out of all proportion to that of other towns throughout the state. Then she turned upon him squarely.

This being the case the question was, why it was so? "You know how that question was settled at the meeting, Mr. Schwarmer, and the result."

"Yes, I know," said Schwarmer, "that my property was meddled with and I know that accidents occur or are liable to occur all over the country on the Fourth, and we don't know where they will occur, nor how many will occur at a given point, most assuredly we don't, and we don't know just how many occur in our own town. They are not always reported, or made much of. There will be accidents on that day as a matter of course, truly there always have been and must be—it's an accidental world—full of accident policies—eh, ladies? The Fourth of July wouldn't be the Fourth without accidents, surely it wouldn't, would it ladies?"

"Yes it would," said Mrs. Normander. "We have had one this year—a lovely

Fourth. We all enjoyed it—especially the children. They said they had never had such a splendid Independence Day. They had no fireworks and not a single one was hurt. We heard there was quite a serious accident at your place where you had an elaborate pyrotechnic display."

"O! a small one, ladies, a very small one—truly very small—not worth mentioning, ladies."

"Not for you," cried out a voice angrily; "but for the poor mother who lost her child!"

She broke off sobbing. She was the widow whose little boy had died of *tetanus* a few years before. The ladies all knew it and were visibly affected.

"Beg your pardon, dear woman," said Schwarmer fussing with his pocket handkerchief. "Beg your pardon, one and all, dear ladies, I meant no harm—no insult to your sex—most assuredly not. I'm all sympathy for any one in a delicate condition and exceedingly sorry for any loss they may sustain and would not do or say anything willingly to aggravate the one or the other. I trust you know I would not. You know also that accidents of that kind *do* happen very frequently, and without any fright from pyrotechnics. The only damage that can be truly chargeable to the rocket, was very slight indeed, very—only a matter of a few bundles of straw and an old tumble down shed. It made quite a blaze of course, you know it would ladies, and the excitement may have been the one straw too much for the mother delicately situated but there is no real proof of it—that is, no absolute proof you understand ladies. I mean to say that something else might have happened that would have led to the same disaster—something quite trifling, such as a husband coming in late and slamming the door. To speak bluntly we have all heard of such things bringing on premature difficulties. Truly we have, have we not, my dear ladies?"

"I see, I see, silence gives consent," continued Mr. Schwarmer quite jauntily, "and I know you have forgiven me any little hand I may have had in the matter—which was very slight indeed, I assure you. The pyrotechnics referred to were under the auspices of a much greater than I—that is pyrotechnically considered. No less a person than the young son of a billionaire friend of mine who has a great taste for pyrotechnics. The piece which caused the premature loss referred to was designed by him. It was very original and powerful—most assuredly it was—almost too powerful for inland display. It would have been truly gorgeous out at sea or off Coney Island or Manhattan Beach. He's a great genius, the

young fellow is, and an aspiring one and needs a great deal of room to display his talents, as all geniuses of any size, invariably do. When he was abroad he was royally entertained by the greatest of living Pyrotechnists, King Pang, whose father was knighted by the queen for doing something splendid. I have forgotten just what it was. By the way, he made a very good pun out of the little accident he had here, after he got back to the city. He said that his ‘Pet Rocket rocked the cradle prematurely’—or attempted to rock it, or something of the kind. I can’t quite remember which; but really it was very good and characteristic also. He always spoke of his creations as though they were live creatures and really they are very lively—very lively indeed, I assure you, ladies.”

“They are fiends in disguise,” exclaimed Ruth rising suddenly and lifting the rim of her hat so he might recognize her without difficulty. She had managed to hide herself from his observation, she hardly knew why. She had a mixed sort of a feeling that she would like to see him let himself entirely out and that he would be more likely to do so if he did not know she were there. She meant to have her say. She had come prepared for it; but she would not say a word until her whole soul was in it and she could hold back no longer. She had brought the spent rocket that had come so near killing or injuring Ralph’s mother. She held it up so everybody could see it plainly.

“Yes,” she went on with righteous indignation. “They are fiends in disguise. Here is one of them, with its pretty red, white and blue wrapping torn off. Look at it one and all. It’s only a rough stick and a lump of lead. It looks dull and harmless now but backed by powder and dynamite it can do terrible execution. Look at it Mr. Schwarmer. It was sent over from the hill on last Fourth and came within a hair breadth of hitting a lady’s shoulder! If it had, it would have laid her arm open to the bone, for it dashed down the whole length of it and buried itself in the ground. What kind of a pun would your City Pyro King have made of that? What does he care for the homes made desolate, the youths that are slain and mutilated, this son of a millionaire, so that he adds more millions to his possessions? What does he care for such misery as I have suffered? Every year for seven years I had to be taken from my home and sent to Canada in order to escape our Independence day horror. Every year since the terrible accident to my little brother. You all know about that. I was only eleven years old then. I did not fully understand what the English officers meant when they said ‘Very sensitive to foreign foes Americans are, and yet they arm the home foes and ignorant boys with enough powder and dynamite to kill and wound thousands every year.’ ‘A

very free country that whose people have to fly to Europe or to us for safety.' But it dawned on me little by little, year after year. Last year I saw it all. This year I am here, determined to leave no stone unturned to do away with the cruel, barberous idiotic celebration of our national day.

"Think of it, Mr. Schwarmer! How would you feel to have your little innocent brother, or child, frightfully scarred, burned or torn to pieces by fireworks that some careless person had put into his hands? Take it to your heart and conscience. Remember, we do not assume that you are a bad man because you distribute fireworks among the children of this town. We know you don't think when you give a lot of boys a lot of toy pistols that they are going to kill or injure each other with them. You are just like a great many others. You have been brought up to think it right for boys to celebrate our Independence Day and you don't stop to think of the new elements of danger which have been, and are constantly being introduced. The firecracker and the torpedo were always dangerous nuisances and should have been done away with long ago for something harmless and more sensible. Instead of that they have been developed into giants and are now manufactured in enormous quantities—enough to burn up the whole world; and they do burn up millions of dollars worth of property each year.

"Think of it! It's not only the loss of life that is to be considered but it's the waste of money. It's a pity to see it recklessly burned up when we are needing so many things. We need a public library. All we have now are a few old ragged books. We need a public park, where the children can go to fly their kites, look at the gold fishes, listen to the music, smell of the flowers, laugh, play and sing, and be out of the dust and danger of the crowded thoroughfare. We need good roads and bridges. There isn't a thoroughly good road in town except the speedway, which the corporation helped you build over beyond the hill. The sewers and water works are incomplete. You have about all there are at your place and the towns-people have paid the corporation taxes, although they have been doubled since your coming, without grumbling. Think of all these things, Mr. Schwarmer. Investigate this whole matter for yourself and see if you can't do something better for us than you have been doing. You have refused to take pay from us for the destruction of your property. We thank you but we do not wish you to think that we did not give our whole strength and influence to the work. What I did was to put it into the head of my husband (that now is) to help me do something at once, to prevent the horrible burnt sacrifice that would surely take place if your fireworks were distributed here as usual. I could not rest after

hearing the English boast as I did last year that a shrewd English Pyro-king had sold millions of dollars worth of fireworks to the American people to burn up on their ‘*awful* Independence Day’ as they called it, and that the demand was so great that he had to send a supply from the London manufactory. You see how it is, Mr. Schwarmer. I have heard and thought about these things through days and nights of suffering and exile on English soil. And now I have to confess that I am the instigator-in-chief of the destruction of your property. You will be kind enough to reckon with *me* if you do with anybody. We bid you good day and a God speed in the right direction.”

The ladies withdrew without being waved out.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE EFFECT OF RUTH'S SPEECH.

MERE words can give but little idea of Ruth's speech. It was what would be called in military phrase of the "rapid-firing order." Her pretty brown eyes were ablaze with feeling. Every gesture struck home. The Golden Rule President encouraged her with nods and smiles. Lawyer Rattlinger was amused and interested. The ladies were effected to tears, while Schwarmer turned all sorts of colors—red being the predominant one. His face seemed full to bursting at times; but her final invocation steadied him a little and after the last lady had disappeared, he gasped out:

"Well gentlemen, really and truly! What are we to do about a thing of this kind? I don't quite understand the ladies. They have such a sort of vascilating way—most assuredly they have."

"Yes, but there's where the love comes in," said the President. He was humming a tune and twitching his ample fingers in a lively way as though they might be playing on a harp of a thousand strings. Then he sang out:

"O! it's through the *women people* we shall find the promised rest. The women, God bless them! They know what the town needs if the rest of us don't, Mr. Schwarmer, and they are going for it. You may as well capitulate—capitulate gracefully and give them a library."

"And you, Rattlinger, I would like your view of it, most assuredly I would—that is, the legal view."

"Certainly, you are welcome to my point of view both legal and experimental," replied Rattlinger. "I should say to begin with that the uprising is too respectable and tee-total to be ignored. Experimentally I know that a woman is the deuce for persistence when she once gets after a thing. I should say that when a whole army of them get on the war-path the library would have to come. Legally considered, you have not given a promissory note, but you have given them promissory words. There's a point of honor, you see."

“Well, really, gentlemen, I have always intended to give a library or something of that kind, in the end, you know, but I don’t fancy being forced to do it—prematurely, so to speak; and you can’t blame me for *that*, most assuredly you can’t.”

“No! No! Mr. Schwarmer,” sang the President:

> “You’re a free untrammeled soul
> An undivided atom within a mighty whole.”

“But you’d better divide up with the ladies, Mr. Schwarmer,” laughed Rattlinger, “or you will have to enter the field against them; I don’t believe you want to do that. At least I shouldn’t. I should know that I would have to beat a retreat in the end and I should rather beat a retreat in the beginning while I could do it and save my honor; as the famous French General always did. I would not wait ’til I had a lot of indictments social or otherwise tacked onto my coat-skirts. As I understand it they have quite a number of things laid up against you; and you know the ladies are famous for making things look picturesque.”

The laugh of the President at this remark was so contagious that Schwarmer couldn’t help joining in.

“It’s all over with you, my good man,” said the President, slapping him on the shoulder as he proceeded to put on his hat.

“The *women people* have pleaded guilty—guilty of doing a good deed and they have won their case according to Lawyer Rattlinger’s opinion. You had better send the library along at once. A little concession of that sort makes everything run as smooth as silk.”

The President and the lawyer went home to tea and Schwarmer returned to the city on the next train. Nothing was heard from him until September first. Then he came on in his rushing way with a surveyor, two architects and half a dozen contractors. The news ran through the town like wild fire that he was really going to begin the long looked for library building. It was to be on the vacant lot where he was born. The house not being of a substantial character had been demolished long ago and the lot itself had been voted a nuisance by the adjacent neighbors; so there were more reasons than one for rejoicing. The ladies were especially delighted.

“Behold the result of your maiden speech!” exclaimed Ralph when he came

home with the good news.

“Newly married speech,” laughed Ruth; but as Ralph went on to tell of the large preparations which were being made she shook her pretty head and “hoped Schwarmer would not be so idiotic as to put all his donation into a splendid building and leave nothing for books. A good plain, commodious building is what we want. Not a palatial, monumental thing that will make our homes look like hovels and turn out to be a monument for himself, for us to keep in order.”

“Seneca the Sensible,” were Ralph’s next words, “but, you are right, dear love,” he added, “Schwarmer needs watching. ‘Eternal vigilance’ is the price when you deal with such a man. The corporation is not obliged to accept his library unless it is properly furnished and endowed. I’ll speak to the Golden Rule President about that, at once. Bless your heart for putting it into my head.”

“Who in the world is Dombey bringing us?” exclaimed Ruth as her dog came leaping and frisking up the walk. “He acts as though he had secured a great prize.”

“Millionaire Schwarmer’s daughter as I live,” exclaimed Ralph! “Isn’t it comical though. I never knew before that dogs *could* be obsequious! See that brute trying to smile.”

The girl came on slowly and rather timidly up the long walk, while the dog rushed backward and forward and indulged in all sorts of joyous antics.

“Excuse me for coming,” she said when she got within speaking distance, “but the dog would have it so.”

“Dombey knew you would be welcome,” replied Ruth.

“He met me at the train and followed me all around to every place I went, but when I got to this street he took the lead. I went on but he came after me and cried and took hold of my dress. I guessed what he wanted so I came a little way with him; but when I turned to go back he whined and made such a time of it, that I gave up and came home with him.”

“And now he wants you to come up on the verandah and rest,” laughed Ruth, looking down into the blue eyes. She thought she had never seen any so blue and true looking.

“I will a moment, but I can’t stay. I came up with father. I wanted to see poor

Mary who got scared and lost her baby Fourth of July night."

"I heard she was better," said Ruth.

"Father heard so too, and thought I hadn't better come, but I would come. I know she feels bad about her baby and I want to tell her how sorry I am and how much I blame Mr. Bombs." The blue eyes filled with tears.

"Fireworks are dangerous things," said Ruth. She felt her own eyes getting misty and she was wondering if Schwarmer's daughter knew of their action in regard to the Schwarmer fireworks.

"Yes, they are dangerous," said Miss Schwarmer, "and they are horrid—all that I have ever seen; and I blame father for ever buying such awful things to give away. I don't believe he ever will any more. There are so many pretty things to buy."

"Bless your heart," said Ruth. "I'm sure he never will if you ask him not to."

"I *have* asked him not to and I've blamed him. He is going to let me buy things after this, for the children here."

"O that will be lovely," exclaimed Ruth—"then we shall see you often shall we not?"

"I wish I could stay here always," said Miss Schwarmer. "I don't like to travel but we're all going over to London with Mr. Bombs. I don't like him, though he *is* honest with me. I blame him for not being honest with others. Father says he was educated to amuse and mystify the people. Isn't it horrid to be mystified?"

Ruth assured her it was and then she left with Dombey at her heels.

"Dombey knows," said Ruth; "and it's no wonder. She is so good and honest."

"The wonder is that Mr. Schwarmer should have such a child," said Ralph, "or Mrs. Schwarmer either from all we hear about her. What a pity that she should be dragged around the world against her will; but she 'blames' them and no doubt but they need her blame."

"And Mr. Bombs, the man that's been educated to amuse and mystify people. He needs her blame without the shadow of a doubt; and he will end by falling desperately in love with her," said Ruth. "It came over me like a flash, when she was speaking of him."

“Then it must be so,” laughed Ralph, “for you have a sample on hand. I hope she will marry him and put him to beneficent uses.”

When Ralph came home to tea he brought another item of news. Some kind of a building was going to be constructed on Schwarmer Hill; and no one as yet had been able to find out what it was to be.

“A Bombs’ mystification, perhaps,” sighed Ruth.

The library building went on very rapidly and by the time the cold weather set in, it was enclosed and ready for inside work. It gave evidence of being a plain, substantial, common sense structure, with nothing showy or monumental about it. Whether it was due to Ruth’s original suggestions, Ralph’s timely action, Lawyer Rattlinger’s shrewdness or President Hartling’s practical ability, was not known. The one thing that *was* known, however, and made sure of by every taxpayer in town was that it would not be saddled onto them for support. That it was to be an absolutely free gift. That there would be a liberal sum for books and a sufficient sum set aside to keep it in good running order.

The knowledge concerning the building on Schwarmer Hill was not so clear. In fact it was “extremely hazy,” as Lawyer Rattlinger expressed it. And yet there was no seeming of secrecy about the matter. The boss-workman as well as the architect and builders were remarkably unanimous in saying when questioned, that it was to be a sort of amphitheatre for sports and games of various kinds.

“That settles it, or rather unsettles it,” said the President, “for there are various kinds—a large number of them. They are very various and very brutal many of them. Yes, a great many of them all the way down from the Indian LaCrosse game and Fillipino Hurdle races to Jiu-Jitsu—the treacherous Japanese game of ankle and neck-breaking. Even the college sports must be pursued with the old time barbaric violence and virulence. If we send a son to college in these days to cultivate his mental powers, we may expect he will be swept into the rage for physical culture, and wind up by losing an eye or two fingers at the least.”

This was the President’s point of view very decidedly after having had a friend who cultivated his physical powers while in college to that extent; but he was ready to confess that he had not always held such a view. He recalled with regret a time when he had encouraged brutal games by inviting a party of tired young men and women to witness a football game.

“What an idiocy,” he exclaimed, “when there were so many perfectly harmless

amusements which I could have taken them to; but I didn't think about it. I wanted to take them where they wanted to go, instead of wanting to take them where they ought to go and managing to make it pleasant for them."

"And so there was a Providence in your friend's hurt after all, you see," said the minister.

"No, I don't see it," replied the President, "else I should have to accuse Providence of hitting the wrong man. I ought to have been the one to have had my eye plucked out or my hand plucked off. For I had been taught the good old Quaker rule, to avoid all games that are gotten up by men, for the purpose of beating each other; I'm going to stand by that rule after this, and I hope Schwarmer can be induced to draw the lines at the dangerous games."

Ruth hoped so too, but her solicitude was not to be put aside. Every week she would have Ralph go with her to The Hill presumably for a walk, but in reality to see what the huge thing looked like. She feared it was going to be something objectionable and unhelpable.

"It doesn't matter so much, does it dear, if he keeps it to himself—that is if it doesn't slop over onto us?"

"Yes it does matter, Ralph—that is if it turns out to be an arena for pyrotechnics and that horrible Bombs is in it. If he is, it will be an advertisement for the blinding and demoralization of every youth within sight of it. Powder and dynamite will be the fashion and our Fourth of July horror will rage again. O Ralph! Ralph!"

"Here am I, dear! Trust! trust! We will be on the watch-tower. If Mr. Bombs comes we will see what we can do with him. There's always something to be done if we can only keep a level head. You must not get too much excited over it, dear, you know the reason why. You remember the gardener's wife, poor soul. Let's stop and see her on our way down."

"Yes, Ralph," replied Ruth eagerly. "Perhaps she will know if Miss Schwarmer is coming up this Fourth. If there is anybody in the world who can influence that perverse Mr. Bombs rightly I believe it is she."

Mary Langley, the gardener's wife, had never recovered from the hurt and fright caused by the explosion of Mr. Bombs' rocket. Hers was one of those double hurts for which *materia medicae* has no remedy. She recovered sufficiently to be

able to attend to her household duties and to the wants of her two little children. Miss Schwarmer's well filled purse had helped her thus far; but it could not tide her over the invalid line. Dreams of fiery serpents and the lost baby kept her from refreshing sleep night after night. Her husband ridiculed her in vain for her so-called woman's weakness. Her hurt was too deep for money or ridicule to mend. She grew thinner and thinner, day after day, and ghostly white until it was rumored about town that she was going into a decline.

The Norwoods were ill prepared, however, for the frail spiritual looking creature who met them at the door.

“Beg pardon,” said Ruth, “perhaps you are not well enough to receive us. I have heard about you and have been wanting to come and see you ever since; but I thought you had so many friends—and better ones—at least those who could do more for you. You are well acquainted with the Schwarmers, of course. Miss Schwarmer is lovely and she spoke to me so kindly about you.”

“Yes,” replied Mrs. Langley, “Miss Adelaide is very, very kind and as good and honest as she can be and she did help me all she could, bless her heart, in deed and word; but she had to go away and it seemed as though nobody else knew just how I felt, and she so young too—the others made fun of me.”

Tears came into the hollow eyes as she stopped speaking.

“Made fun of you?” questioned Ruth, looking at Ralph wonderingly.

“O! the brutes!” he exclaimed, angrily. He could not trust himself to say more. He wanted to ask who the brutes were and why her husband did not resent such cruel insult?

“I suppose I *was* foolish,” she said apologetically. “Even my husband can’t quite understand why I was so frightened—frightened out of my wits, he says; nor why I can’t get over it. Why I want to go away from this place. He hired to Mr. Schwarmer for three years and he can’t go and it wouldn’t do to quarrel with him. Poor James! He works hard all day and is so tired at night; and night is the time I feel the terror coming on!”

Ruth gave a little sob.

“I can understand you, dear Mrs. Langley. It’s the horrible fireworks and their promoters you are afraid of, and you are afraid they will come again. I used to feel that way until we went to work to get rid of them; but you are helpless here on the Schwarmer grounds. Then there’s the new building. Have you any idea what use that will be put to?”

“My husband talks of beautiful horses and races and fairs and things of that kind, but I have my fears. I know they won’t let Fourth of July pass without doing something dreadful; but I shan’t be here then.”

Ruth knew that she meant that she expected to die before that time, but she would not take it so.

“Indeed you must not stay here. You must come over and stay with us. We are not going to have any of those horrible things. You must come, you and the children, too; if you do not come of your own accord, we will come and take you away,” laughed Ruth.

Mrs. Langley promised to come and Ruth and Ralph went home far better pleased than they would have been if they had been returning bridal calls in the ordinary stereotyped fashion.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE QUERY. RUTH'S DOG DOMBEY BRINGS HER A NOTE.

THE first day of May Mr. Schwarmer came and brought a carload of workmen. There had been a very large number from the beginning. The Library building was completed and the building on the hill had been going on very rapidly, particularly through the months of March and April, but the pace was nothing to what it was after Mr. Schwarmer's advent. The large lot on which the main building stood was enclosed by a high wall with gates, elevated seats and awning posts. The building itself was decorated, winged, painted, balconied and improved in wonderful ways. Band stands and observation towers arose as if by magic.

Mr. Schwarmer was a man who liked to rush things, and he was here and there and everywhere, pushing the work. When questioned as to its uses he laughed and said:

"That is a query even to myself. Come to think of it, I guess I'll name it 'The Query.' It would be a good name for it and might be spelled with one e or two. A very good one truly. A capital one, since its gates are to be open to all the queer and popular things—that is the most popular, amusing, instructive and queer; and as there is always a question as to which is the most truly popular *et cetera*. The people of Killsbury and the county can hold their fairs here if they wish, and bring their showiest bed quilts and biggest pumpkins or things of that kind, most assuredly they can."

A week after Mr. Schwarmer's arrival Mrs. Schwarmer and Adelaide came, bringing with them the Librarian and the books. The work of putting the Library in order was to be rushed also, for it was to be formally opened and handed over to the town on the Fourth of July, with appropriate ceremonies.

On the day of their arrival Dombey did not make his appearance at dinner—a function which he was in the habit of observing as punctually as the other members of the family.

“Where in the world is Dombey!” exclaimed Ruth. “You don’t suppose he has gone to the train to meet Adelaide Schwarmer again? Mrs. Langley told me she was expected today.”

“Very likely,” laughed Ralph. “Dogs get habits as well as the rest of us. See, there he comes, running like Jehu! He hasn’t captured her this time; but he acts as though chain lightning had struck him. Something is up you may be sure.”

And so there was. Dombey came rushing up to Ruth with a note tied to his collar. It was from Adelaide Schwarmer, inviting her to meet them at the Library the next morning. They (she and her mother) wanted to consult her about some of the arrangements. “Father,” she said, “was very busy and had given it all into their hands to manage.”

“It’s well he has,” said Ralph angrily. “You wouldn’t have my consent to go, if he were going to be there.”

“Oh I don’t think he is really a bad man, Ralph. Only blind with regard to the characters of those about him, just as he is custom-blind in regard to other things. Anyway I forgive him for his daughter’s sake.”

“Better wait until you see what performances he introduces on Schwarmer Hill.”

“As long as Miss Schwarmer is there I feel as though the Hill has a guardian angel—or a recording angel at least, Ralph.”

“Be careful though. Don’t let them harness you into doing any hard work at the library. You know rich women are apt to do that sort of thing and you have to be extra careful of your health just now. Your mother would never forgive me if I should let you overdo while she is away.”

“Don’t be foolish, Ralph. You know how it has always been with papa and mamma. They were over-solicitous. I was never so strong and healthy in my life as I am now. I feel as though I could work, and should be glad to in such a cause. Only think of it! The gift of books and books and books and books instead of firecrackers and cartridges and toy pistols! An invitation to come and help arrange them instead of an order to pack up and leave the country to get rid of the horrible Fourth! Then the exercises in the Library instead of the carnival of death and destruction. Can you realize it, Ralph? Do you really take it all in?”

She seized hold of his arms and gave him a vigorous shaking up.

“You see Dombey got here first; but how well you are looking,” exclaimed Adelaide, when Ruth entered the library. “How plump and fair you have grown since I was here! Let me kiss you.”

A pink glow came to Ruth’s cheek which made her pretty face look still prettier, and had its effect on Adelaide also. She added shyly: “Are you tired? Did you walk? I ought to have come for you in my phaeton.”

“My husband brought me,” replied Ruth, recovering herself in time to meet the formal salutation and the cold discriminating glance of Mrs. Schwarmer, with wifely dignity.

“I trust your father and mother are usually well. Perhaps I ought to have sent for them to assist me in this matter; but Adelaide told me you were very enthusiastic about the library and knew everything about books. There’s an alcove set aside for the very, very choice ones—books that no one should be allowed to handle, who is ignorant of their value, so the Librarian says; but he has so much to do, we are going to help him all we can.”

“Papa and mamma are in Chicago with an uncle who is very ill—not expected to live day after day.”

“How sad,” said Mrs. Schwarmer, in the even tone which made it difficult to tell whether she meant the uncle’s sickness or the father’s and mother’s absence from home. “Mr. Bombs is in Chicago, too. He went there to meet Mr. Pang, the celebrated Pyrotechnic King. Chicago is to celebrate its centennial before long, and Mr. Pang is to do wonders there. A *fac simile* of old Fort Dearborn will be built on purpose for him to burn down, and he will give a realistic representation of the “Great Chicago Fire” by covering the roofs of all the highest and largest buildings in the city with Roman lights, which are to be lighted all at once and burn for hours and hours, and make it appear as though the city were really being burned up again. No doubt it will be splendid. Did Mr. Bombs say anything about it in the letter you got this morning, Adelaide? I was too busy to read it.”

“He didn’t say he’d seen Pang himself, but the Pang Co. are making great preparations for the burning,” said Adelaide, “and I think it’s horrid. It’s bad enough to have a city half burned up by accident; but to pay thousands of dollars to have it burned up in play is silly and sinful and I’m going to tell Bombs so when he comes back.”

“Hush, Adelaide,” said Mrs. Schwarmer, authoritatively. “You are too young to

express such strong opinions."

"My poor uncle lost his all in that terrible fire, his wife and children even. It broke him down utterly. He has never seen a well day since," said Ruth. "To him even the shadow of such an experience would be dreadful."

"Indeed! what a pity!" said Mrs. Schwarmer in the same even tone that left one in doubt as to where her pity came in, as she went into an adjoining room to have another consultation with the Librarian, after which she rustled out to her carriage and drove swiftly away.

"I am going to take you home in my phaeton when you are ready to go," said Adelaide; "but you must see the rare books first."

"Certainly," replied Ruth, "and I would like to do something to help you, and perhaps I can."

"It would help me to have you here, to see you and talk with you," replied Adelaide; "but you must not climb or reach or handle the heavy books. It isn't necessary. I can climb like a cat, and I know some nice boys who would handle them as carefully as you or I or mamma. It's all moonshine, what the Librarian says about them. They will have to be handled by anybody who chooses, if they are going to be of any use to the town."

"Ralph would be delighted to help—help climb," laughed Ruth, "I know he would. Then how about the catalogues? I can write fairly well—so my husband says?"

"Oh I'm so glad, Mrs. Ruth. Pardon, let me call you Ruth. It's such a pretty name. I write a horrid hand. Besides, I want your company. Mamma is going to be awfully busy up to the house, and Mr. Bombs is coming back in a few days. May I drive around for you every morning at ten o'clock?"

"Yes indeed you may," replied Ruth. "I shall be delighted to come and be with you and help you and talk with you, I'm sure I shall. We think alike about so many things—about monstrous celebrations and dangerous fireworks and the burning up of money, when so much is needed to make the poor comfortable, and improve the world. As though there were not sad accidents enough in the world without going to work and making accidents. Only think of the poor people of Martinique! Only just recovered from the catastrophe of Mont Pelee when a hurricane comes and sweeps away their homes again! I wonder the

horrible Fire-kings don't go over there and try to amuse the people with a Mont Pelee eruption! This making sport out of such terrible happenings seems to be the rage just now."

"King Pang *has* invented a Mont Pelee firecracker," said Adelaide; "and a huge noise-maker it is—fifteen feet long and explodes fifty times! Do you know we visited him when we were in London and I didn't like him at all, though he is awful rich and entertained us splendidly. He invents fiery shows and goes all over the world to pile up money out of them, although he is worth millions already."

"Please tell me about him," exclaimed Ruth eagerly. "I wonder if he is the one that I heard so much boasting about in Canada. The one that wooled the Americans into buying their '*Independence Day annihilators*' of him they said. Those horrible cannon crackers, and things of that sort which kill and maim so many every year—dangerous things that never ought to be manufactured or sold in any country under the heavens. He seems like an arch-fiend to me."

"He is as proud as Lucifer anyway," replied Adelaide. "The whole family are as proud as they can be. They have *a coat of arms* and everything as magnificent as the royal family."

"A Coat of Arms! What has he done to deserve a Coat of Arms?" asked Ruth.

"O! horrible things!—or his grandfathers have. One of them invented a war explosive for the British navy and another gave them a lot of powder to carry on the awful Crimean war! The Government made a Knight of him to pay him for his powder; and they are dreadfully proud of it. They've got it all written down on their Coat," laughed Adelaide.

"They had better write down the number of human beings their fiendish inventions and gifts have killed," said Ruth indignantly.

"O how glad I am to hear you say that. I told Mr. Bombs so in those very words," exclaimed Adelaide with her eyes brim full of honest glow. "And mamma said I was too young to have an opinion about such matters," she added in a grieved tone.

"I am only nineteen," remarked Ruth, "but I have had an experience, and that amounts to more than years, sometimes."

"Do you know Mr. Bombs is only twenty-one. It seems so strange that he should

take it into his head to be a Pyrotechnist. But his mother died when he was young and I suspect his father was too busy making his millions to think about his training. He told me once that his nurse used to take him to the beach every evening almost, to see the fireworks. So you see he had them burned into him almost."

"Probably the nurse had a fondness for that sort of barbarism," replied Ruth. "O how wrong it is for parents to be so careless of their children! To trust them as they do, to the ignorant, the foolish and the wicked—they know not whom—often to anybody who is willing to wear a nurse's cap and apron."

"I'm sure that's the way it was with Mr. Bombs. His head is full of fireworks. He went over to London on purpose to see King Pang and get hold of the secrets of the trade; but I think he found him rather foxy," laughed Adelaide.

"Of course," said Ruth. "The English Pyro-king does not relish having a rival in the American market."

CHAPTER XVIII.

MR. BOMBS' DISGUST WITH CHICAGO AND THE PYRO-KING'S PLANS.

MR. BOMBS came on from Chicago the evening after the first meeting of Ruth and Adelaide in the Library, greatly to the surprise of the Schwarmers, especially to Adelaide; but when she questioned him about it, he turned away without giving a reasonable excuse and went in search of her father.

"What! torn yourself away from Chicago so soon," exclaimed Schwarmer—"the mighty central city—the huge centre of finance, rush and pluck!"

"Faugh!" replied Bombs, turning green. "The huge centre of soot, dirt and smoke! The mighty central inferno, with the Pang emissaries plotting to reburn it, and measuring it to see how much more smoke and flame it will contain."

"Hold on, Fons," laughed Schwarmer, "you are young yet and you are not in it. With the American millionaire *in it* and the foreign millionaire out of it, Chicago might have its attractions, even for you—that is, in a business way, most assuredly it might. You might have to wade through mud or dust ankle deep to get at the heart of Finance—that mighty man-made canon in La Salle St.; but hark, Fons, let me tell you that when you are really and truly up and dressed for business, that canon will seem almost as glorious to you as the very finest of the God-made ones. Most assuredly it will. It's the brainy business man's paradise. Enough of the 'filthy lucre' is handled there every day to run a kingdom."

"More's the pity," retorted Bombs. "Why can't they use a little of the stuff to abate the smoke and mud nuisance and fill up the 'bad lands' that girdle it like a slimy serpent?"

"Because the very size of the business stands in the way, Fons. From every street corner you noticed about a dozen chimneys spouting clouds of black smoke. At least I did when I was there; but I knew it meant business and a great deal of it, and that it would not be interfered with. Rest assured it wouldn't. Then there are the Stock Yards. They are not beautiful but they are mighty. A thousand acres of

slaughter-pens mean meat for the hungry millions. They are mighty interesting looked at in that way, most assuredly they are."

"I didn't give the whole thing but one look," sniffed Bombs.

"No, of course you didn't," laughed Schwarmer. "You were on the wrong scent, no doubt. After the beautiful, so to speak. Well, I reckon nobody ever accused Chicago of being beautiful, really and truly beautiful; but even the leopard has its spots, and there are some spots around and about the sides and tail end of the city that are just beautiful enough."

"Yes, it *is* beautiful along the margin of the lake, where the city is not—or the great bulk of it—but they are making huge preparations to spoil that. When its Centennial comes they will turn its liquid beauty into a bed of hissing, fiery serpents a mile long!"

"Yes, and Pang's bill is to be a mile long, rest assured it is," laughed Schwarmer. "He's sharp enough for them. He isn't there for fun or in search of the beautiful. He's there for business and he's got it, Johnny Bull fashion, by the horns—on the lake front and on the house-tops, most assuredly he has. No, Fons, business isn't a beauty of itself, you know, or will know when you get into the whirl of it; and Chicago is the wildest kind of a whirlpool for business."

"But I'm not there by a long shot," said Bombs, with a sigh of relief, "and Pang is not there, at least I couldn't find him."

"But you've found us and we are glad to see you, most assuredly we are; and really there isn't much time to spare if you are going to get your new piece in tip-top order. It won't do to have any failure this time, most assuredly it won't."

"I can't do much until the Pyro-men come; but I'm glad to be here again and out of that infernal business hole," said Bombs, frankly. "I found Pang's pyro-men so immersed, so perfectly pickled in the big scheme of bombarding Fort Dearborn, reburning the city and burning Mr. Flamingdon (or whatever his name is) that I couldn't find out about the new colors—the scientific things of the trade. It's all trade and no science with them now. They intend to cover everything in their line. They are scheming to get hold of 'The Chicago Amusement Association,' I suspect."

"What's that, Fons?"

"Can't describe it full length," laughed Bombs, "but one section of it is directing

attention to the small boys' amusement on the Fourth of July. Conducted by himself they have discovered that it is not only dangerous but altogether insane, so they are seriously at work trying to construct a sane Fourth, which is to wind up with fireworks of such a splendid order as to indemnify the small boy for not being allowed to have a hand in letting them off. Of course this is where Pang will plot to come in with a ten or twenty thousand dollar piece."

"Truly, this Fourth of July reform business is growing to be pretty wide, to reach as far as Chicago. They've got a new name tacked onto it though. '*Sane Fourth!*' Pretty good. You know I told you the other day you hadn't better go into Fourth of July trimmings too deep—most assuredly I did, Fons."

"I don't intend to, Mr. Schwarmer. Historical pieces are my ambition; but that reminds me, I want to ask you something."

"Out with it, my lad, you can't ask me anything I wouldn't be happy to answer, most assuredly you can't."

"It's about Adelaide," said Bombs, in an assured tone. "I know you and father have talked of uniting your families. Of course she is young yet and I am not very aged; but I am old enough to entertain the idea; and what I want to ask of you is permission to talk to her about it. My father has written me that I am to go abroad for an extended trip—that is, after I have got through here and witnessed the reburning of Chicago. When I return I shall be quite a mature man and she will be a charming young lady, no doubt. You see what would be likely to happen; but I do not feel like going away without sounding the depths—getting a sort of a free-holder's lease—lest another fellow should come along and secure the prize. I think it well to look out for such matters ahead of time."

"All right, Fons. I would like nothing better than to unite our families—consolidate them, so to speak. I believe in consolidations of that kind, I assure you I do, with my whole heart; but you'll have to do your own proposing. I'm a true Yankee on that head. I should never get Anglicised on that point if I should sail over to England every month. I assure you I shouldn't. You will have to do the straight thing. You needn't try to win her in a round-about way through me or her mamma. She's always had her head pretty much, and perhaps that's what makes her rather heady. She is honest, though, and has very strong notions of the right and the wrong of things. She often takes me to task for *not* squaring my business concerns by the 'Golden Rule.' Probably she would do the same with her husband. Eh! Fons?"

“I understand,” replied Fons. “She’s at the formative period now. She will have left off a great many of her notions in two or four years’ time. Besides, I am not afraid of them even as they are.”

“Proceed then, young man. Push ahead with the sounding. You have my hearty permission, most assuredly you have. You seem like an only son already; and you have my best wishes for your success with the plummet-line, so to speak. No use of wasting any great amount of lead on it, though, most assuredly not. You will be able to ascertain the exact degree of perpendicularity in Addie’s case without an enormous waste of time or money. She is straight up and down as a rule, most decidedly so. There’s nothing crooked about her or slantendicular, as there often is about the opposite sex—rest assured there is not. Unlike the vast majority of fathers I have kept up an intimate acquaintance with my daughter ever since she was born, and I can give you my hand or oath on that point, most assuredly I can. I’ve nothing more to say except that I shall keep an eye on the other fellows while you are away, and that she’s heart free to date. She’s only a grown up child, so to speak—all ready to bloom but not fully bloomed out, rest assured she is not.”

With such characteristic assurance, Mr. Bombs left his prospective father-in-law to seek Adelaide. He was anxious to make his first experiment with the plummet-line as Mr. Schwarmer had not altogether inaptly called it. It pleased him to fancy that he had already scored a success in the matrimonial line, but whether it was Mr. Schwarmer’s hearty permission to talk freely to his daughter, or the plummet-line illustration that tickled his fancy the most, he could hardly have told. He may have been pleased to think that his own expression as to “sounding the depths,” had been its inspiration, for he was at the age when he was beginning to use idiomatic language and large-sized words and would be apt to note their effectiveness. As to Schwarmer, he may have had a youthful experience with plummet-lines even though it may have gone no farther than the sounding of a goose-pond.

When he found her she was coming up the hill from Mrs. Langley’s. She appeared on its summit at the moment when the sun was plunging down behind it like a ball of fire. It was rather a remarkable coincidence and it struck him as such, that when she got to the place where Mrs. Langley had first appeared on the night of her accident, she stopped, threw her head upward and clasped her hands around her body just as the poor scared woman had done. He understood the pantomime perfectly and it pleased him, although it recalled one of his most signal failures—that is from a professional point of view. From the artistic point

it had been considered quite a success—“quite madonna like,” Miss Drawling had said, and although he would not have given a “fip” for her opinion on any other subject, he thought she had said one very good thing. His regret for the accident had never been heart deep. He inclined to the brute belief that accidents as a rule added to the human interest in life—at least the kind of accidents that call forth the tenderest kind of sympathy.

“You, have been posing,” he said as he went forward to meet her. “Really you did it well. You see I was watching for you—to tell you something.”

“I have been down to see poor Mary. She hasn’t got well of her fright yet. What a dreadful thing it was!”

“Yes, but you blamed me for it at the time, roundly. I hope you are not going to blame me over again,” said Bombs lightly.

“There’s no use. The blame will last.”

“You will forgive me before I go away.”

“How do you know, Mr. Bombs?”

“O Pythagoras in Petticoats! You are here again! I am undone!” laughed Bombs.

“Don’t call me that or I shall run away before you tell me *your something*.”

“That would be a dense calamity.”

“Why dense, Mr. Bombs?”

“Because I could never get through the tangle if you were not here to ask leading questions, Miss Adelaide.”

“I am here and I am listening. But if you don’t begin to tell me at once I am going.”

“Here it is, then, without exasperating prelude. I am going away immediately after the Fourth to be gone from one to four years—four probably. Only think of that immense stretch of time! Are you glad or sad to hear the astounding revelation?”

“Before I answer I want to ask where you are going and exactly why?”

“To Germany, Austria and China. To schools of Pyrotechny everywhere—to

study up the art and find out the secrets of the craft."

"In order to beat King Pang at his trade and become an American Pyrotechnic King?"

"Undoubtedly! my father is worth his million, he would not let me take a back seat in any profession."

"I am sorry then, Mr. Bombs."

"For whom or what, Miss Adelaide."

"For you, and that you are going on such a quest."

"Are you not the least bit sorry on your own account. Will you not be a trifle lonesome without me to blame, Miss Adelaide?"

"Perhaps, Mr. Bombs, in a way."

"In what way, Miss Adelaide?"

"Just as your sister or mother would be, I fancy."

"Sisterly! Motherly!" laughed Bombs. "That's infinitely correct, just now, but in two or four years from now wifely will be the proper word, and you will feel very different."

"I'm sure four years or a thousand will not make any difference in my feelings about—"

"About what or who?" insisted Bombs.

"About you," she added promptly.

He was looking at her with a brazen sort of fixedness that would have made almost any mature woman blush. He wanted to make her blush and he expected she would, but he was disappointed. She looked straight at him and was as placid as the traditional moonbeam.

CHAPTER XIX.

SCHWARMER DOES A LITTLE HUSTLING ON ADELAIDE'S ACCOUNT—A FOURTH OF JULY BUGLE.

THREE skilled Pyrotechnics came down from the city a week before the Fourth to set up Mr. Bombs' Pyro-spectacle, The Siege of Yorktown. Mr. Bombs himself was very busy superintending the work, which was conducted with all possible secrecy. He did not absolutely refuse to answer Adelaide's questions; but he called her Pythagoras in Petticoats quite frequently and she knew that whenever the epithet came in, it was to stand in the place of an explanation; but she soon found out enough about it to know she wasn't going to like it and she told him so frankly. She could not do otherwise. The frankness that her father claimed to have she possessed in a full degree. Moreover, she had a desire for correct knowledge which he did not possess.

She re-read the Siege of Yorktown and the life of Washington during those days and she could talk intelligently about both.

"It's sad enough to think, Mr. Bombs, that Yorktown *was* besieged and so many lives lost and so much property destroyed, without having it done over and over and over again."

"I'm afraid you don't love your country and the Father of it as well as you should, Miss Adelaide."

"Yes, I do, Mr. Bombs. I love my country and I love Washington and I wonder what he would say, were he to come back after all these years, and see us besieging an imaginary Yorktown, and burning up money which he and his men had almost perished for the want of. You haven't represented the misery and poverty of it, Mr. Bombs."

"No, Miss Adelaide, nor the money chests of Rochambeau and Laurens," laughed Bombs.

“You represent only what you consider the glory of it, Mr. Bombs. Washington would never admit that there was any glory in war. He said it was ‘a plague that should be banished from the earth.’ What would he say if he should take a look at the earth as it is now and see the millions and millions spent to glorify war, be-star it and write it on God’s sky in lines of fire! And, worse still, see thousands of innocent youths sacrificed yearly, not to the patriotic sentiment, but to the patriotic fury. There was little Laurens Cornwallis’ terrible accident! Have you any idea how it could have happened, Mr. Bombs?”

“Yes, I have an idea, Miss Adelaide—at least an idea of how it might have occurred, but ideas are not worth much without proofs. They are apt to be rather prejudicial, especially with young ladies of your age. Perhaps I will tell you my idea sometime.”

“Before you go away, Mr. Bombs?”

“No, surely not. You will not be much older then,” laughed Bombs. “When I come back from Europe you will be quite a young lady. The explosion of an idea or of fireworks will not be apt to shock you then.”

“I shall always be shocked when I think of that beautiful boy’s death, Mr. Bombs. It’s a dreadful mystery!”

“Was his name Laurens or Lawrence.” asked Bombs, laconically.

“Laurens. It was his mother’s maiden name. Her ancestors were French.”

“Laurens Cornwallis! Indeed! Two celebrated names. English and French conjoined. Do they claim to be descendants of the French financier and of the English fighter?” asked Bombs.

“I have never heard so. Wouldn’t it be lovely though? Foe meeting foe in true love and friendliness through their children. Mr. and Mrs. Cornwallis are a very devoted couple.”

“My point of view was simply consolatory. Providence permitting, it might not be well to have too many Cornwallis’s on American soil,” said Bombs.

“We have room enough and to spare. I read a letter yesterday from Washington to Lafayette. He said it’s a strange thing that there should not be room enough in the world for men to live without cutting each other’s throats.”

“But he laid siege to Yorktown all the same, Miss Adelaide.”

“Yes, but after it was all over and he had grown older and wiser, he saw how horrible it was. I almost know he did.”

“I am only twenty-one and the siege is booked,” laughed Bombs. “I wonder if Mrs. Ruth Cornwallis will come to witness it? I should think she would be interested, especially if one of her grandfathers paid French money for it and the other had to surrender.”

“I think she will not, but I’m going to ask her today,” replied Adelaide, as she started off for the Library.

When she returned she told Bombs that Ruth was supposedly allied to the Laurens and Cornwallis of Revolutionary fame and that her husband, Ralph Oswald Norwood, could trace his ancestry back to the British merchant who told King George that “nothing would satisfy the Americans short of permission to fish to an unlimited extent on the banks of New Foundland.”

“Then I shall have to give them seats in the front row, I suppose,” laughed Bombs.

“No, they are not coming, Mr. Bombs. Ruth attended the Queen’s birthday celebration once when she was in Canada. It wound up with one of the great London Pyro-king’s shows. She did not like it at all and was afterwards shocked to learn that America had paid millions of dollars for such shows during the twenty-five years of his occupancy of her market and that they were advertisements for his Fourth of July Fireworks, which are a curse to the land.”

Mr. Bombs received the information with an air of unconcern and Adelaide went to her father’s office. She had a piece of information for him also, and something more.

“O father, Ruth can’t come to our dedication if you are going to have a military company with guns and swords and a Fourth of July racket band in the procession. Such things make her sick.”

“What nonsense, Adelaide! I guess she can stand it since the small boy is not permitted to have a hand in it.”

“No she can’t, father. It isn’t nonsense. How would you feel if I should be brought to you tomorrow all torn to pieces as her little brother was?”

“O, my dear child! don’t mention it!”

“But I *must* mention it and I want you to look straight into my eyes and answer me truly! Suppose I should be brought home to you this Fourth with my eyes both blown out and mamma’s jewels lodged in the sockets, do you think you could ever bear the sight or sound of horrid explosive things after that—bear them without a shudder—even if they were in the hands of grown-up people?”

“Such a thing never could happen, Addie.”

“It did happen to Ruth’s little brother. The jewels were his mother’s wedding sapphires.”

“O Addie! Addie!”

“Answer me truly, father.”

“No, dear child, I never could.”

“Ruth can’t either. She has more reason than you could have. She’s like poor Mary, the gardener’s wife. Her husband and parents know it wouldn’t be safe for her to come if there’s going to be guns or things of that sort. She wants to come so much that Ralph was going to speak to you and see if they couldn’t be left out; but I told him I was the one to speak, because the Library was going to be named for me.”

“Well, there is something in that, Adelaide, most assuredly there is; but it’s rather short notice. The military company were coming on the morning train.”

“Telegraph. You’d do it if stocks were in jeopardy—you know you would—you are such a hustler.”

“Of course, of course! Here it goes then. I can’t ruin my reputation as a hustler,” said Schwarmer, stepping to the ’phone and calling up the regiment. “Don’t come to the dedication of The Adelaide Library.”

“Now, there’s one hustle for you, what next?” laughed Schwarmer. Adelaide laughed too and clapped her hands.

“O! isn’t it jolly, father! The soldiers can stay at home for once and dear, sweet, little Mrs. Ruth can come.”

“What next, Addie? I’ve got on my hustling cap. Call off.”

“The Independence Day racket band and the rockets must be left out of the procession, father.”

“O! now! that strikes nearer home, Addie! But I can do it. I can hustle things near by, most assuredly I can, if I once set out with my hustling suit all on. Bombs will have to confine his fire to Yorktown if I say so, won’t he?”

“Yes, and you’ll say so, won’t you, father?”

“Yes, Addie, I’ll say so if you really want me to; but aren’t you afraid it will hurt Bombs’ feelings to have his precious rockets left out *in the dark*, so to speak. He has invented a new kind on purpose for daylight show—very rich and dark and velvety, exceedingly so, and he has named it the ‘Airy Navy Rocket.’ I suppose he intends it for a hit at Lord Tennyson’s ‘airy navies grappling in the central blue,’ and no doubt but they’d get hurt if they should ever materialize sufficiently to get hit with Bombs’ rockets,” laughed Schwarmer, looking at Adelaide, keenly. He was wondering how she stood affected toward the young man.

“Airy Navy Rocket!” exclaimed Adelaide. “I won’t have it. I don’t care if his feelings *are* hurt. You know how his horrid rocket hurt poor Mary. It killed her baby, hurt her feelings and made her sick. She and her children are going over to Ruth’s to stay the night of the Fourth. She is afraid to stay with us. O dear! dear! I think it’s dreadful to have our own people feel that way toward us. I can’t endure it. I thought the Common Council had passed a law against sending off dangerous rockets.”

“They have, but it didn’t include Bombs’ brand-fired new navy rocket; and even if it had a few little fines wouldn’t cramp him much,” laughed Schwarmer.

“But I include it. I say he has no business to put those hissing horrors into the Adelaide Library procession. I won’t have the Library named Adelaide if he does.”

“Good for Adelaide,” laughed Schwarmer. “That ends it. I promise. What next? There is something more. I see it in your eye.”

“Yes. There *is* one thing more. Promise not to have the cannon let off. Ruth doesn’t like to hear it and it makes her mother cry, because little Laurens shivered when he heard it the morning before he was killed, and asked her why you didn’t have a bugle?”

Schwarmer turned quickly to the ’phone and called up a music-dealer: “Please send me at once the best bugle and bugler that there is in the market.”

“That’s all, dear blessed father. I’m so happy! What a truly glorious time we are going to have,” cried Adelaide, as she danced out of the office and hastened away to the Library to tell Ruth the good news. She did not tell her about the bugle; but it came in time to speak for itself.

It’s sweet notes penetrated the Cornwallis cottage as the Fourth of July dawned. Mr. and Mrs. Cornwallis were asleep when the first note came. When the second note came Mrs. Cornwallis awoke and wondered if she were still on earth. She had dreamed of being in Heaven with Laurens and listening to a bugle call. It seemed so real to her that she shook her husband’s arm.

“The bugle! The bugle! Did you hear it? Are we in Heaven?”

“Not quite, Angeline, but I think we are happier than we have been in years and I *do* hear a bugle. It’s time for the cannon. Do you suppose anybody could have put it into Schwarmer’s head to have a bugle instead of a cannon?”

Ruth and Ralph were awake when the first note sounded. She was gathering up her nerves for the booming of the cannon and Ralph was saying: “I believe Miss Schwarmer would influence her father to do away with that monster if she knew how it hurt you and especially your mother.”

“She does know it, Ralph, and I believe she has done it,” exclaimed Ruth, springing up and listening intently. “Yes, Ralph, don’t you hear it? It’s a bugle! Really a bugle!”

Another note sweeter and louder greeted them.

“Yes, it is a bugle and a very fine one. What a blessed creature Adelaide Schwarmer is!” said Ralph.

Ruth could not speak. Her heart was so full of gladness, but she indulged in what Ralph called “a happy cry.”

CHAPTER XX.

THE DEDICATION OF THE LIBRARY.

THE dedication of the library proved to be a very enjoyable affair although the military "fuss and feather," the Independence Day racket and the ostentatious hoisting of flags were left out. It was more like a church dedication, minus the mounted marshals and uniformed cadets which are among the latter day improvements or experiments. The Schwarmers stood out more conspicuously than they would otherwise have done; but they were no more so than the Killsbury people felt that they had a right to be. Mrs. Schwarmer was in regal robes with which the ladies were much pleased. Mrs. Martin nodded to Mrs. Arundel and said:

"She has honored us at last by putting on her best apparel."

Adelaide was dressed in a lovely white mull. Nobody had noticed until then how very pretty she had grown. Mr. Schwarmer insisted on wearing his plain business suit as it was eminently proper he should since he had to do the main business part—that is, hand over the deeds to the Town. That being done he made a short characteristic speech, in which he said:

"This building is not a monument to myself, most assuredly it is not; but it would have been if the architect had carried his point. He planned to have a giraffe style of tower, which was to rise about sixty feet above the roof and be furnished with a bell that would weigh 3,000 pounds and peal out every hour of the day and night. But as it was going to be a gift to the people and named after my daughter I thought they ought to have something to say about it, and they did; most assuredly they did (cheers and laughter). You see, my dear friends and fellow citizens, I have discarded the old barbarous saying—'Never look a gift-horse in the mouth.' Hereafter my maxim will be: Look a gift horse in the mouth very carefully and pay particular attention to his grinders. (Laughter and applause.) But, as I was saying, the architect's plan was handed over to the Golden Rule President and referred to the people—'all the people,' my daughter included, and they decided that the giraffe tower and thunderous bell would be a superfluity if not a nuisance, most assuredly they did. They decided that they did

not want to be kept awake nights by the clanging and the whanging of a brazen bell. Also that they had never had any trouble finding out the time of day."

Schwarmer sat down amidst cries of "Good, good!" "Schwarmer's a wit." "What's the matter with Schwarmer? He's a wit. He's a wit."

Mrs. Schwarmer was to do the naming of the library as Adelaide was under age; and so it was highly proper and natural that Adelaide should stand between her father and mother during the process; and she did stand between them with her slender hands resting on an arm of each and looking as one of the Killsburyians remarked, "for all the world as though she were going to fly."

She really did feel happy enough to fly when she saw the radiant faces of Ruth and Ralph and of Mrs. and Mr. Cornwallis, who had come on from Chicago on purpose to attend the dedication.

Yes, the people of Killsbury really did enjoy this peaceful, home-like affair. Although they may not have been fully aware of it, they really enjoyed it much more than they possibly could, if there had been a whole regiment of strange soldiers to take all the best seats and leave them to hang on the outside and peer in at the doors and windows. They enjoyed the speeches, for all the speech-makers in town were there, the Golden Rule President and Father Ferrill inclusive. They would not have heard a word of them if they had been pushed to the background, with an Independence day racket in the rear. Besides it was so much more in harmony with books and the spirits that made them or would wish to commune with them, than the ordinary civic fuss and noise would have been.

Mr. Bombs did not attend. Indeed why should he? He had no interest in it after his new rockets were left out and he was almost as much a stranger in the community as the soldier would have been. Besides he was going to rehearse his piece.

Adelaide appreciated the former reason and Mr. Schwarmer the latter.

"That's right, Fons," said Mr. Schwarmer, "you must have your siege all fixed so nobody will get hurt, most assuredly you must. You'd better leave out some of the most striking things than to have anybody struck blind. I don't know of anybody on this side of the drink that would be willing to be made black and blue all over or have his hair burned off by the falling of a burning tower, as old Crags did at a Pyro-show in London."

“You forget that even his willingness didn’t hold out,” laughed Bombs. “He clothed himself with asbestos for the last night.”

“Don’t know as I blame him much and I’m sure Addie wouldn’t blame him at all, most assuredly I am,” nodded Schwarmer significantly.

Adelaide and her mother came out a moment later dressed for the library. Bombs looked at Adelaide as though he had never seen her before, made his lowest bow and went to his rehearsal. It was well he did for one of the Pyro-men was on the point of charging a motor that would have laid Yorktown in ashes before the siege began.

As it was, however, the siege came off at the appointed time and was witnessed by a large majority of the people of Killsbury besides the Schwarmer guests that came up on the evening train.

The best that can be said of the siege is that it passed off very smoothly and without incident. Historically considered it was just about as valuable as the famous pyro-show of the burning of Rome, where Nero goes down beneath a falling pillar of fire. The siege of Yorktown ended with the going down of Lord Cornwallis and his 8,000 soldiers into the pyrotechnic gulf especially prepared for them.

The audience applauded and Adelaide was feeling relieved to think that all was over when a vociferous encore set in and Mr. Bombs came on the stage. He looked amazingly brilliant. He had all his jewels on surely, and more too, she thought. There seemed to be a nest of them in the curl of jet black hair on his forehead. Was he going to do that tiresome siege over again? No, he would make a bow and a speech, and that would end it certainly.

He began: “The London Pyro-king who boasts of his prowess in this country, has invented a piece which he calls ‘*Eagle Screams*’. Turn about is fair play. I have invented a piece which I have named ‘*Johnny Bull’s Bellows*.’ You will now have the pleasure or grief of looking Johnny full in the face and listening to his bellowings.”

He bowed again more politely and gracefully than before—as graceful as a—serpent, she finally put it and “polite enough to shake hands with a crab,” as the Indians say. She had never seen him look so splendid—so—startling; but she liked him less than ever.

The bull's head that was formed while Adelaide was forming her opinions was shaped like a veritable bull's head and outlined with stars of small magnitude. From its mouth and nostrils issued great streams of different colored fires. The bellowings were effectively but mysteriously produced.

"I can't see faw the life of me, Mr. Bombs, just how you could have compassed all that," Miss Drawling was saying, when something in the nature of a revelation cut short her sentence. The bellowings suddenly ceased and loud oaths and grumblings and groanings took their place. Mr. Bombs rushed behind the scenes and saw the man whom he had engaged to do the bellowing, lying in a collapsed condition on the floor of the stage with a whiskey bottle in his hand.

"Confound you!" exclaimed Bombs, "what does all this mean?"

"It means that the lungs av me have been giving out with the dress rehearsal and the play on top av it and I am sthriving to reinforce them."

"Allow me to say that your efforts are not successful. You can be excused until further notice, and you," he added turning to the chief Pyro, "will oblige me by winding up the spectacle without any more swearing."

The spectacle of Johnny Bull's Bellows was wound up according to order and Mr. Bombs appeared on the stage and gave a humorous account of the complication behind the scenes which had cut off the spectacle rather prematurely, and added that it was not quite so bad as the thing that had happened to Mr. Pang on his first presentation of the burning of Rome. He related the incident and the guests were greatly amused—almost as much, perhaps, as they would have been if "Johnny Bull's Bellowings" had been carried out to the full extent.

And so, Mr. Bombs fancied he had not failed after all. If he had done nothing more he had proved himself to have the proper personality for the making of a successful Pyro-King. He could fascinate and mystify the public. "You see," he said to Adelaide the next morning, "I might better have such accidents and experiences now than when I get about my larger piece—'The Battle of the Wilderness.'"

"The Battle of the Wilderness!" exclaimed Adelaide. "Is it possible you are going to try making an amusement out of that dreadful battle?"

"Yes, it's a possibility," laughed Bombs, "and I know of another possibility, that

will match it beautifully."

"What is it, Mr. Bombs?"

"That Miss Adelaide Schwarmer will not be so scrupulous about such matters when I return from Europe as she is now."

"Why do you think so, Mr. Bombs? Have you changed that way since you were my age?"

"No, Miss Adelaide, but I was a boy and you are a girl."

"What difference could that make, Mr. Bombs."

"A mighty sight of difference, Miss Adelaide. You were not educated or expected to have anything to do with business concerns. I was and with the very biggest kind, and they all mean war, more or less."

"O dear, how dreadful! I can't understand it at all, Mr. Bombs."

"Of course you can't, Miss Adelaide. No truly good woman can. Business, especially of the vasty kind is a devil incarnate in her pure eyes."

"And it seems to me that your kind of business is the worst of all, Mr. Bombs, and that there's no need of it in this world."

"Can't you think of something more consoling? This is your last chance. I am going to the city tomorrow to see King Pang beat himself in his twenty-fifth saturnalia of fire. Then to Chicago to see him help the Chicagoians beat the St. Louis dedication and re-burn the city. After that I will start out on what you have called my 'worst of all business.'"

Adelaide thought of Laurens Cornwallis' tragic death, of Mary Langley's fright and the poor man with the exhausted lungs; but she did not speak until the silence had become unbearable to Mr. Bombs and he asked:

"What is it, Miss Adelaide? Why don't you speak out?"

"Hush! Mr. Bombs. I am listening! I thought I heard a voice. Your mother's or mine."

They were discouraging words for the last—almost cruel he thought for him who had known nothing of mother love and very little of parental care. They made him feel like a savage almost. He went to Miss Drawling for an offset. He knew

he could get enough encouragement there and he did find more than enough. Not but what he liked her flattery but the personality behind it. Faugh! It was simply disgusting. Any woman who could think and talk as she did, was worse than a man. She was a brute. Would it be ever thus, was one of the questions he asked himself. Was one truly loveable creature going to say things to him that would not be endurable in themselves and was another going to say opposite things which would make herself a creature to be abhorred. With the unreasonableness of the youthful man he hoped to find a mean between the two—that is a woman who would love himself most deeply and devotedly even while she was finding fault with and condoning his business enterprise. He did not realize it but it was as much as to say that he knew he was launching out in an unrighteous course; but that he was determined not to turn from it for the love of any creature whatever. Adelaide understood his attitude toward herself and she did not care a rush for it; but there was something about his attitude to others which she did not fully understand. It was struggling to light and it filled her soul with dread.

CHAPTER XXI.

ADELAIDE STAYS AT HOME WITH HER FATHER.

MR. BOMBS did not go to Chicago alone nor as soon as he intended. He planned to go at the first breaking out of the Centennial, which was to be on the day when Chicago was exactly one hundred years old. The city was expected to be in an unusual state of ferment from the beginning; and many things were going to be done to herald the coming glory of the Jubilee week, among the most important of which was to be the much advertised re-burning of the city.

“King Pang is trying to keep his fires to the front; but his ‘*ads*’ will cost him something,” laughed Bombs scornfully; “for there are others and others and they are going to make a big show of everything, from a razor-back porker to a Golden Rule Mayor. It will be tedious.”

“Everything ‘*from a jackass to a lyre*,’ as the Romans say,” remarked Miss Drawling.

“Yes, and you might spell it l-i-a-r,” sneered Bombs. “I don’t believe Pang will be there.”

“Then why do you go so soon?” asked Mrs. Schwarmer. “You will die of *te-di-um*—not *te-deum*. There! Mr. Bombs you have spoiled me. I never made a pun before in my life. I had rather make a pie than a pun.”

They all laughed and Bombs said he “must obey his royal father’s mandate, and find out all he could about Pang’s trade, with or without King Pang’s aid.”

“Perhaps if you will wait a little we will go with you and try to divide the tedium into shares,” suggested Mrs. Schwarmer, whereupon there occurred a large amount of social banter which finally ended in a declaration from the ladies that if he would *wait* they would surely accompany him; and a declaration from *him* that if *they* would surely accompany him, *he* would surely wait.

“And you, Miss Adelaide, and Mr. Schwarmer—you will go and take shares with us, will you not?” asked Bombs.

“Say no, father. We don’t want any stock in the Chicago Jubilee. Let’s stay here together,” said Adelaide.

“Of course we will stay and keep house, Addie—that is, eat up our dividends, so to speak.”

“Good! Good!” laughed Adelaide.

“Indeed, Miss Adelaide! Won’t you feel rather lonely to have us all flit away?”

“No, Mr. Bombs. I can go to see Ruth every day and the faithful Dombey will be my escort. I like it here. It’s so beautiful, still and sweet. I would not go to Chicago and be in all that smoke, dust, fire, dynamite and stuff for anything. O how happy we are going to be here, aren’t we father?”

“Yes, Addie, quite comfortable, I reckon. Of course we shall miss them, most assuredly we shall; but we’ll try and not grow thin over it,” laughed Schwarmer.

The next day after their departure Adelaide went to see Ruth and took her mother’s journal as she had promised.

“You see how dearly I prize it,” she said, taking off the rose-scented covering. “I have had it rebound and adorned with her own portrait and those of other *Friends* so far as I can find them—every one she mentioned in the Journal—William Penn, Elizabeth Fry, Lucretia Mott and many others.”

She handed it to Ruth to look at the portraits. It was bound in soft gray plush and had bands and clasps of solid silver.

“O how delicate and shining!” exclaimed Ruth taking it tenderly from her hand—“like her quiet, cheerful spirit I fancy.”

“Yes, that’s the way I tried to have it seem,” replied Adelaide brushing away a tear; “but I didn’t know as you would understand it. Her dresses are all of this dove-like tint. Sometimes when I am alone I put them on.”

“Did she wear the Friends’ cap and bonnet?” asked Ruth.

“No, she did not think them essential; but she drew the line at adornments for the production of which human life is imperiled or animal life recklessly destroyed,” replied Adelaide.

“And this is your mamma on the first page? How much you look like her!”

“Not mamma, but mother,” said Adelaide. “She wanted me to call her mother—to speak of her and think of her as mother, and I always have. I call my *second* mother, mamma.”

“How old were you when she died?” asked Ruth.

“Three years, and father married again when I was four.”

Ruth handed back the journal and Adelaide began reading in a low tuneful voice like that of a mother talking to her child.

“My Dear Daughter Adelaide:

“The doctors say that I have consumption—the incurable disease, and that I cannot live many years at the longest. I can hardly believe it—I feel so well and happy and have such a desire to live and be ever near thee to guard thee against the evils and perils of this world; but lest I may not I will try to make it plain to thee what the evils and perils are that encompass us around and about—plain to thee according to my light, received through the teachings that have been handed down to me through a long line of ancestry, from such good and wise men as George Fox and William Penn. Remember that I do not say that they were the only wise teachers in the world or that their light is the perfect light or rather all the light; but that it is good so far as it goes has not as yet been gainsayed. Even thy father who was not reared in my faith, can find no flaw in it except that it is impracticable in the present imperfect conditions of the world. I trust he is beginning to see the light of Christ as it is and will be. Keep near him, dear child, very near him. Seek for the living light together, hand in hand. It is needed everywhere, in our daily walk and conversation and even in our dress and adornments. I am not one who thinks that the cut or style of a dress or hat is of great importance and yet I have been led to perceive that there is a line beyond which it would be a sin to go—that we should use nothing for personal adornment which calls for the cruel slaughter of animals or for vicious and degrading work from our fellow creatures. Lest words fail to express my meaning, I will give thee an experience of my own as an illustration.

“Thy father gave me a set of pearls for a wedding gift. All my friends both in and out of Friends Society said it was a beautiful and appropriate gift. I thought so too. Their gentle lustre pleased me. They were in harmony with my silver-gray gown. We went to Paris for our wedding trip. One day we visited the famous oyster markets and parks which provide such a bountiful food supply for the sustenance of the human race.

“‘What a blessing particularly to the working people,’ said thy father. ‘The ever-ready meat that unlike beef does not have to be killed and cooked.’

“But even while we were talking of the goodness of Providence in furnishing such a convenient sort of food, a shadow crossed our path, that startled us both. It was a man with a sallow complexion, bulging brow and piercing eyes. He was hurrying on at a wild and rapid pace but as he observed us he stopped stone still and glared at us—or rather at my pearl brooch and ring—glancing from one to the other with a greedy look that frightened me for I had read of people being robbed of jewels in the streets of Paris in broad daylight.

“‘Oh! he’s not dangerous,’ laughed the guide. ‘He’s one of those scientific wretches who is on the watchout for pearl oysters. He goes prowling around the oyster beds and markets in search of them. He was looking at your pearls to see if they had a *perfect skin* and a *fine orient*.’

“‘I see he is interested in oysters as pearl producers instead of food products,’ said thy father.

“‘He has curious ideas about pearls,’ said the guide. ‘He says they are the product of disease in the animal—that the disease is contagious and he is hard at work trying to spread the contagion!’

“‘Spreading contagion among oysters! What a work for a sane man,’ said thy father. ‘How does he manage the business?’

“‘He takes the oysters that are afflicted with the pearl disease and puts them in the bed with those that are not afflicted and keeps them there until they catch the disease. He says it is as easy to spread as the small pox.’

“O how horrid! I cried. How satanic! To think of going to work deliberately to introduce disease and contagion, even among the lower forms of life! And he does all this, not to benefit the hungry poor but to hang more and more pearls around the necks of the greedy rich!

“Thy father laughed; but it was no laughing matter for me. I cried over my wedding pearls that night and resolved to lock them up out of my sight as soon as I returned home.

“The next day I was strengthened in my resolution by meeting with a pearl diver. The poor man was worn out before his time by this dreadful business. He sat day after day by the sea looking out upon its sparkling surface and dreaming and

talking of the perils he had encountered down below in its green gloom—of the hideous armor he wore when he went forth to war with its savage army of sharks and devil-fishes, in order to win pearls for the Queens of the world and the queens of men's hearts.

"Will you show us your awful armor? I asked.

"'Certainly, madam, and get my son to trick me out in it, though I've never worn it since the day that the shark cut off my air pipe and the terrible pressure blew out my eye balls and ear drums to the bursting point.'

"O don't put the horrid thing on, I pleaded, only show it to us.

"But put it on he would—the ply upon ply of clothing, the heavy weights for the feet, back and breast and the awful barred helmet, which was screwed up at last like a lid to a coffin, making him deaf and dumb to the outside world! O, my child, I cannot tell thee of the sensations I felt as I looked upon that manacled denuded specimen of the human being sent out to fight the vain war for *pearls*!

"But the worst of all is the war between governments and nations. It is the giant murder. It impoverishes and brutalizes humanity. It is the cardinal sin against which the Society of Friends have always striven. George Fox began the good fight, and William Penn though reared for the army and tempted by rewards of glory and honor, renounced all and joined the blessed Brotherhood of Peace. Not only that but he came to this new world and put his principles into practice, as thou wilt see when thou are old enough to read his life which thou wilt find in my little library that I have willed to thee. Read it and ponder it in thy heart, dear child. It will tell thee far better than I can of the sin and horror of war and the beauty and loveliness of peace.

"Look about thee and search out the apostles and prophets of peace the world over and establish spiritual or visible communion with the friends of peace everywhere. Those that preach and write and paint—foremost among whom at the present time are Count Tolstoi and Vassili Verestchagin of far off Russia. I had read much about Tolstoi and knew of his great influence for peace; but it had never occurred to me that an artist could make the painted lesson fully as effective until we met Vassili on our trip abroad and talked with him face to face. He was educated for the navy even as Penn was, but he laid aside the sword for palette and brushes and painted the horrors of war so truly and in such living colors that no one with a soul could look upon them without being converted to peace—so truly that the German soldiers were not permitted to look upon them!

So truly that the Russian soldiers fled their country rather than be compelled to join the army. So truly that he was counselled by the Government to destroy one of his greatest truth-tellers—a large picture of Alexandre II. sitting safely on a hill watching the awful slaughter of his soldiers at the battle of Plevua.

“The truth seems terrible to behold, especially to ‘the powers that be,’ said Vassili as we stood by the ghastly picture of the ‘Frozen Sentinel in the Shipka Pass,’ but I can’t help that, I must paint the truth or nothing. I wade through the inferno of the most hideous battles for the precious kernel of truth, and when I find it I can’t gloss it over and make it appear what it is not. If you ever have another awful war in America I shall have to come over and paint it truly.”

“‘You need not wait for another war,’ said I, ‘to get material for a warning truth. We have a glorification of war every year—yes, twice a year now; that is more dangerous than war itself, because it begins at the root. It takes hold of the children.’

“‘I shall be there in good time,’ were his last words to us. I believe that he will come, dear child, and that thou wilt see him and help him in his mission of truth.

“Next to the giant murder of war there is another murder that is like unto it. It is not wholesale murder like that which is done by the Government army, but it is worse in some respects. It is surely worse for the one who strikes the death blow—for the man that is hired by the Government to murder its criminals inasmuch as such a life-taker is abhorred not only by the criminals whom he releases from life as gently as possible, but by the people whose instrument he is; while the other murderer, the army officer who leads hundreds of splendid young men and horses over wounded bodies of friends or foes to cruel slaughter is applauded on all sides and covered with honor and glory.

“I saw them standing side by side one day—these two kinds of murderers. One was plainly dressed and carried a grimy black bag in his white bony hand. He was wrinkled and old before his time. He was nervous and shrinking, as though the fingers of the living were pointing at him and the curses of the dead following him.

“The other man was richly dressed and had a sword at his belt. He was large, full-fleshed and florid. He was bold, brazen and bulging, as though the whole world were at his back, pushing him forward and encouraging him to cultivate every bestial faculty to the full extent.

“Yes, dear Adelaide; I saw these two men standing side by side one day at a railway station. It was before thou wert born. I knew well enough who the man with the sword was, but the other!—the frightened, woe-begone looking man? Thy father did not want to tell me about him at first. He thought it might hurt thee and me. He was foolish about such matters as kind husbands are apt to be. It cannot hurt anyone to talk and think freely at any time about anything that is worth thinking or talking about. It hurts them and those born of them to suppress the truth.”

“O how true!” exclaimed Ruth! “Ralph ought to hear that.”

Adelaide nodded as she went on.

“And I did think of those men until my journey was ended, and I have thought of them many times since. Thanks to my righteous teachers I was able to see them as they were. They filled my soul with horror and pity—pity, for I perceived that they were the monsters the Government (which is ourselves) had made. But I pitied the scared looking man with the grimy black bag in which his weapon of death lay concealed more than I did the man with the glittering sword that he wore boldly in the eyes of all. He looked so wretched, so oppressed and conscience stricken, that I thought the time would surely come when he would throw off the terrible yoke that had been put upon him and refuse to use the bolts of heaven for the extinction of human life. But when I heard that he was working by night and day on an awful chair—a veritable throne of death on which the criminal will sit and die without looking upon his executioner’s hated presence; my pity was mingled with loathing, for I perceived that he was a willing instrument instead of a terrible necessity, and that he cared nothing for the victims of the law except that he might be spared from their cursings and hate. That he was plotting against them while he was hiding away from them and making of that *death-machine a life-work*.

“Beware of all such men, my dear daughter. Believe thy mother when she tells thee that the life-taker is sure to be a brute. Trust not thyself least of all to the so-called capable brute. See to it that the occupation of the man that would marry thee be not of their kind.

“In short, marry no one unless the spirit moves thee strongly. Remember that the credit is not to those who bring the most children into the world but those that bring the best or take the best care of those that are already here.”

Adelaide paused and looked at Ruth questioningly.

“She meant that the Krupp guns, torpedo boats and all those horrible war implements were inventions of the capable brute, did she not?” asked Adelaide.

“Yes, and more too. She meant all those dangerous things that are made for boys to celebrate with,” said Ruth.

“And the capable brutes are such inventors as Krupp and Pang—and Bombs,” added Adelaide hesitatingly, as though averse to including him in the same class.

“Yes,” replied Ruth; “but Mr. Bombs is young and perhaps you can influence

him to do better things."

Adelaide shook her head vigorously. Ruth had not quite caught her meaning but she did not know just how to explain it, so she went on with the journal.

"Next to the cruel game of war are the celebrations that glorify war or warriors. They are murderous at the core and they are growing worse and worse every year. Notably our Independence Day. I was never so fully conscious of it as now. I have just been to see a little boy who is dying of *Tetanus*. His sufferings were terrible to witness. His father gave him that invention of the evil one, a toy pistol. No father in our society would have done such a thing. O how I wish Vassili had been there to paint the scene in its true horror and exhibit it all over this reckless American continent.

"Last of all come the games of chance. Many of them are dangerous to life and limb and all of them are more or less sinful. They are wrong in principle inasmuch as they are a waste of energy—the great Divine energy that was given us for the regeneration of the world and the building up and beautifying of the God-given body instead of tearing it down, defacing it, brutalizing it and arousing within it the murderous spirit of resistance and revenge. Such games are too numerous to mention. Thou wilt know them by their signs. They are among the perils that encompass thee around and about.

"Look at them with an unclouded vision. Let not custom blind thee to their sinuousness and wrong. Set an honest face against them. Cast out the devil that is in them and invent new ways of amusing the young and entertaining the old.

"Think of these things, dear child. Think of the women and children that are shivering and starving while millions and millions are being spent in battleships and hideous inventions for the destruction of human life. Raise thy voice against them and do whatsoever thou canst to avert or heal the poverty and misery that follow in their track.

"How I wish I could be spared to go with thee, for I feel that thou *wilt* go about doing good to souls in need. Yes, the spirit tells me so, dear child, and I must listen and be content."

Truly thine,
ELEANOR TOWNSEND SCHWARMER.

"How I wish she could have been spared; and how I wish I could see Vassili

Verestchagin!” whispered Adelaide as she closed the journal.

CHAPTER XXII.

A WONDERFUL CHANGE IN KILLSBURY.

IN less than four years after the events recorded in the last chapter a young man of fascinating appearance stepped off from the train at the Killsbury station. His name was Alfonso Bombs. He had just returned from his trip abroad. He had seen the Russo-Japanese army fighting like fiends—setting hellish traps for each other and blowing whole regiments into eternity. Vassili Verestchagin had lost his life in the terrible explosion of the Petropavlovsk and thousands of men had died awful deaths through the same satanic agencies that had snatched this noble truth-painter from his needed work. The commercial world was being made hideous with the manufacture and transportation of monstrous battleships and explosives. Mr. Schwarmer had been blown to atoms by a dynamite explosion on a railroad train and his widow had married a military man and was deeply interested in "*The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*." She contemplated giving a fine building for its use and enlarging its scope by adding an infirmary for disabled war-horses; but Mr. Bombs was not thinking of these things nor of the immense army of youth that was being prepared for the annual slaughter although it was Independence Day and the nation's flag was flying from every train. He refused the proffered carriage and walked leisurely through the town, stopping here and there and looking around in pleased surprise. It seemed to him that the whole atmosphere of the place had changed. The gardens were full of flowers, the lawns were green and velvety, the crooked old fences had disappeared, the sidewalks were in a perfect condition, the roads were gravelled, and the ugly hollows filled up.

When he got to Library Street, he stopped and surveyed it critically. The improvement was still more apparent there. The Adelaide Library was handsomely winged. He wondered how it would be with Adelaide herself. He felt that she would have wings spiritual if not visible—quite after his heart's desire. He reasoned that if all these improvements had been made through her influence, she must be a very rare woman and well beloved—so well that she would not need any other love perhaps. Then the little viper of jealousy slid into his heart; but he cast it out with the lash of self-assurance. He would not think

that he could not win her if he should approve of her and really wish to have her for his very own.

Up to this point he had not met any one he knew and he was glad he had not. He went on noting changes until he found himself at the point, where the street branched off for the “Round About Way” to Schwarmer Hill. He avoided it instinctively. He took the Straight Road; but his reverie as he ascended the hill had a tragic element in it that robbed it of its charm.

After that, the reign of disappointment set in. Schwarmer mansion had not improved in the least—rather the reverse.

If he had expressed his thought he would have said:

“It looks as though it had doffed a turret and were reaching down to bring the buildings below up to its own stature.”

The truth was, Adelaide had ordered one of the most useless and imposing turrets to be taken down as it was found to be unsafe.

The Queery buildings remained intact and the grounds were greatly improved; but he saw at a glance that it was an improvement in which he and his Pyro-pieces had not been taken into account. Little children were playing on the grass, small boys and girls were running from the fountain to the garden and baby carts were being wheeled about the numerous walks. He hastened on to the mansion and rang the bell.

Mary Langley opened the door and started back.

“O I see that you remember me,” laughed Bombs. “Is Miss Adelaide at home?”

“Miss Adelaide is down at the college. Will you come in and wait for her?”

“Thanks. I will wait on the veranda or roam about. I find many changes of interest.”

He sat down and rested from his walk while he looked out over the handsome grounds and inhaled the odor of violets and mignonette. After he had rested he went out to the brow of the hill. There was always a strong breeze on the brow of the hill; but there was something else this morning—something more stirring than the rustling leaves. There were musical sounds. His first thought was that they were from the throats of young orioles. He listened intently and heard

instead of warblings, fine strains of music like those of an aeolian harp.

“Yes a hundred aeolian harps!” he ejaculated and the fancy possessed him that Adelaide had taken advantage of the situation and had strung aeolian harps in the tops of the trees for the winds of heaven to play upon. He did not try to find out if it were so. If it were a delusion he preferred to enjoy it instead of dispelling it. He stood still and listened intently.

Without knowing it he stood on the very spot where Mary Langley had lost her baby. He hit his toe against a stone and looking down he saw that, it was fringed with moss and bore a name and date in tiny artistic letters. The name was *Adelaide S. Langley* and the date was *July 4th, 1902*. He knew then that he had been doubly remembered; but it was not flattering to his vanity to be remembered so strongly in this case, any more than it was to be entirely forgotten in the matter of transforming The Queery grounds into a children’s park. He turned away abruptly and saw Adelaide Schwarmer coming up the hill.

He knew her at a glance; but he was a trifle disappointed. His first thought was, that like the mansion she had been holding herself down to the level of the Killsbury people.

“You surprise me,” he said. “You have changed so very, very little.”

“And you do not seem to have changed at all; and yet I am not surprised.”

“But you were at the changeable age and I was not.”

“And you have been changing places and peoples and views constantly. I should think you would be changed by reflection if nothing more.”

“There is something in that apparently,” laughed Bombs. “Then it must be because you have lived in the same place and with the same people that you look the same. If the theory is true you should move on in order to attain a full development. That would be in accordance with Goethe’s idea would it not?

> ‘Keep not standing fixed and rooted.
> Briskly venture—briskly roam.’

“Perhaps I didn’t ‘foot it freely’ enough to receive a benefaction of bronze and muscle that the ladies admire.”

“From the Occident to the Orient even on wheels, there must be much to see and

learn, Mr. Bombs."

"Yes, Miss Adelaide, and much that is not worth learning. When I was in Turkey, I learned nothing of more interest than that the Sultan had finished his forty days fast at Ramazar and taken a new wife."

"But the treacherous war, with its horrid weapons! You must have seen how awful it was, Mr. Bombs?"

"It was the same old story, Miss Adelaide; men were made to kill each other with fists or dynamite—no matter which."

"You are caustic as ever, Mr. Bombs. You must have spent your time chiefly with chemicals and in lurid laboratories—looking inward instead of outward—trying to find out and master the hidden forces. Father told me of your investigations only the day before he died," said Adelaide closing her eyes and leaning back in her chair.

There was silence for a few moments, then she added: "Please tell me what you have discovered, Mr. Bombs."

"There isn't much to be told at present date, Miss Adelaide, except that I have discovered or think I have, the long sought for and greatly to be desired explosive—the ideal force which combines the highest known power with perfect safety in use; an explosive which when put upon the market and used in the place of dynamite will make such accidents as that which cost your father his life, practically impossible."

"I don't believe such awful things can *be* made safe, any more than the arch-fiend himself, Mr. Bombs."

"But they can be, Miss Adelaide, if properly harnessed and handled—at least my explosive can be. It will not explode unless rightly treated or *en*-treated. It is very particular about that," laughed Bombs. "It won't respond to hard knocks or kicks or a shower of bullets, and a child might treat it to a lighted match and coals of fire and it would do no more than burn with a gentle blue flame. An ounce of it would make a safe and satisfactory firecracker in a boy's hands; while the same quantity in skilful hands, could be made to blow up an immense battleship!"

"How horrible!" exclaimed Adelaide. "What need have we for such powerful explosives? Are we commanded to wreck the world—or grind it into powder? I

heard a few days ago of a man who had invented a machine that would crunch up great rocks in its horrible jaws in less time than it takes a dog to eat a bone. At that rate there wouldn't be a rock left in a few years' time and the blessed earth would be little else than a succession of pitfalls!"

"Pretty good," laughed Bombs. "It's time for the inventor of safety appliances to come to the rescue, eh! Miss Adelaide."

"We cry safety! and yet there is no safety with such monsters all around us. If we were all good and wise—full grown savants, we might talk of safety—but there are the children who don't know how to use safety appliances and the criminal who is using dynamite to terrorize the railroads."

"There's where my explosive has the advantage. There isn't but one way to explode it; and there's too much science about it for the child, the idiot or the railroad dynamiter. He couldn't be on hand with an electric battery; and it can't be exploded by accident.

"Let me show you something," said Bombs, fumbling in his pocket and bringing forth a small piece of reddish brown substance. "You see how harmless it looks; and so it is ordinarily but by employing certain agencies it could be made to blow up as large an establishment as your library building."

She shuddered involuntarily.

"I see you have no confidence in it, Miss Adelaide," he said tossing it up and down in his hand. "I have some larger pieces in my traveling case. I will prove them to you some day if you like."

"No! no! Mr. Bombs. I don't want any proof! This is no longer a fit place for proving grounds, as you will see."

She looked out over the network of walks and added: "The children have gone home to dinner, but they will be back again soon. They come and go like the birds of heaven."

"O Adelaide, how cruel," exclaimed Bombs, half in jest. "If your father were here, he would receive me with open arms. He would be proud to have me show up my discoveries and inventions. He built the Queery at my instigation; but you __"

"Father told me I might do as I liked and he knew I did not like dangerous

things. We were alone here for several weeks and we talked it all over and made plans," sobbed Adelaide.

"Well, don't cry, Adelaide. I shall not insist. I ought not to wonder that you feel as you do especially since his death and about anything of the same nature that caused it; but you will change your mind I am sure when you see that my invention is entirely the reverse of the old and everlastingly dangerous ones. I am going to have some experiments tried with it by Government authority at the Indian Head Proving Grounds later on, and I hope you will be induced to come and see for yourself that it will be a blessing rather than a curse. It is ten times more powerful when its power is needed than the horrible dynamite of which you have had such a sad experience; but it is religiously believed that the very might of it will make disastrous celebrations and even war practically impossible."

"Religiously believed!" exclaimed Adelaide. "I should say that it was anything but religious to believe that disastrous celebrations and wars are to be done away with by monstrous life destroying agencies instead of the human and divine agencies of love and true friendliness. No! no, Mr. Bombs! That is treacherous military pretense. We have never had any Independence Day accidents here since the fireworks were abolished. We had a great many before. Ruth Cornwallis began the crusade against them and our Golden Rule President with his earnest appeals and wise prohibitions made a clean sweep of them. You remember Laurens Cornwallis's mysterious death. You said you would tell me what you knew about it when you came back. Please tell me now, Mr. Bombs."

CHAPTER XXIII.

MR. BOMBS TELLS ALL HE KNOWS ABOUT LAURENS CORNWALLIS' MYSTERIOUS DEATH.

BOMBS began to explain and Adelaide listened with silent attention until he came to the point where he sent the four boys to the river bank to make Laurens divide the fireworks with them.

"How could you think of doing such a thing?" she asked.

"I didn't stop to think, Miss Adelaide. I knew they were little rascals; but I had a feeling that Laurens was too goody-goody, and that somehow or other the two extremes would be equalized by setting them onto each other."

"How dreadful! Mr. Bombs! And so you set your four little devils on to one little angel, to overpower him? You must have known they would destroy him!"

"No! No! Miss Adelaide. I did not know that. I had the unwisdom and rashness of youth. I was only fifteen years old. I had a perfect passion for pyro-spectacles. I had been brought up on them you know; and I had faith in my inventions. They were intended to amuse, scare and mystify. I had been taught early and late that danger gives zest to enjoyment. Besides I had never known of anybody of consequence within my circle of acquaintance, being killed by fireworks; and I was of the opinion that they never would injure anybody except idiots, who deserved to be injured."

"But you knew that Laurens Cornwallis was not an idiot, and that the boys were reckless and the fireworks dangerous."

"Yes, but Laurens had charge of them and he could have held up a score of boys if he had known how to handle them."

"But you knew he did not know and the other boys did."

"Yes, but I thought he ought to have known."

He saw the rising of an indignant flush in Adelaide's face and added quickly, "besides I intended to go back and see that no harm was done, Miss Adelaide."

"Why did you not go?" inquired Adelaide shortly.

"Your father claimed my services. First to help store away the surplus stock I had brought with me. That done, we gave chase to some boys that were making up the river with his boat. We headed them off. They got into a panic, lost one oar and broke another, then went down over the falls and were drowned. You heard about it did you not?"

"Yes, but not much."

"Well, there wasn't much said about it. They were of no account anyway. They were a squad of tough boys that came up from the prolific French settlement, to work their little game and see how much they could get out of 'old Schwarmer,' as they called him. Of course the parents wouldn't say anything on account of the stealing of the boat, and probably they had about fifteen other children and were glad to be rid of them. I shouldn't have remembered it had it not been for one little circumstance."

"What was that?" asked Adelaide breathlessly.

"They were the boys I sent to Laurens Cornwallis for a division of fireworks."

"And they killed him with the terrible things and were trying to make their escape," exclaimed Adelaide in dismay.

"That's the mystery, Miss Adelaide. They quarrelled with him, without a doubt. The killing was most likely accidental. They had a hand in the accident, probably, were frightened, ran to the river and took the boat to make good their escape. Only God knows!"

"And the parents thought father must have given him the fireworks. How strange!"

"Yes, it was strange. Strange that all who knew anything about it should have met a violent death. It looks as though Providence or whatever you choose to call him, was on my side, doesn't it, Miss Adelaide? But I did not know your father was suspected. I regret that."

She did not reply. She was trying to analyze her feeling.

“Non-plussed I see,” said Bombs. “Well I don’t wonder. I had something of that feeling at first. Nobody could blame me but myself, because no living person knew about it but myself. Now no one knows it but you and I; and I am used to your blame; I rather enjoy it. In fact I like it so well that I have come to ask you to marry me.”

“But you would not marry me knowing that I would continue to blame you—knowing that I would work against your business interests, Mr. Bombs.”

“I would marry you, knowing that you could not harm my adamantine interests,” laughed Bombs. “It would take a hundred years of such gentle leaven to affect them materially or immaterially and we shall both be in heaven before that time, where everything is changed in the twinkling of an eye and reforms if needed would not have to be worked out by the tedious, sinuous and rather sour or unsavory processes of fermentation.”

“But you would not marry me knowing that our thoughts, feelings and tastes were entirely antagonistic—that I should strive with my whole might to pull down the things you would build up? Impossible!”

“I would marry you and love and admire you all the same, Adelaide. And I would give you *carte blanche* out of the proceeds of my ‘*horrid*’ inventions to use in your work of demolishing, reconstructing and Christianizing.”

“You are jesting, Mr. Bombs.”

She broke off and rested her head on both hands. The old weariness had come again, and more! Even the multiplicity of his adjectives affected her. They tired her to death just as his Pyro-shows used to do—with their flash after flash.

“You are the same and yet you are not the same,” she added, arousing herself and turning away from his glittering gaze with a gesture of despair. “O why did you come back to torment my life?”

He came swiftly to her side and whispered in her ear—*whispered*, although he might have spoken aloud; for there was no one in the room and no sleeping Adam anywhere among the shrubberies “I came to fulfill my promise to your father and claim you for my wife.”

She started from him as though bitten by a serpent, or rather as though she had been mistaken for the original Eve and a real serpent had been whispering in her ear.

“Your wife!” Her face turned surface-red as though scorched with outside flame. “Your wife,” she repeated, “and the elected burden-bearer of your secret, sinful knowledge! I have never thought of being your wife and never could be or should be, and father would not have insisted.”

“Adelaide! Adelaide! You don’t know what you are saying. You will feel differently after everything is proven and you have time to think it over.”

“Never! Mr. Bombs, never! I shall never think differently. Leave me! Go out of my sight forever!”

“Adelaide! Is it possible! Whatever I have been to others I have always been honest with you.”

“Honest? Yes! You tell me of your black and sinful deeds, then try to make them look sinless and white. Leave me at once. Your presence is more than I can endure.”

She turned to an alcove in the far end of the room and stretching her arms high above her head in agonized supplication, she added:

“And thou Angelo Cornwallis! Beautiful spirit! be with me! Help me undo the dreadful deeds that have been done in our midst; and when I have done all I can at home, lead me on and on; for as it is here so it is elsewhere all over God’s great world. The good and beautiful are being battered and slain, that the coffers of the bad and beastly may be filled to overflowing with gold!”

The picture before which she stood was an artist’s realization of what Laurens Angelo Cornwallis would have looked like, if he had lived to reach man’s estate. It was a life-sized portrait of rare beauty and nobility thrown out in strong relief from a bluish-black background of peculiar make-up. Was it the work of Vassili Verestchagin and had her wish to see him been granted, or failing to be granted had she taken him for her spiritual teacher and inspirator and painted it herself?

Alfonso Bombs looked in her direction and recognized both the portrait and the significance of its setting—the marvelous whiteness, brightness and angelic beauty of the one, and the mysterious darkness, luridity and startling suggestiveness of the other—as though the artist had at the last moment dipped his brushes in the paint pots of the Inferno for characteristic colors with which to portray the dread and nameless shapes that had threatened to destroy his fair creation.

Feelings of jealousy, rage and resentment overwhelmed the spirit of Alfonso Bombs as he looked at his unconscious paint and canvas rival and detected in that hellish background unmistakable shadowings of himself; but for the first time in his life he had no specious plea to make. He had received his answer and the proof of its finality. He turned away with the swift and subtle movement habitual to him and left the house and the town.

THE END.

End of the Project Gutenberg EBook of The Independence Day Horror at
Killsbury, by Asenath Carver Coolidge

*** END OF THIS PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK INDEPENDENCE DAY HORROR--KILLSBURY ***

***** This file should be named 39479-h.htm or 39479-h.zip *****
This and all associated files of various formats will be found in:
        http://www.gutenberg.org/3/9/4/7/39479/

Produced by The Online Distributed Proofreading Team at
http://www.pgdp.net (This file was produced from images
generously made available by The Internet Archive.)

Updated editions will replace the previous one--the old editions
will be renamed.

Creating the works from public domain print editions means that no
one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation
(and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without
permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules,
set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to
copying and distributing Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works to
protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG-tm concept and trademark. Project
Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you
charge for the eBooks, unless you receive specific permission. If you
do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the
rules is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose
such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and
research. They may be modified and printed and given away--you may do
practically ANYTHING with public domain eBooks. Redistribution is
subject to the trademark license, especially commercial
redistribution.

*** START: FULL LICENSE ***

THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE
PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg-tm mission of promoting the free

distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work
(or any other work associated in any way with the phrase "Project
Gutenberg"), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project
Gutenberg-tm License available with this file or online at
  www.gutenberg.org/license.

Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg-tm
electronic works

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg-tm
electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to
and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property
(trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all
the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy
all copies of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works in your possession.
If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project
Gutenberg-tm electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the
terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or
entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. "Project Gutenberg" is a registered trademark. It may only be
used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who
agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few
things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works
even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See
paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project
Gutenberg-tm electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement
and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg-tm electronic
works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation ("the Foundation"
or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project
Gutenberg-tm electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the
collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an
individual work is in the public domain in the United States and you are
located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from
copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative
works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg
are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project
Gutenberg-tm mission of promoting free access to electronic works by
freely sharing Project Gutenberg-tm works in compliance with the terms of
this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg-tm name associated with
the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by
keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project
Gutenberg-tm License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern
what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in
a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check
the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement
before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or
creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project
Gutenberg-tm work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning
the copyright status of any work in any country outside the United
States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate
access to, the full Project Gutenberg-tm License must appear prominently
whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg-tm work (any work on which the
phrase "Project Gutenberg" appears, or with which the phrase "Project
Gutenberg" is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed,

copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at www.gutenberg.org

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is derived from the public domain (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase "Project Gutenberg" associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg-tm License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg-tm License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg-tm.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg-tm License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg-tm work in a format other than "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg-tm web site (www.gutenberg.org), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original "Plain Vanilla ASCII" or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg-tm License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg-tm works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works provided that

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg-tm works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and

sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, "Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."

- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg-tm License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg-tm works.

- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.

- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from both the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and Michael Hart, the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread public domain works in creating the Project Gutenberg-tm collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain "Defects," such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the "Right of Replacement or Refund" described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg-tm trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg-tm electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy

is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg-tm work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg-tm work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg-tm

Project Gutenberg-tm is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg-tm's goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg-tm collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg-tm and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at www.gutenberg.org

Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's principal office is located at 4557 Melan Dr. S. Fairbanks, AK, 99712., but its volunteers and employees are scattered throughout numerous locations. Its business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's web site and official page at www.gutenberg.org/contact

For additional contact information:
Dr. Gregory B. Newby
Chief Executive and Director
gbnewby@pglaf.org

Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation

Project Gutenberg-tm depends upon and cannot survive without wide spread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations ($1 to $5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit www.gutenberg.org/donate

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg Web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: www.gutenberg.org/donate

Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg-tm electronic works.

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg-tm concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg-tm eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg-tm eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as Public Domain in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our Web site which has the main PG search facility:

www.gutenberg.org

This Web site includes information about Project Gutenberg-tm, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.