

MY BOYHOOD'S 4TH OF JULY

-BY-
GOV. GEN. MERRITT
GOV. W. A. RICHARDS, OF WYOMING.
MAJOR GEN. ELWELL S. OTIS.
BRIGADIER GEN. H. G. OTIS.
BRIGADIER GEN. KING.

-BY-
COLONEL SMITH OF TENNESSEE
LIEUT. COL. AMES OF MINNESOTA
BRIGADIER GEN. HUGHES, INSPECTOR.
LIEUTENANT COL. CHILDERS
ADJUTANT GEN. BARRETT OF CALIFORNIA
MAYOR JAMES D. PHELAN.

And that was the way we kept the day. The great, the grand, the glorious day, that gave us Hurray! Hurray! Hurray! (With a battle or two, the histories say) Our National Independence!

MY memory distinctly calendars the year 1863 as the most forlorn Fourth of my experience. I had not been very long from West Point and had been most fortunate in receiving rapid promotions. For services rendered in the battle of Beverly Ford, which was fought on the 9th of

Fourth of July speech. As for the other matter—I never will tell you about that ended.

WHEN I was about 10 years old I encountered my first Fourth of July disappointment. I remember this occasion well, because for the first time in my life I wore a white duck suit. My! how I did hold up my head, and when I mounted that old gray horse that the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals would have owned at this date, I tell you I was the proudest boy alive. We lived in an Iowa village and the nearest grove suitable for a celebration of the kind

ADJUTANT GENERAL BARRETT
of California.

was twenty miles away. All of the churches united their flocks and worked in harmony toward making this Fourth one long to be remembered. It certainly was in some respects, for I never can forget that procession. Of course the brass band led the van and

The ponderous dog and the pointed fife proceeded to roll and shriek for life. An old maid school teacher was chosen to represent the Goddess of Liberty just because she could boast of the longest hair. The red-sashed Marshal and the orator of the day (the Methodist parson) rode side by side. Following this came the most important vehicle of this imposing caravan, the lunch wagon. We had traveled about sixteen miles of the twenty when one of those Kansas water spouts swooped down upon us. We were drenched through and through, the lunch wagon was a floating mass of sandwiches.

THE Fourth of July, 1876, was really the most uncomfortable one I ever spent. We were encamped on the banks of the Yellowstone River after Custer's charge, and as the freighting of supplies by wagons was considered impracticable we took nothing but packs. We had spent the whole summer in the fields and from officer to man we were in a most awful predicament for clothes.

BRIGADIER GENERAL HUGHES,
Inspector.

The whole scheme was that the wife should end, but Custer got in a hurry for battle and we sat down and waited for weeks for orders to move. At last news came of the action which occurred on the 25th of June and after we had cared for the wounded I was compelled by necessity to think

and I went to field practice the next morning with a heavy heart.

THE most unfortunate Fourth of July for some of my friends occurred the day I was born. It was so long ago, however, that I have forgotten how I felt about it. At any rate there was one pleasure in boyhood for me in having my birthday fall on our nation's birthday because my parents always gave me a present of money in addition to my Independence Day fund, and as money is king I ruled my playmates with a high hand, for I spent it all for fireworks.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL CHILDERS.

Our nearest neighbor owned a very valuable hunting dog. I was very fond of it and played with him

pleasure out of my last dime which I spent for gingerbread and peanuts than I did out of the whole day's celebration.

FOURTH of July, 1863, brings to my mind more disagreeable recollections than any other within my memory. On that day, during the progress of the war, I was with my old regiment, the Twelfth Ohio Volunteer Infantry, on board of a little stern-wheel steamer puffing her way laboriously down the Kanawha River in West Virginia.

BRIGADIER GENERAL H. G. OTIS.

We were on an expedition in pursuit of the famous rebel raider, John Morgan, who was then on a rapid march through Indiana and Ohio. Morgan had marched through the flank of the Union forces in Kentucky and evading all our military posts and detachments devastated the country on his way. The infantry forces of which I (then a lieutenant) was serving had orders to co-operate with the Union cavalry in the pursuit. To that end in order to make time we were transported on steamboats down the Kanawha River and up the Ohio as far as the famous Blennerhassett Island. Here an engagement took place and a portion of Morgan's command contained its flight badly demoralized. The only disagreeable feature of this campaign was confined to the steamboat voyage which included the Fourth of July and involved the crowding of the troops of my command onto a small river ship not built or equipped for such emergencies.

Imagine, if you can, a pleasurable Fourth spent on board a boat with barely standing room for its men and with the sun of the South beating down upon the water.

In the days of my boyhood the celebration of Independence day was always an interesting occasion to me. The booming of cannon, the parade of citizen soldiers and the most attractive feature by far to my boyish mind, the booths where sweet things were sold. My! how I used to hang around



I CHASED THE DOG AND MY FATHER CHASED ME—THE DOG GOT AWAY, BUT I DIDN'T.

nearly every day. At this time my pleasure was increased by having some little boy guests at the house. They told me of a little boy whom they knew who tied a tin can of fire crackers to a dog's tail and that there was no end of fun in it. So we concluded to try it on this hunting dog. We did it and the dog made such a noise in trying to get away from the fiery can that my father came upon the scene. I started in pursuit of the dog and my father ran for me. He caught me and my real joy for that day was over.

THE only Fourth of July that I did not enjoy I spent at Hazel Green, Wis., when I was 12 years of age. During the three weeks preceding this holiday I made myself useful to our neighbors—when my mother didn't need me, or I may more truthfully say when she couldn't find me. My motive in making myself scarce at home was to increase my fund for fireworks by doing chores and running errands for any one who would pay me.

GOV. W. A. RICHARDS
of Wyoming.

On the night before this all eventful day I counted my money over and over again. Fifty cents was all that I realized out of my three weeks' hard work. Even this amount made me happy and I was up bright and early the next morning to map out my campaign for that day of days.

To begin with I spent 20 cents of the 50 for torpedoes and took them out of their sawdust box and put them into the spacious pocket of my new linen duster that my mother had just finished. Prior to this time it had not been considered necessary for boys to wear coats at this season of the year and before the day was over I was a living testimonial to the fact that this article of clothing was a foolish piece of extravagance.

The torpedoes were safe enough until in the wild



IN MY JOY I CLAPPED MY HANDS TO MY SIDES AND WHEW! I'LL NEVER FORGET WHAT HAPPENED.

exuberance of my joy I gave vent to my feelings by slapping my sides and—the torpedoes did the rest. My clothing on one side was utterly wrecked. I hadn't the least desire to go home to mother either. Somehow I was always careful about alarming mother when anything serious happened to my apparel. Past experiences taught me that these surprises were a shock to her nerves and in the end most disastrous to me.

One of the boys had a home-made cannon which he sold me for 10 cents. I bought 10 cents worth of powder and together we proceeded to the edge of the lake where we found an old stump or a tree—just the thing to hold our toy cannon. We filled it full and rammed it tightly with powder for we wanted a big report because some Sunday-school picnickers were listening for it. We got the report all right, but the recoil knocked the cannon into the bottom of the lake. I dived for it all unmindful of my clothes and mother, but of no avail. It couldn't be raised.

I still had 10 cents left and I think I got more real

I HEARD THE JOLLY CHORUS, BUT DISAPPOINTMENT FILLED ME AND I SAT OUTSIDE DISCONSOLATELY IN THE RAIN.

June, I had been promoted to brigadier general, although I did not receive my appointment until the 29th of the same month. I recite these facts but to show you how the happiness I felt at being extravagantly rewarded, served but to edge my despondency at Gettysburg on this Fourth of Fourths.

Previous to this time I had been off scouting; but on the third day's battle I took command on the left of Little Round Top. By the heroic charge of McCandless's brigade and the Eleventh Pennsylvania Regiment the ground lost the previous day had been retaken. This victory we to the man wanted to follow up, but General Meade was in command and thought it unsafe to go in pursuit of Lee—a restraint under which we chafed the live long day.

It was certainly the gloomiest Fourth of my life. A steady, dismal rain that lasted until night only added to our discomfiture and intensified our gloom. To cap the climax word was brought in camp that Lee had escaped across the Potomac and had made his way back to Central Virginia. This was a heavy blow. Just then some boys who had not yet heard the news sang out the familiar West Point chorus:

In the army there's sobriety,
Promotion's very slow,
So we'll cheer our hearts with choruses
At Benny Havens, oh!
We'll sing our reminiscences
Of Benny Havens, oh!

This memory of school days was too much for me—I put my hands to my ears to shut out the sound and felt for the first time that the hardest battles of life were those of disappointment.

I DO not remember that I ever spent a particularly unhappy Fourth in my life. As a boy, of course, like all others, I looked forward to this holiday with the keenest enjoyment; but never can I remember a celebration of this kind wherein I escaped the small boy's mishaps—burnt fingers, powdered face and sometimes burnt clothes. This I sort of expected as part of the programme and would allow nothing so paltry as these accidents to dampen my ardor. If they had occurred at any other day of the year except the Fourth of July I am quite sure I should have been an invalid for several days.

MAJOR GENERAL ELWELL S. OTIS.

THE bitterest disappointment of my youth I associate with Independence Day. When a young man in my teens I was very much in love with a young Virginia bud who attended a seminary not far distant. It was my very first love affair and I was dreadfully serious and puzzled to know the extent of her regard for me. I never could get her to tell. She was my ideal of beauty and grace, with just enough tact to ward off the conversation that most filled my mind by changing the subject. Just how to make her listen and answer me became my study. At last my opportunity arrived.

COLONEL JONES
of Idaho.

There was to be an oratorical contest in my college and by passing a creditable examination I was chosen orator of this occasion. I was in luck, for following upon the heels of this honor came the invitation to deliver the Fourth of July oration. I pinned my faith in her love upon my success at this college contest.

Now I must distinguish myself. She was not there on that all eventful night, but the newspaper notices made her proud of my friendship. But as a test of her love I must excel myself on the Fourth of July oration and if she were pleased with my efforts she would then give me her answer.

Then I began to burn midnight oil. On the night of the 3d I had learned it by heart and read it aloud while I stood before the mirror and gesticulated in the most eloquent way. My song of patriotism had cultivated a range of sound all the way from a cat's purr to a lion's roar and to-morrow she would hear me. Ah! that to-morrow.

The grove where the oration was to be delivered had been draped with bunting and flowers and everything was in readiness for the programme. The next morning I was awakened early by my responsibility and a big clap of thunder that rumbled through the heavens and rattled the windows of my sleeping apartment. With the downpour of the rain came the downfall of my dreams. The very sky seemed to open and a second flood appeared imminent. It kept up the whole day and night and I never did deliver that

IT WAS MY FIRST TRIAL AT TAILORING AND, OH, HOW I PERSPIRED AND BLED OVER THOSE CANVAS PANTS.

of my appearance. I was lieutenant colonel at this time and had been married only one week before starting out on this campaign.

My wife gave me a most useful needle case with scissors, thimble, etc., and early in the morning on this Fourth of July I took the shelter-tent for the material out of which to make my new trousers. This was my first trial at tailoring and by noon I had worked up a perspiration that can only be equaled by an Hammam bath. My needle-pricked fingers were bleeding and my canvas pants were polka-dotted with gore. I worked at those pants all that day and when night came I was actually sick with weariness. But when I put them on I was a sight to behold. Just where they should have been large they were too small and vice versa. They were as full of corners and lumps as a horned toad and I found that I couldn't sit down in them comfortably unless I turned them rear side before.

Everybody laughed at me for I looked so utterly wretched, whether walking or standing. When General Otis came into camp the next day he gave me the undignified sobriquet of Colonel Breches. Any way it was the most nerve wrecking and I may add most profane Fourth of my life.

MY unfortunate Fourth of July experience dates back to the year 1857. At this time I was drummer boy in the First Regiment of the Wisconsin State Militia and my friend, who is the present Brigadier General MacArthur, was my guest on this all eventful morning.

We amused ourselves by shooting at a target in the backyard with one of those old-fashioned horse pistols and soon grew so boisterous in our sport that my mother was attracted to the scene and participated in our fun.

BRIGADIER GENERAL KING.

We had been betting on hit or miss and putting our clothes up for security, each one donning the article as soon as the bet was won, so that when my mother joined us I was to all appearances more like MacArthur than myself in matters of dress.

The pistol we used had a saw handle and a steel projection that came back over the wrist to give additional strength and was extremely heavy. I coaxed and finally persuaded my mother to try her hand at the target and gave her the loaded pistol. She fired and the recoil was so great that the weapon flew back and struck her in the forehead with the sharp end of the steel projection. I don't think any boy ever felt remorse more keenly than I, for she was so good and patient, not wishing to hurt my feelings or spoil my holiday with thoughts of her suffering.

But the delights of the Fourth were over for me

