

(Afterward, whenever he saw a boy in kilts, he thought the youngster wore them because he had not yet had the scarlet fever.) He did not recover Miss Margaret again until—the 24th of May.

These were the days when the 24th of May, "the Queen's Birthday," was a festival for all loyal Canadians. And they were the days before the invention of the giant cracker and the toy revolver. As yet only the "cannon"—that first improvement on the Chinese cracker—was in the toy-shop windows; and although Don had bought five of them (believing in weight of metal as against rapidity of fire) Frankie had bought only crackers of smaller calibre. It remained to be seen whether his rattling volleys would be a match for Don's great guns.

They had been forbidden to begin their celebration until after breakfast, and they raced through the meal neck and neck. They finished together and ran upstairs together; but Don stumbled and fell on the landing, and Frankie reached the toy closet first. There the crackers, Roman candles, pin-wheels and what not, were laid out on the floor in two long rows, in fond imitation of ordnance in an arsenal; and Frankie began to cram his purchases in his pockets as fast as as he could pick them up. Don shoved in beside him, panting, to see that his brother was taking two cannon crackers which he did not own; and Don, as the rightful owner of them, snatched at them, to hold them till he could get breath to protest. He caught them by their long fuses; and Frankie, jerking back, plucked the strings out by the roots.