

LOSS OF PROPERTY AND LIFE FROM FIREWORKS.—The time for the slaughter of the innocents and burnt offering of homes, in our annual exhibition of patriotism, has almost arrived. Therefore, the Fourth of July warning of the fire marshal is due.

The great loss of property on the Fourth is from the small fire cracker, while the great loss of life is from the toy pistol.

In the five years since the office of fire marshal was established, the average number of fires in Ohio, from celebrating the Nation's natal day with noise, is thirty-six.

Unfortunately the particular kind of fireworks which gives great joy to a boy at small expense, and which he can

personally manage with little danger to himself, is the Chinese cracker, which is responsible for nearly all the burning of buildings. Red fire does not explode; the pin-wheel is fastened to a tree; the Roman candle discharged from the pavement scorches nothing but a wrist and the skyrocket usually falls harmless, even upon a shingle roof. Torpedoes, which are kept from under the street cars by ordinance in some cities, damage nothing but the nerves of the hysterical.

The only way in which a property owner can protect against fire dangers of the Fourth is to clean up rubbish and then watch the place.

"Young America" must demonstrate his nerve by letting the fuse of his cracker burn part way down before throwing it, and in the excitement of the supreme instant at which it must leave his hand he throws it without deliberating as to where it will light, or what.

Many big fires come from crackers flying through pavement gratings or cellar windows when they explode, and there igniting rubbish. Often they ignite sweepings, paper or shavings or go over a fence into rubbish piles.

The cannon cracker, which contains dynamite, and the toy pistol, which takes more lives than all other contrivances for celebrating combined, should be prohibited by ordinance under a sufficient penalty, although they are chargeable with but a very small part of the property loss. In Columbus a man who caught a lighted cannon cracker to throw it into the street, had both his hands and wrists converted into gases instantly by the heat of the explosion.

The toy pistol which fires blank cartridges is a deadly thing. In 1903 a medical journal gathered reports of 166 dead from Fourth of July accidents and of this 363 were deaths from lockjaw, each of which came from a wound by a wad from one of these cartridges. This frightful penalty for juvenile enthusiasm led the newspapers of the country to cry out against the toy pistol, with the result that the next "Fourth" produced but 105 deaths from lockjaw.

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