

BRING MYRTLE

And then she turned with ready grace to meet Col. Haldane, who had just entered the room. "Felicity and I were rawn to the window by the magnetic influence of your charming little charge," she said. "Do you," said Col. Haldane, gratefully, "it is very kind of you," and then he looked steadfast at Florence, absolutely blushing as he did so. Florence, catching the glance interrogative, was arrested by her admirable intention of transporting him to the other end of the long lounge drawing-room, and introducing him to Mrs. Harrington, the rectrix wife. This excited gentleman did not look exactly in a fit state to be despatched to about winter blanket clubs at workingmen's clubs and friendly societies. It's all very fine to talk about leading a suppressed existence like Jane Austen, but why on earth did Col. Haldane look at her with his unfathomable glance from his undecipherable fine grey eyes? What did it mean? She fell away from him, music, and turned to outward machinery of a trim commiseration on her greeting of the numerous guests, who were rapidly arriving. The Whites had just started a page, who answered to the ubiquitous name of "Tommy," one of the specimens such adapted by ambitious aspirants as an improvement on parlor maids, a creature raw of the fields, with the expression of an animated turnip in his brain to match. In the midst of a buzz of voices intermingling with the frazzled of rich dresses, Tommy suddenly darted into the room and made straight for Miss Florence White, carrying in his lobster-colored hands a book suggestive of the P. D. company. Col. Haldane, from his solitary seat in the deep recess of the bay window facing the entrance to "The Grange," felt an awful sensation come over him. Was this the myrtle arriving? and had the mission he absolutely charged the page to do? He sank behind the deep chamber of the curtains, then as suddenly emerged. "Bring Myrtle!" these were her own words, and he made a violent rush across the room to her side. "It's the myrtle!" he said, breathlessly. "Allow me! The stupid people have made a mistake," he continued incoherently. "The idea of charging the carriage to you! And he threw a sovereign into Tommy's bashful fingers. Miss White looked at Col. Haldane with ever-enlarging pupils. He had returned lately from Egypt, had been indefatigable in the bombardment of Alexandria, and had not returned until he had been obliged to have his head shaved. "Thank you, Col. Haldane," she said. "You have saved me the trouble of fetching my myrtle. This is a new boy—a country manager, you know; he wants instruction" and smiling pleasantly, she moved on to the room after the vanishing sign of Tommy. In the room, Tommy had stood a huge tub, matted and bearing the name, "An Mycotis, Menton," etc. "It's a flowing myrtle, Miss," said Tommy, "the best carrier says it ever fell to the ground to die." Tommy said Miss White, "and another time never, never to bring P. D. C. books into the drawing-room. Go to the housekeeper in the kind of thing." Tommy took her natural to him in yet deeper, and ran for the scissors. Miss White snipped the detaining string and gave way to a very natural deluge of the starchy blossoming myrtle was used to view. "Very odd, she thought; 'its addressed unmissably to me. Poor Col. Haldane! What does it mean?'" Thinking of the shaven head and the bombardment of Alexandria, she sighed a little pensively and a little compassionately and returned to the drawing-room in time to escape the entry of Mrs. Danvers, whose forest cart, drawn by a pair of Welsh ponies, she saw in the gate. That lady now, followed by her inseparable companion, a perfect Dandy Dimont, a R-bodied, low-legged, flap-eared peddle creature, which rejoiced in the position of seven prizes. Florence immediately made a rush at the dog. "Ah, you have brought Myrtle!" she said, when I saw you this morning, if you would forget, though I meant it in my note." Both ladies had yed in the direction where still sat Col. Haldane, plunged in started reflection in the recess of the window. Was it long-backed, low-legged, flap-eared the honored object of the message? "Of course I brought dear old Myrtle," retorted Mrs. Danvers. "I should suffice at an afternoon if I hadn't a bit of natural life like that trusty Scotchman about me." "Now it's expedient," said a deep voice from behind curtains, and Col. Haldane came forth once more. The hesitation of manner had vanished; he was smiling serenely, and his eyes were fixed with expression of perfect understanding on the countenance of Miss White. "Bring Myrtle!" continued, laughingly. "This is Myrtle; Rival Myrtles there may be; but I form of Myrtle can't be improved in." Again Miss White's pupils enlarged sympathetically, and worse! Poor Col. Haldane! He trembled for his reason. Not so, Danvers. Fixing him with her blue eyes, she said: "What is explained? Misuse of circumstances?" "Confusion of names," said Col. Haldane, who was scribbled on a wrong leaf—that's all," said Col. Haldane. With a sudden intuition, Miss White sank down beside Col. Haldane in the recess, with a deep gasp of mortified confusion. "Does that account of the presence of the flowering myrtle in the hall?" she asked after a moment's horrified silence. "Yes. Charming mix for me," muttered Col. Haldane, "I have an opportunity that I—" and he looked at Mrs. Danvers, who, in a fitness worthy of her, dashed at the other end of the room to meet extended hand of a propitious acquaintance. He went on smoothly enough—"An opportunity that I wanted, you one day wear a sprig of tother myrtle for me, Florence!" Miss White didn't say "No," she evidently intended to say "Yes."

THE CANNY SCOT INVESTS. A western paper says that the only sister of the late Gen. Custer is giving dramatic readings for a livelihood and that she is in great demand for such service among the different Grand Army posts. The name of Custer is still revered by the old soldiers, especially those who live in Michigan, where he is looked upon as the real hero of the late war. His widow spends her time between her native home, near Detroit, and New York city. Mrs. Custer is almost as much admired as her illustrious husband was. After she married the general she was almost constantly in Washington with her virtally in hand waiting to go to the front. She was always the first woman in camp after battle, and would have been delighted to have followed her gallant husband in his impetuous onsets upon the enemy. She never seemed to know what fear was, and many times put herself in great peril. She was in Richmond two days before her husband reached there and almost before the sound of the guns had ceased to reverberate about the Confederate capital. Just after the surrender, when her husband came up from Nottoway court house to take her to his headquarters, he remarked "that it looked pretty bad for a general; to be beaten into Richmond by his wife after he had been trying for four years to get there first." Of course, Custer, like all other soldiers, died poor, and his wife and family are practically without resources, except the pitiful pension of \$50 a month that the government has granted. Mrs. Custer has a great many relics of the war, left her by her husband and given to her by different officers of the army. Besides possessing the first flag of truce the Confederates brought into our lines as the beginning of Lee's surrender, she has the flag of truce carried by her husband into the Confederate lines. She also has much valuable data about the cavalry arm of our service that has never yet been given to the public. It is really a pity that a fact history of this branch of the service has not yet been written or even seriously contemplated. Long-Range Rifle Firing. The peculiar method of long-range firing by the Croodmoor and other rifle teams appears to have been adopted from the hill-men in Formosa. The Tansui correspondent of The London News describes the mode of fighting of these semi-savage people as follows: "The man lies on his back, raises his head sufficiently to be able to look along the barrel, places the muzzle between his toes, takes a deliberate aim, and makes, as a rule, better practice than by lying on his stomach and taking aim in that position. The toes keep the long weapon steady, very little front is shown, and experts on a level piece of ground, covered perhaps with tufts here and there of rank grass, would puzzle European troops considerably on landing in a strange country, where an upright enemy would be looked for instead of a horizontal one." Their ordinary method of carrying their rifles is to place the lower end of the rifle in their matches, and to hold the upper end, high enough to be able to see the muzzle straight down the long barrel, on which are no sights of any kind. They have a habit, too, of discharging their guns from their hip, making good practice at short distances. Sailors' Prejudices and Superstitions. The sailor's prejudices are for the most part unaccountable, but as a rule they are traditional. Sailors have the same superstitions now that they had when Alexander the Great set sail with his enormous fleet of 2,000 transports and eighty galleys from the mouth of the Indus for the mouth of the Euphrates, and was frightened out of his course by a school of spouting whales. If a sailor is questioned about his superstition he never admits that he believes in signs, although he may spin yarns about the beliefs of other sailors. The regular old-fashioned sailor has no love for preachers at sea. Many stories are told, particularly of the old sailing packet days, which show it. The prejudice was a tradition handed down from the middle ages, when all priests wore black gowns and forbidding hoods. The open-hearted sailor feared the looks of them, and dreaded the power of their prayers, and saw only evil in the mysterious counting of beads and the reverential looks at the crucifix. We bet the priest on shipboard in a gale if lacking in courage. The sailors believed invariably that he was a Jonah, and if he in any way showed that he feared them, overboard he went. But if he stood up and cross in hand, ordered them forward or to do their duty, they observed in fear and trembling, drawing the oars or the sails, and the vessel was driven on by the power of his officers. Not less superstitions were the owners. Hulls and sails were decorated with images of saints to protect the ship from evil, and of hobgoblins to propitiate the devil and his angels. Catholic signs were painted on the hatches, and sacred figures on the cutwater. Chips were launched with ceremonies upon the water to spread a charm about the new vessel which would bring her owner wealth and prosperity. Figureheads are usually supposed to have originated in a desire for ornament, but the fact is they came from superstitious fear. Not much better are modern ship-owners, for the number of horseshoes nailed over cabin-doors would freight a schooner. Perhaps it will be remembered that when a big yacht was launched last summer without the customary waste of a bottle of wine on her bows, the omission was telegraphed all over the world, because it showed a very remarkable temerity on the part of the owner. An orator speaking of the uselessness of a man said that "he wastes his sweetness on the desert air and stands like an eagle upon a siding." This is a strange combination of metaphors. The birds of paradise, which are natives of New Guinea, are reported to be in danger of extinction. At a recent sale in London 4,725 of these birds were sold for ornaments and decoration.

Gen. Custer's Widow. (Philadelphia Times "Sideload Sketches.") A western paper says that the only sister of the late Gen. Custer is giving dramatic readings for a livelihood and that she is in great demand for such service among the different Grand Army posts. The name of Custer is still revered by the old soldiers, especially those who live in Michigan, where he is looked upon as the real hero of the late war. His widow spends her time between her native home, near Detroit, and New York city. Mrs. Custer is almost as much admired as her illustrious husband was. After she married the general she was almost constantly in Washington with her virtally in hand waiting to go to the front. She was always the first woman in camp after battle, and would have been delighted to have followed her gallant husband in his impetuous onsets upon the enemy. She never seemed to know what fear was, and many times put herself in great peril. 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She also has much valuable data about the cavalry arm of our service that has never yet been given to the public. It is really a pity that a fact history of this branch of the service has not yet been written or even seriously contemplated. Orange Culture in Florida. Coming into Bearing—"Sour Stumps"—Grafting—Other Products. (Cincinnati Enquirer Interview.) "How long before the orange tree bears fruit?" "The small ones will begin to blossom and have a few oranges on them at four or five years, but growing from the seed it is ten years before the tree is mature and bears the full crop. Some have been known to bear nicely at seven years. A good plan would be to buy the sweet seedlings raised from the seed for \$40 per 100, or from 25 to 50 cents apiece, according to the age. You can buy them at the nurseries ranging in age from a year to ten years. Some prefer to buy the sour stumps, which are grafted with the sweet orange buds. You can pay \$3 or \$4 apiece for sour stumps and raise good fruit in four years." "What are sour stumps?" "The original wild orange tree cut off and grafted." "What do the groves command an acre?" "An average bearing grove sells at \$1,000 per acre—some more, and some less. An orange commands 1 1/2 cents on the tree. There would be money in it at 1 cent, and the price is bound to come down. Northern capital is boosting the country up and developing its resources. It is northern men who are making the orange business pay. The beauties of grafting are wonderfully illustrated in Florida. I have seen lemons, oranges and grape fruit growing on one tree as nicely as could be. I have seen grape fruit weighing two pounds, and lemons big as your head. Grape fruit looks something like an overgrown orange, is quite sour, but very palatable." "Where do the planters ship to mostly?" "New York gets the fruit. Railroad rates to Cincinnati are against us. As an illustration what northern capital and push has done, it is only necessary to point out, land that was purchased for \$5 and \$10 per acre, selling for \$100 per acre now. A mature orange tree is considered to be worth \$10 per year. In Ocala they are very plentiful in naming their streets, for instance, the streets of prominent streets are Lemon avenue and Orange avenue. Nearly every fruit known—bananas, pomegranates, figs, peaches, etc.—is grown in Florida, and, besides that, there are now great opportunities in cotton, rice and coffee and cane planting. The southerners all prefer to raise cotton and cane. The sea island cotton, the finest in the world, grows in Florida." "How about wild game?" "There is game in abundance. We have plenty of bear, wild cat, deer, wild turkeys, ducks, rabbits, squirrels, etc. Then there is a great industry springing up in alligators. A great many make a living killing them and selling their hides and teeth. There is about \$10 profit in a good sized alligator. The hunters catch them sunning themselves and shoot them behind the shoulder or in the eye. Good big teeth bring \$3 apiece, and are made up into pins, and there is always ready sale for the hide." Fastidious English Servants. (Lady Gaskell in Louisa's.) Even the delicate satire of Du Maurier and the broader humor of Leach have failed to exaggerate the follies of modern servants and the foolish and fanciful causes given by them for quitting the service of their employers. "To leave in order to get a change" is become between masters and servants a regular, recognized reason. "I have no fault to find against you and Lord G—," a housemaid said to a friend of mine a short time ago, "but I want a change, and I don't like H—shire scenery or air." Another friend of mine had a footman who left her "because," he said, "he could no longer stay, as he regretted to find that his employer did not keep the company he had been accustomed to." A scullerymaid that had been engaged for no more than a year, was declared to take any orders from me, declaring that she could only take orders from the person who had engaged her. A foreman in the employment of one of my friends allowed a great quantity of his master's greenhouse glass to be broken during a storm, "because," he said, "it was not his place to close the windows, and that the second man his business." A maid to whom I once offered a situation declined it on the ground that she had once lived in a duke's family, and could not possibly sink lower than a viscount's, or else, to use her own words, "she would lose all self-respect," while a housemaid left me because she declared that she considered the men servants of the establishment too deficient in good looks to keep company with. Beneath the Varnished Surface. (The Current.) Professor Goldwin Smith, in The Week of Toronto, commenting upon a fatal accident that recently occurred to a trapeze performer in a Spanish theatre, says: "Barbarism still lurks beneath the varnished surface of civilization, and there is still in us an element of baseness and cowardice which makes us take pleasure in the sight of another man's peril." The surviving Rothschilds will turn their house in Jew's lane, Frankfurt-on-the-main, into a sort of museum of family relics. A Taxidermist. "What you say your friend to Tommy, a taxidermist?" "What's that?" "Why, he's a sort of animal up-hoister."

THE BRIGHT SIDE OF THE BUSINESS. (See an Interview.) "It is true, as frequently repeated, that chewing gum is made of old rubber, dog manure and similar delishious." "If you will stop back into the store, I will take pleasure in showing you the materials of which we make our gum. And certainly there were none outside of old shoes and umbrellas, and no traveling bags of putrescent porkers and the contents of the back yard." "This is the foundation of all the chewing gum," said the manufacturer, as he lifted from a sack of foreign flax a lump of material that looked very much like putty or thick dough. "It is the product of a tree, the sap of which when exposed to the atmosphere solidifies and becomes just what you here. It is controlled by the market of a New York house, and varies from 10 cents to \$1 per pound, to suit the no-olists' fancy. Its commercial value is not known by more than a dozen souls outside of New York. I saw a leading druggist there for it, but he declared that there was no such substance in existence. Commonly it is known as 'tohu gum,' but there is no tohu in it. Break off a piece and chew it. Isn't it pleasant to the taste and agreeable to the teeth? There you have the chewing gum without the toll for chewing purposes. It is, in a natural state, just as satisfactory as when made up into a composition. But the gum-chewers want more than a substance to chew. They want something sweet and odoriferous. So we form a composition of this South American gum with sugar and tolu balsam. There is the aromatic tolu. It is the product of the tolu tree of South America, as you well know, is a stimulant used for colds and throat troubles. Its qualities are healing; it is pleasant to the taste, and when sweetened is really delicious. It is the attractive part of the chewing gum, and gives it its name, but as I told you, the South American gum is the base and body of the wax, while the tolu is only a small per cent." Gradually the "secrets of a trade" were leaked out, and all but the written recipe were in the mind of the reporter. It seems that this much boasted gum from the tropics, which is most probably harmless, is boiled by the chewing-gum maker, strained, and all chips and dirt removed, when the tolu and sugar are added, forming a concoction which, when sufficiently cooked, is rolled out, cut into squares and laid aside to dry. It takes three or four days for the newly made gum to dry out; then it is wrapped, boxed and marketed. The same dealer makes a white chewing gum. This is made of paraffine and sugar. Paraffine is a production from coal oil. In appearance it is glow white, and as to taste it is insipid if something worse. Paraffine and sugar boiled up into a "ball broth," cooled and put into shape, because the wax is so soft, soon in heartily adorned. I think the tolu paraffine is made of natural products; while white wax is made of manufactured stuff. The Awakening of Nationalities. (Enloe de Lawley in Contemporary Review.) See what a prodigious reawakening! One might almost compare it to the resurrection of the dead. Idioms buried hitherto in darkness spring forth into light and glory. What was the German language in the eighteenth century, when Frederick boasted that heignopit it and prided himself on writing a treatise as perfectly as Volttaire! True, it was Luther's language, yet it was not spoken by the upper and educated classes. Forty years ago, what was the Hungarian tongue? The despised dialect of the pastors of the Pusta. German was the only language spoken in good society and in government offices, and at the diet, Latin. At the present day the Magyar dialect is the language of the press, of the parliament, of the theatre, of science, of academies, of the university, of poetry, and of fiction; henceforth the recognized and extensive official language. It is imposed even upon the inhabitants of Croatia or Transylvania, who have no wish for it. Teuchek is gradually securing for itself the same place in Bohemia as Magyar has attained in Hungary. A similar phenomenon is taking place in Croatia, the dialect there, formerly merely a popular patois, now possesses a university at Agman, poets and philologists, a national press and schools. The Serbian tongue, which is merely Croatian written in Cyrillic characters, has become the official, literary, parliamentary and scientific language of Serbia. It is precisely in the same position as its elder brothers, French and German, in their respective countries. It is the same for the Bulgarian in Bulgaria and Romania, for the Polish in Poland, for the Fin in Finland, and also in Flanders, where, as elsewhere, the literary reawakening precedes political claims. Her Choice. (From the F&G.) Two servant girls arguing their holiday out and come a hall before the show-case of a do's in antiquities to admire the lamps and vases. "Which of these chandeliers did you have for your house if you were rich?" one asked. "I'd have that lovely bronze one there with the eighteen figs." "I'd prefer that one," replied her companion, pointing to a pair of pendant with three lights. "Because it would be so much less trouble to clean it!"

How the Whites Got Its Name. (Washington Hartford Times.) It was during Addison's term that the executive man got the name of being the White Man. After being burned by the British walls of the building, which are of stone, were much smoked up, a cure for the defect, when the house rebuilt the walls were painted white. They have been left painted white since, hence the name White Man. A Taxidermist. "What you say your friend to Tommy, a taxidermist?" "What's that?" "Why, he's a sort of animal up-hoister."

THE DANIEL BUSINESS. (Burlington Hawkeye.) A Parisian pianist, M. Perru, has offered to play in a cage full of lions. An irreverent critic, therefore, asks whether Paris does not possess a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals. But a confere replies: "Don't worry about the lions; they will take care of themselves. The Daniel business does not always work." Success from Failure. (Farm and Fireside.) When one fails, he should study into the causes of it, and take a fresh start with more intelligence. His want of success ought to teach him a valuable lesson if he will only study it out. Professor Swing: Of the alleged unhappy, perhaps two-thirds have been too indolent to extract from the world anything but its poison. This country produces annually five and a half billion oysters, or, to state the fact more clearly, one hundred millions a week. Bonner: Of all the riches that we long for, of all the pleasures we enjoy, we can carry no more out of this world than out of a dream.