

# "Nolan's Joke" and Its Gloomy Ending.

## A Fourth of July Incident in Which an Over-Zealous Parent Gave His Family a Big Surprise.

On the Fourth of July Nolan played a practical joke. Nolan, by the way, was always extremely fond of practical jokes, and his Fourth of July venture was not of itself, a surprise to his friends. But the outcome was rather extraordinary, and its two pleasing results are:

1. That into the English language as it is spoken in Harlem and Yorkville there has crept an expression which hereafter will take an honored place beside Hobson's choice and Caesar's ghost.

2. That Nolan has lost his taste for practical joking.

In every store and household in Harlem you can to-day hear the expression "Nolan's joke." It is as good as Nolan's joke, or "Like Nolan's joke" have become familiar phrases. And the way it all came about was like this:

Thomas Nolan, who works in a downtown importing house, lives in One Hundred and Sixteenth street. He has a wife—a delicate, nervous woman—and a son, whose name is Jimmy.

Jimmy is ten years old, and the best description that could possibly be given to portray him to your mind is that he is exactly ten years old in body, mind and predilections. Like all well-trained boys of that age, Jimmy is governed with a tight rein, with just that wee bit of latitude that is allowed by a father who remembers that he, too, was once a boy of ten years old.

Thomas Nolan and Jimmy a trifle more mischievous than usual, and the Fourth of July found them both in a pretty bad condition. Jimmy wanted money to buy firecrackers.

"You can't have it," said the father.

"But paw! All the other boys will have them. Can't I have a few, paw?"

"No," was the stern reply. "I'll give you some pennies to buy Roman candles and sky-rockets in the evening, but firecrackers are only a nuisance. They make a lot of noise and they will disturb your mother."

Jimmy had saved up enough to enable him to splurge to any extent in the purchase of firecrackers nor would it place him upon an equal footing with the other boys in the neighborhood. So Jimmy hit upon a scheme.

He would invest all his money in one firecracker—the most tremendous he could get—explode it in the presence of all the boys on the block and then retire gracefully upon the laurels of that one bang! He went from store to store carefully measuring the biggest firecracker that each offered for fifty cents until he found one that was bigger than the others. This he purchased and, unobserved and unsuspected, carried home and hid in a closet in the dining room.

Papa Nolan on his way to work the day before the Fourth passed a confectionery store in which a number of imitation firecrackers filled with candy were displayed in the window.

"Hi!" he cried with glee. "I will play a joke."

Selecting the largest box—it was only a box shaped like a firecracker, but with a genuine fuse attached to the top—he paid for it, and under cover of darkness took it home with him, and hid it in the same closet and upon the identical shelf where Jimmy had secreted his purchase. The following morning, when



the family assembled at the breakfast table, Nolan was chuckling.

"Say, paw," began Jimmy, "give us some money for fireworks, will you?"

"All right, my son," replied his father; "here's a dollar for you. But remember, no firecrackers."

Jimmy made a grimace, but pocketed the money without saying a word.

"Firecrackers," continued Nolan with a twinkle in his eye, "are dangerous things. It's all right to fire them off when you understand them, but otherwise they're very deceptive. Now when I was a young man I worked in a powder factory and learned all about firecrackers. I'll show you how they work."

With eyes that almost bulged out of his head Jimmy beheld his father arise and open the closet door. With his face turned to his wife, who was pale with nervous dread, Nolan fumbled in the dark closet for a moment, and then, to Jimmy's horror, drew forth a gigantic firecracker.

"Oh, paw!" was all that he could gasp. Nolan was smiling, and Jimmy, convinced that his father had discovered his deceit, was trembling with fear.

"Mary," said Nolan, calmly propping the cannon cracker against the sugar bowl, "this is a peculiar firecracker, the like of which you never saw before. It will go off with a tremendous explosion, but it will be perfectly harmless."

Then, to his wife's horror and Jimmy's dismay, Nolan applied a lighted match to the fuse and leaned back in his chair to await his wife's cry of delighted surprise when the candy would scatter out upon the table. His wife, however, after one faint scream, buried her face in her hands to shut out the sight and waited in agony for the explosion which she expected would follow.

The sputtering of the fuse was more than Jimmy could stand.

"Ow, paw!" he cried. "Don't paw! Please don't! I want to see it! I didn't mean it!"

"Well," said Nolan, with a contented smile, "if you had wanted firecrackers like this I would gladly have given you a dozen of them."

Jimmy's face lit up with sudden pleasure, but—

"Bang!"

With a roar intensified a hundred-fold by the narrow confines of the room the cracker exploded. Nolan, who had tipped his chair backward, was promptly thrown to the floor. The sugar bowl, shattered into countless fragments, flew about in every direction. One piece struck Mrs. Nolan, and, with a shriek, she fainted. Another fragment upset the steaming coffee pot, the contents of which poured into Jimmy's lap, whereat he set up an awful yell.

The affrighted neighbors came running in, people in the street cried, "Fire!"

Some of the tenants ran for a doctor, others called the police and tried to get an ambulance, and pandemonium reigned supreme. Luckily no serious harm was done, and after a little washing the Nolan family was as good as new. Jimmy was so thoroughly demoralized to be punished, and his father was not in the proper mood to deliver a lecture to his son upon the evil of his ways.

But all over Harlem to-day, you can hear people talking of Nolan's great joke.

# How They Tease the Life Out of Little Lord Fauntleroy at Harvard.



### Young Vivian Burnett's Initiation into the Pi Eta Society.

Vivian Burnett, of Washington, the original of Fauntleroy, has just finished his sophomore year at Harvard. He has gone on his Summer vacation—and needs it, for life probably has fewer charms for him than for any young man who ever went to Cambridge.

Vivian has a whole peck of trouble. He would give most of his term allowances, and an quantity of old shoes, if he were not famous.

Vivian Burnett is the son of Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett, the writer. When he was a little boy she put him in a book, which everybody read, and which nobody who read can forget.

Vivian Burnett wishes they only could forget it, for it is making his college life more than half a bore. He was Little Lord Fauntleroy. He ran beautifully for a long time in St. Nicholas; he had a stupendous sale in book form; he found his way into Christmas stockings and made many little hearts happy, and at last came out upon the stage and was played in half the theatres of the country by such child actors as the Gerry Society did not put an embargo on.

His fame travelled to England. He was translated into various foreign tongues.

It was lovely while he was a toddler, but he is a college man now, and nights when he puts his head—with the famous curls all gone from it—down on his pillow in Quincy Hall he is sorry that the maternal genius ever took the notion of transmuting him into "the Little Lord," and making a household word of him.

Harvard wouldn't be Harvard—or any sort of an American college at all—if it gave Burnett any chance to forget that he is the original of Little Lord Fauntleroy.

It doesn't make any difference how masculine he may grow to be. He may have a voice like Old Boreas, and the whiskers of a Peffer, or an Orson. Harvard will always call him "Curly Locks," and say things to him about his velvet collars. His classmates, with a persistence which only classmates know, will remind him of his cunning little talks with the grocer, and all the cute and winsome things he did when he was the sweet, little boy in the book.

And when class day comes, and he gets his diploma, he will be gazed and grilled by the class day talkers until, maybe, he'll swear.

For all that, Burnett is known in Cambridge as a chap who is getting about all there is to be gotten out of college life. He is neither a "grind" nor a "sport," but just one of the easy-going youth who keeps a fair class standing, and, for the rest, gets all the fun he can without impairing his nervous system or his status as a gentleman.

His rooms in Quincy are furnished in good taste, but not lavishly. But with all the pictures that adorn the walls, there's not a solitary one of Little Lord Fauntleroy. That chapter in his life would be a closed book if he had anything to say about it. He never mentions Fauntleroy, but other people do it for him.

When Burnett first went to college he was in training as a sprinter. He wanted, the heartless upper classmen said, to get in condition so he could run away from his record as Fauntleroy, but two or three experiences that have made his life miserable since that time seem to have robbed him of hope, and he has given up running. His

other efforts at athletics were equally unavailing. He has not made any of the teams yet.

Perhaps the worst fun-making on the Fauntleroy lines that Burnett was forced to undergo was when he was a neophyte in Pi Eta society. He had to stand no end of joking. They made him "tog" himself up in the whole detested Fauntleroy outfit.

The initiation ceremonies last three whole days, and before the end of the ordeal the sufferer thought he was paying pretty dearly for the red bandanna handkerchief, the long hemp rope and the short iron bar which are emblems of the society, and which now decorate his quarters in Quincy.

There was no getting out of it. He wanted and had started out to be a Pi Eta, and he either had to bear the impost of probationary misery, or give up, withdraw his name, and abandon all hope of the distinction.

He had a forewarning of what the medicine was that they had in store for him. The preliminary teasing he had endured told him plainly that if he wanted membership in the society he would have to play Fauntleroy.

So he was not surprised when the mandate came. He was ordered to go forth with and secure Fauntleroy clothes to fit his now well developed figure, and wear them until further notice. But it was especially imposed on him not to omit any detail of the make-up. He must go the whole figure.

And he went it. He visited a high-priced tailor, and ordered a suit of Fauntleroy's that would have made Elsie Leslie's heart jump for joy. Short breeches, velvet collar and all—nothing was overlooked. His haberdasher got some fine, long, black, silk bows for him, and from a wig maker he secured a wig that was a wonder. It looked like molten gold.

Fauntleroy was as pretty as ever, only bigger. And the word of the rulers was that he should wear it all, and thus work out his title to membership.

Then the fun began. Wherever Fauntleroy went, the cry was sure to go. It made the students laugh and play to see him dressed up so.

In immaeulable misery he walked around, and when the senior members smoothed his shining locks he didn't dare "uppercut" or reach out with his left, or do any indelicate thing like that. He just had to smile and smile, and be a Fauntleroy still—and a still Fauntleroy.

After he had stood two days of chaffing, had been chucked under the chin and pinched and tickled in the ribs for a "pretty boy" and a "sweet thing" and "too cunning," he took one of the prominent Pi Eta men to one side and told him a sad story.

The guying was insufferable, he said. Ordinarily he wouldn't mind it at all, but it brought vividly to mind the thought of his brother, now dead, who, he said, was really and truly the original Little Lord Fauntleroy.

This took the listener entirely by surprise, but he swallowed the statement, took it as a bluff, and the Fauntleroy banter ceased. But to this day there are men in the society who cannot make up their minds whether the story was literally and altogether true or not.

The biggest "tear" that Fauntleroy has ever made since he went to Harvard was when Pi Eta, which ranks every whit as

high as the famous Hasty Pudding for theatrical shows, produced its opera "The Alcalde." Burnett was cast for Gitana, the gypsy girl, and he covered himself with Spanish girls' clothes, face paint, and all sorts of gory.

Performances were given, not only in Cambridge, but in Boston, Lynn and Salem, and at all these places Burnett was the drawing card. The Boston papers fairly overran with humorous praise of him, and the awful boy pretended he didn't like it a bit.

He was "made up" to a nicety, with black tresses, and a short skirt, and when he sang and danced the way in which his plump legs flew brought forth applause galore. He was the heroine of the show, and people who had seen in the Boston papers pictures of him as Gitana, shouted: "There he is!" "That's Little Fauntleroy!" and cheered him to the echo.

A man who is finishing his second year in college has not had time to push very prominently to the front, but Burnett for a sophomore is a youth of large acquaintance and wide popularity. Of course, he will be wanted in future Pi Eta shows, and he will doubtless be one of the best-known men in '98 by the time that class comes around to Sander's Theatre for its sheepskins.

But even there fame will not let him drop. He'll be Fauntleroy until he becomes that well-known and quaintest of creatures, "the oldest living graduate."

### BE YOUR OWN OCULIST.

Here's a Way to Test Your Eyesight, with Very Practical Results.

You may be your own oculist, and in a very practical and simple way. All you need is a stereoscope and a photograph.

That arrangement in which the picture holder slides up and down a flat frame, trombone fashion, is the best sort of stereoscope for the purpose, although any will do, and the photograph that will give the best results is a cabinet size view of some locality, with people in it.

You put the photograph in the holder and focus it just so that you can see the faces clearly. Then close the left eye and look at the picture intently with your right eye, while you count thirty slowly. Now close the right eye and look at the picture with the left eye for the same time. Then open both eyes and stare at the picture without changing the focus.

Something queer will happen. The figures on the one side of the picture will seem to move across the view and group themselves with those on the other side, and this is the point of the experiment—the figures will always move away from the weak eye.

Moreover, they move with a very precise relation of speed to the weakness of vision. If the left eye, for example, is quite weak, the figures will move very quickly across the plane of sight to the right side, while if there is but a slight defect the movement will be gradual, and so on.

A queer thing about this experiment is that, simple as it seems, it will bring out defects of vision that have never been suspected, and another queer thing is that it will demonstrate the cases in which both eyes are of equal power to be surprisingly exceptional.

# The Romance of the Champion Diver.

## Being the True Tale of a Long Lost Sister and Her Unexpected Discovery as a Coney Island Favorite.

Long Island shore romances against all the old tales of the Minnesingers and ballads of the Middle Ages.

This is a Long Island shore romance. And it is a romance of the first water, for the heroine is Birdie Lewis, champion lady high diver of the Boynton Water Show. That the press agent at this particular shore resort has made affidavit to the truth of this tale, should not shake popular belief in it.

A romance that does not involve separation and long wanderings is a poor shilly-shally thing. For that reason, Birdie was born in Ireland. That was twenty years ago. In the little village near Cork Birdie was Carlotta Lawson-Lottie to her folks. She had a brother Raymond.

When the old people died Birdie went to England. She could swim like a duck. Cork and Corkinians are very buoyant. She joined a water show and made money as a diver.

Six weeks ago she came to America. Meantime Raymond had gone to Australia. While Birdie in the tank shows was getting wet as water, Raymond in Australia was getting rich as gold. Everything he touched seemed to turn to sheep, and he forgot he had a sister until one day he "totter" up his wealth and found that he had too much.

Then he started out to find Birdie and spend a few dollars. He went as straight as a string back to Old Ireland, and asked the neighbors if they had seen his sister. They told him she had gone to London long ago.

He sought her in London, but found no trace of her, despite the fact that she was a famous water-queen. Sad at heart, but led by some destiny that no press agent can explain, he took ship for New York. He had a bank roll in his jeans which would have given Hungry Joe a nervous chill, and the plasters on the outside of it were getting so pocket worn that he decided that he'd have to spend them to save them.

So he went down to the different shore resorts. He saw all the sights, but still there was a gnawing sorrow at his heart, and gloom upon his brow. But that same destiny which had buttonholed him in Australia and dragged him some 15,000 miles away from his sheep led him into the water show.

His eyes, which had worn a sad, faraway look through so many years of prosperity, began to sparkle when he saw the diving lady with the red tights and the yellow over-waist.

"Where have I seen that face before?" That was the question he kept popping into himself. Birdie mounted to her platform and dove, ker-splash! And while she was under water Raymond muttered, "Aha! I have it!"

When she pushed her smiling Irish face up out of the tank he spoke right out loud and said: "She is my long lost sister." Then he followed her up to the dressing rooms.

Birdie has no mole on her chin. Hers is a scar over her right eye. Raymond had a bull terrier pup when he was a boy. It bit Birdie one day, and all the diving she had done had not washed away the mark of the dog's teeth. Raymond saw the scar. That settled it with him.

Birdie saw the prosperous looking "gent" staring at her. She already had formula-



lated visions of a "large, cold bottle and a small, hot tamale," when he walked over and asked her if she wasn't Carlotta Lawson.

She looked him all over. Process servers have such cute ways. Then she said "Yes."

"Then you are my long lost sister." She fell on his neck as only a high diver can, and her salt tears mingled with the water that dripped from her yellow jacket. Raymond's shirt bosom was a sight. "Never mind, sister dear," said he. "We'll dry it. I have money to burn."

"And I will tend the fire," said she.

But that was all in a joke, for the people who know Birdie say that she is not extravagant, that out of her wages, ever since she has been in the diving business, she has saved a fair proportion. And although she always keeps herself neat, her taste does not run to flamboyance and gew-gaws.

"And indeed," she said, when the matter of economy was mentioned to her, "why shouldn't I be careful? I never knew I had a rich brother. I had been alone in the world for a good many years. I had no means save what I earned at my business. I had no friends on whom I could fall back."

Of course, I knew I could live, and live comfortably, for a good many years yet by giving swimming and diving exhibitions, but by-and-by of course, there must come a time when that would no longer bring me in a livelihood. For I've been about enough to know that audiences don't care to see a woman in that sort of acts when she has out-lived all her comeliness.

"So wherever I could save a little, I did it, and I have enough now so that it doesn't take a microscope to find it. Still, it's nothing when you compare it with a real fortune."

"As for my brother's wealth, of course I am glad he has been fortunate. It's a splendid thing to find all of a sudden that you've got a lot of money."

"But I'm gladder to find that I have a brother, alive and well. It is a pretty lonesome world to live in when you haven't got a soul, throughout the whole length and breadth of it, that belongs to you, or that really cares, down in the bottom of their heart, what becomes of you. I'm tired of it, and I'm glad I've got my big brother—even rich as he is."

Raymond was mortified beyond measure that his sister should be diving into a tank for a living when his sheep and his dollars were as the sands of the sea. He told her if she would forswear diving from the top of the pavilion for the rest of her life he would settle broad acres and plenty of money on her.

Then he left her and went to San Francisco, but he is coming back in the Fall to take Birdie away from the Beach and the tank diving business forever.

The lucky girl has made no plans yet about giving her money away to charities or theatrical friends who have met hard seasons. She says she is going to settle down in the land of the kangaroo and make up years of lost time being good to her brother.

With the dollars he will give her it is more than likely Birdie will have a better chance than she ever had before in her life to be good to some other girl's brother.