Entire Industries in 1858.
CHAPTER XII.

A MEMORABLE 4th.

The 4th of July in the year 1852 which, owing to the 4th occurring on Sunday, was celebrated on the 5th, is one that will never be forgotten by many of the earlier settlers.

In order that the nation's anniversary might be duly celebrated, a committee of villagers had made arrangements for a parade and picnic at which a luncheon and refreshments of all kinds were to be served without charge. Hosea Allen was in charge of the arrangements and invitations had been sent to the residents of Manitowoc, Sheboygan and Milwaukee to participate in the festivities.

Accordingly friends in Milwaukee arranged an excursion to Two Rivers on the side-wheeler steamer "Planet" which left Milwaukee on Sunday afternoon, July 4th, at about 6 o'clock for Two Rivers, stopping at Sheboygan and Manitowoc en route to take on additional excursionists. The steamer with a large number of excursionists on board arrived at the pier here about 9 o'clock Monday morning and was met by practically all the villagers who accorded them an enthusiastic and noisy welcome, in true western style.

A line of march was then formed with Hosea Allen at the head and Ed. Boutin as marshal of the day, followed by the band and the crowd. After a short parade in honor of the occasion, they were escorted to a grove of tall pine trees, which occupied the site where Mr. Kessman resided for many years. Here tables and benches had been erected and the visitors and others were treated to an elaborate dinner which was to be followed by a program of speech-making, games and a general jollification.

In order that the celebration might be duly ushered in, an old cannon which had formerly constituted a part of the de-
fenses of Fort Howard, near Green Bay, and which had been brought here sometime previous, was brought into service.

The committee on arrangements had procured six 50-lb. kegs of powder and engaged Ed. LaPoint, a veteran of the Mexican War, to fire the salutes. The cannon was planted on a knoll or hill which occupied a site approximately on the northwest corner of the public school grounds. The knoll was surmounted by a flag pole 275 feet high. For convenience in handling and loading the cannon, the powder from five kegs had been sewed up in flannel bags containing one pound of powder each, each bag constituting one charge. The other keg was opened and left in this condition, the powder being used in priming the cannon. All of the powder both in the bags and keg was placed conveniently near at hand.

Promptly at four o’clock in the morning the first salute was fired and continued at regular intervals up to ten o’clock in the morning, when a disaster occurred that caused sorrowing and suffering to many and turned the day of joy and pleasure into sorrow and suffering.

It seems that some of the younger element were engaged in shooting fire crackers and began throwing them promiscuously about. Suddenly one of the lighted fire crackers was thrown into the keg containing the loose powder which had been used for priming the cannon. Instantly a sheet of flame shot forth igniting the other powder contained in the bags, which, igniting all at once, exploded and flames and powder were shot out in every direction for a distance of 100 feet or more. When the smoke had cleared away it was found that 36 people had been more or less severely injured, the clothes catching fire in many instances, adding to the horror.

Of those most severely injured were the following: Henry Decker, Henry Rife, Albert Jackson, Oliver Pilon and Moses Bunker. Friends immediately offered every assistance, private homes were thrown open, notably that of Mr. Gotlieb Berger
at that time residing near the Washington House, where the injured and badly burned were wrapped in cotton and sweet oil.

Of the victims Albert Jackson was so severely injured by the force of the explosion, besides receiving burns, that he died within a few hours after the accident. Of the others all recovered but many were sadly disfigured and will retain the scars the balance of their lives. Moses Bunker was probably, next to Jackson, the most badly injured, and although only eight years of age at the time, and badly burned, he finally recovered and still lives to recite the history of that day.

The steamer "Planet" with such of the injured and others of the excursionists immediately left for Milwaukee to procure more sweet oil and cotton and other medical supplies as might be needed and returned the following day in record breaking time with the much needed supplies.

The old cannon used on that occasion did service for nearly 50 years on similar occasions after that, and finally came to a glorious end by bursting while firing a salute on the occasion of Schley's victory at Santiago, July 4, 1898. Fortunately no one was injured when she burst. The victory was evidently too great for the limited capacity of the cannon to properly give vent to its pent up feelings, so with a supreme effort it burst.