

The fourth of July in America.

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ceremonial and doctrine, with the place of the *Quicunque Vult* in the public service, no more admit of settlement to-day than their predecessors admitted of it in the past. Undoubtedly a Free Church could determine them one way or the other. But she could only do so by accepting very grave risks. Even these risks must be faced rather than see the Anglican counter-Reformation brought to a sudden end. But assuming that they can be averted, I submit that those who, rather than see open questions prematurely closed, prefer to put up with an Establishment, the drawbacks of which they see as clearly as their critics, have something to urge in their own behalf.

D. C. LATHBURY.



THE FOURTH OF JULY IN AMERICA

AMERICAN Imperialists have no need to found an organisation to whip up enthusiasm for the celebration of an Empire Day. The circumstances of the origin of the United States have provided both an obvious date for commemoration and an adequate stimulus to a jubilant spirit. Few of us would care to risk an opinion off-hand as to the greatest event in English history; but in the story of the American Republic the Declaration of Independence holds an undisputed primacy. The Fourth of July is consequently the red-letter day in the American calendar. Christmas alone shares with it the distinction of being observed as a legal holiday in all States and Territories. Even Thanksgiving Day and Washington's Birthday are in a secondary rank. If patriotic ardour may be estimated by the total number of foot-pounds of energy liberated, it may be doubted whether any other political commemoration in the world comes anywhere near the anniversary of 'the Glorious Fourth.'

The early celebrations seem to have been marked by considerable solemnity and dignity. The formal reading of the text of the Declaration was the most prominent feature. Nowadays this practice has largely gone out of fashion. Possibly, in view of the acquisition of the Philippines without the Filipinos themselves being consulted, a document which bases the powers of a government on 'the consent of the governed' is considered scarcely up to date. The interest in 'glittering generalities' appears to be on the decline, at any rate in so far as they express the political dogmas of the eighteenth century. There is still much speech-making, however. This is indeed the customary method of observing the occasion outside of the United States. Happily, the War of Independence has left no rankling memories on this side of the Atlantic; and at the Fourth of July dinner in London British speakers can honestly offer their congratulations to the representatives of a Republic which was built up out of revolted British colonies. Yet it is neither in making nor hearing speeches that the average American displays his patriotic sentiment. Mere words fail to satisfy his absorbing eagerness to demonstrate that no offering is too precious to be placed on the shrine of national independence. It can scarcely be said of the Americans that they take their pleasures sadly. But that they keep their national holiday with deadly seriousness is evident from the fact that every year the

celebration of the Fourth of July costs the country from one hundred to two hundred lives, mostly of children, besides maiming and otherwise injuring a few thousand other persons. Is there any other nation that vindicates with such self-sacrificing zeal its 'inalienable right' to 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness'?

No one who has not spent a Fourth of July in America—unless perhaps he has found himself in a Chinese city on a New Year's Day—can have any conception of the festive possibilities of gunpowder. The Fifth of November of our childhood is in comparison as a penny pistol to an Armstrong gun. In New York, for days and even weeks beforehand, the din of the streets is varied at intervals by the discharge of giant crackers. On the actual Fourth, from morning to night, the whole city seems surrendered to the noise of fireworks and pistol shots, interrupted only by the occasional clang of the fire-engine bell. A journey in any direction in the tram-cars is accompanied by a constant fusillade, and offers at the crossing of every side street the spectacle of crowds of children absorbed in the fierce delight of a *feu de joie*. Early in the afternoon, the first editions of the evening papers begin to give us some idea of the price in life, limb, and property that is being paid for this entertainment. The next morning the impression is deepened by several columns reporting deaths, accidents, and fires to such an extent that the paper bears some likeness to a special edition published in war-time.

In the year 1902 I took the trouble to collect in some detail the particulars of the celebration as reported in the press of New York, where I was then living. It was a year, as it so happens, in which the number of deaths and accidents was below the average. Already on the morning of the Fourth the papers had reported the first New York fire, started soon after midnight by a sky-rocket. It destroyed three planing mills, doing damage to the amount of 50,000 dollars, and exposing to grave danger the occupants of some adjoining tenement houses. The edition of an evening paper appearing at about seven o'clock had to devote a column and a third to an account of local casualties. It included such items as the following: A man of thirty-five died suddenly of heart disease, a giant fire-cracker having been let off at his door. A wealthy coal merchant, while walking quietly along the street, was struck by a stray bullet, which penetrated his brain. A can of powder exploded on the porch of a house, and injured a mother and four children, one of whom had all her hair burnt off. A woman, attempting to dodge a sky-rocket, fell from a fifth-storey window and was killed.

The following morning it was possible to make a general survey of the results of the previous day. At one hospital, the Roosevelt, the officials reported that they had treated 147 cases. There had been in Greater New York 64 fires, 122 calls for ambulances, and 26 instances of injury by bullets. The list of accidents included such details as—shot in breast with pistol he was carrying; hand lacerated by

premature explosion of toy cannon; face and eyes injured by fire-cracker explosion; right hand blown off by bomb; sight of right eye destroyed by fire-cracker; shot in thigh; shot in foot.

The reports from other cities were of the same type. According to the *Boston Transcript*, the day passed off 'quietly' at the Hub, for not more than one of the 200 or more injuries was serious. 'The day ended without a single shower or a single death—a record remarkable in both particulars.' There were about 90 out-patients at the emergency hospital, and 30 at the relief station at Haymarket Square. The Boston firemen were called to 56 alarms, with a total damage of 25,000 dollars. At Chicago special note was made of the suffering inflicted on patients in the hospitals through the discharge of fire-crackers, pistols, torpedoes, and shot-guns close to the grounds, in spite of an appeal that had been made by the police to the people of the neighbourhood. At St. Louis a boy of seventeen was killed through the premature explosion of a jar of sulphuric potash, which he was carrying in his pocket, with the intention of using it in lieu of fire-crackers. His left side was entirely blown away, and two companions were seriously injured. At Philadelphia a young woman standing on the doorstep of her father's house was shot dead by a person unknown. At New Haven a girl of eight was burnt to death by her skirt catching fire as she was lighting a cracker. At Springfield, Illinois, a boy of ten hanged himself because his father had refused to give him money to buy crackers. At the city of the same name in Massachusetts several street cars were set on fire by boys who put saltpetre and sulphur on the rails, with the result that there was an explosion when the cars passed over. At Troy, N.Y., a man, while setting off fireworks for the amusement of his little daughter, had a part of his hand blown away by a dynamite cracker. Fearing that he was maimed for life, he stabbed himself in the heart and died. At the golf club at Cranford, N.J., the accidental ignition of some fireworks in an open box cast showers of fire on the heads of two hundred spectators. Many women's gowns were set ablaze, and in the panic children were knocked down and trampled upon. At Detroit a man was crushed to death under a truck, the horses of which had been startled by a cracker.

Let us now examine the statistics of Fourth of July casualties throughout the United States. The most trustworthy figures are those published annually by the Journal of the American Medical Association. Here are the numbers for the last four years :

	1903	1904	1905	1906
Killed	466	188	182	158
Injured	3,983	3,986	4,994	5,308
Killed and Injured	4,449	4,169	5,176	5,466

I have been unable to find anywhere a computation of the total losses in the course of the War of Independence, but the figures given with respect to certain individual battles suggest the estimate that within the last twenty years the United States must have sacrificed as many lives in celebrating her independence as she gave in the whole of her struggle to secure it. An interesting sidelight is cast on such comparisons by the experience of Boston, which celebrates not only the Fourth of July, but also the Seventeenth of June, the anniversary of Bunker Hill. At the celebration on the 17th of June, 1904, the casualties amounted to 300, or about two-thirds the number of losses on the American side in the battle itself.

An analysis of the death statistics reveals one of the most distressing features of the whole celebration :

	1903	1904	1905	1906
Deaths from tetanus	406	91	87	75
Deaths from other causes	60	92	95	83
Total deaths	466	183	182	158

The large proportion of deaths from tetanus helps to explain why the figures appearing in the American daily papers on the 5th or 6th of July in each year come far short of the total published later in the professional journal. It is not until about the 14th of the month that these cases begin to be reported. The victims are mostly young boys, who suffer intense agony before death brings release. In 1903 the mortality from this cause was so appalling that the Journal of the American Medical Association made a painstaking inquiry into the whole subject. That year there were found to be only seven cases of 'Fourth of July tetanus'—American specialists give this particular variety a name of its own—that were not fatal. The period of incubation was shorter than in other forms of tetanus. In most instances the injury was received in discharging blank cartridges from toy pistols, frequently of a 22-calibre and generally of most flimsy mechanism.

It may be of interest to add a typical summary of deaths from other causes. In 1905 the 95 fatalities not resulting from tetanus were thus classified: 37 persons were killed by gunshot wounds; 23, mostly young children, were burned to death by fire resulting from fireworks; 10 died from fright or shock, as a result of sudden loud noises near them, including a baby thrown into convulsions by the explosion of a large fire-cracker near its ear; 7 were killed by cannon, 4 by giant fire-crackers, 4 by powder explosions, 3 by misdirected sky-rockets, 2 by falls in the effort to get away from fire-crackers, 2 in runaways due to fire-crackers, 2 by dynamite, and 1 by the explosion of a railroad torpedo.

The statistical section of this article may be completed by the following summary, taken from the same source, of the non-fatal injuries for the four years in question :

	1903	1904	1905	1906
Loss of sight	10	19	25	22
Loss of one eye	75	61	106	72
Loss of leg, arm, or hand	54	61	80	56
Loss of one or more fingers	174	208	221	227
Other injuries	3,670	3,637	4,562	4,981
Total injuries	3,983	3,986	4,994	5,308

There is reason for doubting whether even the most carefully compiled statistics of killed and wounded can give anything like an adequate idea of the suffering caused by the Fourth of July celebrations. For one thing, there can be no computation of the effect of the incessant uproar upon sick persons. Mention was made earlier in this article of the distress caused to patients in Chicago hospitals in 1902. Three years later, on a similar occasion, a dispatch from the same city reported that 'hundreds of patients in Chicago's hospitals were subjected to nervous shocks that may eventually result seriously for the sufferers.' Further, the statistics take into account only such accidents as occur on the Fourth of July itself or within a few days of that holiday. Actually, in the larger cities at any rate, the celebration practically begins weeks beforehand, and increases in volume and intensity until it reaches its climax on Independence Day. This extension of the time-limit of the disturbance is periodically bewailed by the American press. The *New York Times* of the 28th of April, 1904, published a letter from a correspondent in the upper part of the city, who said that the noise of fire-crackers was already causing suffering.

Scores of little shops all over this city [said the *Brooklyn Eagle* of the 15th of June, 1904], have been selling torpedoes of the most vicious sort, and fire-crackers of any size you like, to schoolboys for weeks and months past, and the purchasers of the merchandise have shot it off as freely on the sidewalks as they strew fruit skins. In various parts of the city the glorious Fourth begins to announce itself on about the 1st of April, and from that time forward there is a steady crescendo of noise, culminating in universal racket, stench, discomfort, danger and death on Independence Day itself.

Here is an extract from the *New York Tribune* of the 26th of June of the same year :

Thanks to the general laxity of the city authorities, New York is, as usual, undergoing its customary month of suffering, beside which the infrequent bombardments of Port Arthur pale into insignificance. Anticipating by nearly a month the old-time celebration of the Fourth of July, the necessary permission to sell fireworks was granted on the 10th of June, and since that date 385 dealers in explosives have been ministering to as many hundreds of roughs, corner

hoodlums and disorderly youths the city over. Thus equipped, this rapidly growing disorderly portion of the community has been busily engaged in frightening and burning horses, ruining and destroying property, and even maiming and disfiguring human beings, through the agency of the Roman candle, the fire-cracker, and the other explosive horrors that characterise the modern celebration.

That year it was a favourite pastime in New York to throw lighted fire-crackers into an open tram-car, and watch them explode amid women's summer dresses. The article from which I have just quoted reports a number of instances of this diversion occurring on the previous Sunday. The shooting of Roman candles into open windows was also a popular amusement long before the actual Fourth arrived. In 1905 the *New York Evening Post* had a similar complaint to make as early as the 12th of June. 'Yesterday,' it said (the day referred to happened to be Whit Sunday), 'the East Side was made an almost unlivable region from six o'clock in the morning until close to midnight by reason of small penny-a-package cannon, and fire-crackers, torpedoes, and loaded revolvers.' But accidents occurring so long before the celebration find no place in the statistics.

It is only fair that some account should be given of the efforts made in mitigation. Some time in June the New York Department of Health generally issues a formal notice recommending the use of tetanus antitoxin for all flesh wounds, and giving the addresses of antitoxin inspectors who are on duty day and night, and will administer it free of charge whenever so requested. At the same time the hospitals lay in an extra supply, not only of antitoxin, but of the various bandages and lotions that are likely to be of service. From 8 A.M. on the Fourth of July all leave of absence for New York firemen is cut off for twenty-four hours. Factory owners take special pains to fill their roof tanks, and to see that their fire-extinguishing appliances are in good order. Most of these precautions, I believe, are adopted in other large cities also. Local practice varies as to the regulation of the sale of pistols and fireworks. The great number of fatalities from tetanus in 1903 attracted general attention, and led to restrictions on the sale and use of pistols in some of the towns where the celebrations had been most disastrous. The result was seen in the following year in a marked decrease of cases of tetanus from blank cartridge, the number falling from 363 in 1903 to seventy-four in 1904. There is still room for improvement, however, in the enforcement of the existing legislation in this respect. In New York, for example, shooting in the streets is punishable by fines and the confiscation of pistols. Last year's experience shows how imperfectly the prohibitory law acts as a deterrent. On the 5th of July 202 persons were brought before four New York police magistrates for firing revolvers in the streets the previous day. The offence was practically the same in each case. One magistrate imposed fines of

ten dollars ; another of three dollars ; another of one dollar ; and the fourth considered that the confiscation of the weapon was sufficient punishment. In a number of instances the prisoners were found to have two or more revolvers in their possession, and in one case the police took no fewer than seven from one man. The pistols thus confiscated are not destroyed, but are sold by auction some time later for the benefit of the police pension fund. This sale gives an opportunity to several hundred young men and boys to purchase a serviceable engine of war for a few cents, and it is believed that the same exhibits often figure in several police-court hearings. And even these 202 arrests do not by any means cover all the cases of shooting, for the New York *Evening Post* of the 5th of July, 1906, says :

Four persons were seriously injured in this city yesterday, two of them it is feared fatally, by stray revolver bullets. The typical action taken in the cases is recorded as follows : 'No arrests were made,' 'There was so much noise that he could not distinguish the shot (*sic*) that preceded the bullet,' 'The police were unable to find who did the shooting,' 'The person who fired the shot could not be found.'

In the same city the law prohibits the retail sale of fireworks except from the 10th of June to the 10th of July, and allows it between these dates only to dealers who have taken out a permit. It also prohibits the letting-off of fireworks without a special permit except from noon on the 3rd of July to 6 A.M. on the 5th of July. Actually, fireworks are exposed for sale in dozens of small shops that have no permit, as well as in a number of unlicensed carts and wagons parading the down-town streets. The limitation of the use of fireworks to forty-two hours, while their sale is permitted for a full month, is also a merely nominal restriction. In 1905 the chief of the New York fire brigade went so far as to urge the total prohibition of the sale and use of fireworks for Fourth of July celebrations. He supported his plea by the statement that during the celebration of 1904 there were in Greater New York no fewer than 118 fires directly traceable to them. This proposal was, of course, too radical to be approved ; and, indeed, in view of the half-hearted enforcement of the existing law, there can be no doubt that any attempt to take more drastic measures would be utterly futile. As it is, there is often considerable friction between the fire and police departments on account of the alleged reluctance of the police to exercise their due powers.

A few years ago considerable prominence was given to a movement for a 'noiseless Fourth,' which aimed at the popular substitution of patriotic literature for implements of destruction. The scheme had little vitality. It obviously offered a tempting opportunity for sarcastic comment.

The average boy with 50 cents to spend [remarked one newspaper], instead of buying the familiar six packs of fire-crackers, a package [of torpedoes, 'a

5-cent cannon-cracker, two 2-cent cannon-crackers, 1 cent's worth of punk, and a Roman candle for use in the evening, will purchase a copy of Burke's speech on 'Conciliation with America,' a copy of the 'Declaration of Independence,' a pamphlet containing selections from the speeches of Adams, Webster, Pinckney, and Patrick Henry, and a few stray copies of the *Federalist*.

Sometimes, too, this movement was officially discouraged, as by the Mayor of Milwaukee, who in June of last year declared: 'I want this to be the noisiest Fourth Milwaukee ever had. Everybody whoop her up, and have a rousing old celebration of Independence Day. That is what it is for. I want all the boys to make all the noise they can, but to be careful of their fingers.' How little headway has been made by the reform propaganda may be seen from the fact that in 1906 the total casualties amounted to over a thousand more than three years previously.

It would be an impertinence on the part of an English writer to offer any exhortations to the amendment of the prevailing custom. It is for Americans themselves to judge how their patriotic feeling may find most suitable expression, and an Englishman is least of all entitled to remonstrate, inasmuch as it is a British reverse that is thus commemorated. The propriety of their taking vengeance on their own people in the twentieth century for their victories over British forces in the eighteenth is not open to foreign criticism. There is, however, a particular justification for presenting to English readers the facts recorded in this article. Just now many writers and public speakers on both sides of the Atlantic are advising us to take American methods as our models in the training of the young. When the United States is thus held up before us as an object-lesson, it is important that no section of the evidence should be overlooked. It is therefore only reasonable that we should take cognisance of such illustrations of the results of American education as are afforded in the celebration of the Fourth of July. Perhaps the most significant feature of the whole story is this—that, while the recklessness of American boys and youths has such appalling consequences at each recurring anniversary, nobody thinks it worth while to appeal either to parental authority or to school discipline to check the disorder.

HERBERT W. HORWILL.

STOCK EXCHANGE REFORM

THE subject of the reform of the London Stock Exchange is one which undoubtedly presents certain difficulties to the ordinary reader; but, nevertheless, it seems very desirable that the public should understand something of the process of the purchase and sale of securities, and should be able to satisfy themselves that their investments are being made under fair and proper conditions.

It is, of course, essential that all financial business should be conducted, as far as possible, *sans peur et sans reproche*, that everything should be open and above-board, and that no suspicion of double-dealing should be allowed to hinder investment, or to impede the legitimate development of commercial enterprise.

For many years past the London Stock Exchange has been regarded, both at home and abroad, as the business centre of the world, and one of its members may be pardoned if, through jealousy for its high reputation and efficiency, he ventures to suggest certain reforms which the altered conditions of the times seem to render imperative.

In order to make the situation clear it is necessary to describe the ordinary course of business which has been traditional in the Stock Exchange.

Members were originally divided into the two classes of brokers, who acted as agents for the public, and dealers, commonly called 'jobbers,' who, acting as principals, held, practically, the position of merchants on the Exchange. A broker, receiving an order from his principal to buy or sell securities, went into the market or centre within the Stock Exchange where such securities were dealt in, and asked a dealer, without disclosing whether he wanted to buy or to sell, to 'make a price,' in other words, to say what he would bid for the security and at what price he would sell it. The dealer, not knowing whether the broker was a buyer or a seller, would quote what he believed to be a 'business' price 'either way.' If this price did not suit the broker he could go to another dealer, who would probably make a different price; and in this way a 'free market' was assured. Of late years, however, this free market has, in many cases, ceased to exist, a great deal of business in certain securities having been diverted from the Stock Exchange to large financial