

A BUNDLE OF MYRRH

By WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE

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ONE of the first things that a new reporter on our paper has to learn is the kinology of the town. Until he knows who is kin to whom, and how, a reporter is likely at any time to make a bad break. Now, the kinology of a country town is no simple proposition. After a man has spent ten years writing up weddings, births and deaths, attending old settlers' picnics, family reunions and golden weddings, he may run into a new line of kin that opens a whole avenue of hitherto unexplored facts to him, showing why certain families line up in the ward primaries, and why certain others are fighting tooth and toenail.

The only person in town who knows all of our kinology—and most of that in the county, where it is a separate and indeterminate study—is "Aunt" Martha Merryfield. She has lived here since the early fifties, and was a Perkins, one of the eleven Perkins children that grew up in town; and the Perkinses were related by marriage to the Mortons, of whom there are over fifty living adult descendants on the town-site now. So one begins to see why she is called "Aunt" Martha Merryfield. She is literally aunt to over a hundred people here.

She lives alone in the big brick house on the hill, though her children and grandchildren are in and out all day and most of the night, so that she is not at all lonesome. She is the only person to whom we can look for accurate information about local history, and when a man dies who has been at all prominent in affairs of the town or county or state, we always call up "Aunt" Martha on the phone, or send a reporter to her, to learn the real printable and unprintable truth about him.

Aunt Martha used to bring us flowers for the office table, and it was her delight to sit down and take out her corn-knife—as she called it—and go after the town shams. She has promised a dozen times to write an article for the paper, which she says we are not to print, entitled "Self-Made Women I Have Known." She says that men were always bragging about how they had clerked, worked on farms, dug ditches and whacked mules across the plains before the railroads came; but that their wives insisted that they were princesses of the royal blood.

Her particular animosity in the town is Mrs. Julia Neal Worthington. Aunt Martha told us that when Tim Neal came to town he had a brown you could scrape with a knife and an "O" before his name you could hang a hoghead with. "And that woman," exclaimed Aunt Martha, when she was under full sail, "that woman, because she has two bookcases in the front room and reads the book reviews in the Beltonator, thinks that she is cultured. When her folks first came to town they were as poor as Job's turkey, which was not to their discredit—everyone was poor in those days. The old man Neal was as honest an old Mick as you'd meet in a day's journey, or at a fair, and he used to run a lemonade and peanut stand down by the bank corner. But his girls, who were raised on it, until they began teaching school, used to refer to the peanut stand as 'papa's little pretend that he only ran it for recreation, and say: 'Now why do you suppose papa enjoys it?'—We just can't get him to give it up." And now Julia is president of the Woman's federation, has stomach trouble, has had two operations, and is suffering untold agonies with acute neuritis. And yet, Aunt Martha would say through a benignant smile, "she's a good-enough woman in many ways, and I wouldn't say anything against her for the world."

Once Miss Larrabee, the society reporter, brought back this from a visit to Aunt Martha: "I know, my dear, that your paper says there are no cliques and crowds in society in this town, and that it is so democratic. But you and I know the truth. We know about society in this town. We know that if there ever was a town that looked like a side of bacon—streak of lean and streak of fat all the way down—it is this blessed place. Crowds?—why, I've lived here over fifty years and it was always crowds. 'Way back in the days when the boys used to pick us up and carry us across Elm Creek when we went to dances, there were crowds. The girls who crossed on the boys' backs weren't considered quite proper by the girls who were carried over in the boys' arms. And they didn't dance in the same set."

Miss Larrabee says she looked into the elder woman's eyes to find which crowd Aunt Martha belonged to, when she flashed out:

"Oh, child, you needn't look at me—I did both; it depended on who was looking! But, as I was saying, if anyone knows about society in this town, I do. I went to every dance in town for the first twenty-five years, and I have made potato salad to pay the salary of every Methodist preacher for the past thirty years, and I ought to know what I'm talking about." There was fire enough to twinkle in her old eyes as she spoke. "Beginning at the bottom, one may say that the base of society is the little tads, slogging down from what your paper

calls the Amalgamated Handholders, to the trundle-bed trash just out of their kissing games. It's funny to watch the little tads grow up and pair off and see how bravely they try to keep in the swim. I've seen ten grandchildren get out and I've a great-grandchild whose mother will be pushing her out before she is old enough to know anything. When young people get married they all say they're not going to be old-marriedly, and they hang on to the dances and little hops until the first baby comes. Then they don't get out to the dances much, but they join a card club."

In her dissertation on the social progress of young married people, Aunt Martha explained that after the second year the couple go only to the big dances where everyone is invited, but they pay more attention to cards. The young mother begins going to afternoon parties, and has the other young married couples in for dinner. Then, before they know it, they are invited out to receptions and parties, where little tads preside at the punch-bowls and wait on table, and are seen and not heard. Aunt Martha continued:

"By the time the second baby comes they take one of two shoots—either go in for church societies or edge into a whist club."

Aunt Martha's eyes danced with the mischief in her heart as she went on: "Now, if after the second baby comes, the young parents begin to feel like saving money, and being someone at the bank, they join the church and go in for church societies, which don't take so much time or money as the whist clubs and receptions. The babies keep coming and the young people keep on improving their home, moving from the little house to the big house; the young man's name begins to creep into lists of directors at the bank, and they are invited out to the big parties, and she goes to all the stand-up and 'gobble-gobble-and-gie' receptions. As they grow older, they are asked with the proceeds and widows for the first night of a series of parties at a house to get them out of the way and over with before the young folks come later in the week. When they get to a point where the young folks laugh and clap their hands at little pudgy daddy when he dances 'Old Ian Tucker' at the big

ried—judge of the District court at twenty-four." She held the case in her hand and went on opening the others. She came to one showing a mustached and gaunt youth in a captain's uniform—a slim, straight, soldierly figure. As she passed it to Miss Larrabee Aunt Martha looked sidewise at her, saying: "You wouldn't know him now. Yet you see him every day, I suppose." After the girl shook her head, the elder woman continued: "Well, that's Jim Purdy, taken the day he left for the army." She sighed as she said: "Let me see, I guess I haven't happened to run across Jim for ten years or more, but he didn't look much like this then. Poor old Jim, they tell me he's not having the best time in the world."

Miss Larrabee came down the lilac-bordered walk from the stately old brick house, carrying a great bouquet of sweet peas and nasturtiums and poppies and phlox, a fleeting memory of some association she had in her mind of Uncle Jimmy Purdy and Aunt Martha kept tantalizing her. She could not get it out of the background of her consciousness, and yet it refused to form itself into a tangible conception. It was associated vaguely with her own grandmother, as though, infinite ages ago, her grandmother had said something that had lodged in the girl's head.

When the occasion made itself, Miss Larrabee asked her grandmother the question that puzzled her, and learned that Martha Perkins and Jim Purdy were lovers before the war, and that she was wearing his ring when he went away—thinking he would be back in a few weeks with the Civil war ended. In his first fight he was shot in the head and was in the hospital for a year, delirious; when he was put back in the ranks he was captured and his name given out among the killed. In prison his dementia returned and he stayed there two years. Then for a year after his exchange he followed the Union army like a dumb creature, and not until two years after the close of the war did the poor fellow drift home again, as one from the dead—all uncertain of the past and untried for the future.

And his sweetheart drank her cup alone. The old settlers say that she never flinched nor shrank, but for



The Judge Walked Over and Gave the Band Leader Five Dollars. parties in the brick house, it's all up with them—they are old married folks, and the next step takes them to the old folks' whist club, where the bankers' wives and the insurance adjusters run things. That is the inner sanctuary, the holy of holies in the Society of this town."

"That reminds me of the Winthrop. When they came here, back in the sixties, it happened to be Fourth of July, and the band was out playing in the grove by the depot. Mrs. Winthrop got off the train quite grandly and bowed and waved her hand to the band, and the Judge walked over and gave the band leader five dollars. They said afterward that they felt deeply touched to find a raw western town so appreciative of the coming of an old New England family, that it erected them with a band. Before Mrs. Winthrop had been here three weeks she called on me, 'as one of the first ladies of the town,' she said, to organize and see if we couldn't break up the habit of the hired girls eating at the table with the family."

The talk drifted back to the old days, and Aunt Martha got out her photograph album and showed Miss Larrabee the pictures of those whom she called "the rude forefathers of the village." In their quaint old costumes of war-times. In the book were baby pictures of middle-aged men and women, and youthful pictures of the old men and women of the town. But most interesting of all to Miss Larrabee were the daguerrotypes—quaint old portraits in their little black boxes, framed in plush and gilt. The old woman brought out picture after picture—her husband's among the others, in a broad beaver hat with a high choker taken back in Brattleboro before he came to Kansas. She looked at it for a long minute, and then said gayly to Miss Larrabee: "He was a handsome boy—quite the beau of the state when we were mar-

ried, even after her marriage, the young man kept a little grave covered with flowers, that bore the simple words: 'Martha, aged five months and three days.'"

The war brought her neighbors so many sorrows that Martha's trouble was forgotten, the years passed and only the old people of the community know about the little grave beside the judge's and their little boy's. Jimmy Purdy grew into a smooth-faced, unwrinkled, rather blank-eyed old man, clerking in the bookstore for a time, serving as city clerk for 20 years, and later living at the Palace hotel on his pension. He worshiped Aunt Martha's children, but he never saw her except when they met in some casual way. She was married when he came back from the war, and if he ever knew her agony he never spoke of it.

One day they found him dead in his bed. And Miss Larrabee hurried out to Aunt Martha's to get the facts about his life for the paper. It was a bright October morning as she went up the walk to the old brick house, and she heard someone playing on the piano, rolling the chords after the grandiose manner of pianists 50 years ago. A voice seemed to be singing an old ballad. As she mounted the steps the voice came more distinctly to her. It was quivering and unsure, but with a moan of passion the words came forth: "As I lay my heart on your dead heart—Douglas, Douglas, Douglas, tender and true—"

Suddenly the voice choked with a groan. As she stood by the open door Miss Larrabee could see in the darkened room the figure of an old woman, racked with sobs on a great mahogany sofa, and on the floor beside her lay a daguerrotype, glinting its gilt and glass through the gloom. The girl tiptoed across the porch, down the steps, through the garden, and out of the gate.

Why Music Should Be In The Public School

Paper read before the County Teacher's Association Meeting in Murphy Saturday, January 13th, by Mrs. J. N. Hill.

The public school system of America is unquestionably weakest in the most significant of all factors of education, i. e., character building. While music in itself does not build character, its stimulating, ennobling influence, its power to serve as a unifying force in all assemblies, its effect in training the mind to exceeding rapid, accurate action, make it an indispensable background for the more direct character forming activities. Let us consider this very serious problem and perhaps suggest what part music shall play in its solution.

Music is the universal language—the passport to the hearts of all nations. It has this in common with all languages, that it is most easily acquired in childhood and early youth. Among our greatest soloists and composers, both classical and modern, nearly all were children of musical parents, or, in some way during their infancy and childhood constantly heard instrumental or vocal music.

Thus the gentle art of music may have educational value greater than any one or two of the important branches usually taught in public schools, and changes few parents realize.

Parents, especially mothers, even those who have had little or no musical training and probably consider themselves unmusical, can help tremendously toward our national musical growth. At the same time their children will be gaining qualities, both through discipline and development, which will make them in all respects better citizens, giving them an influence, perpetually broadening their mental horizon toward artistic truth and beauty.

Comparing the study of music to that of subjects considered essential in the school or college curriculum, mathematics, both theoretical and applied, is perhaps most nearly akin to musical study. We do not use many actual figures—2, 3, 4, 6, sometimes 8 or 12, but we learn to measure off in just proportion and orderly sequence.

Viewed as a language, music has its prose and poetry; its grammar and rhetoric, analysis and scansion. History and geography may not on first thought seem closely related to the study of music, but consider how intimately associated with every nation, every clime is its national music, how certain forms of music inevitably picture to us the social, political, or sentimental condition that produced them.

Parents should not fail to realize the ethical importance of music in the school and at home. The need for strong training in ethical truth and problems which the child must confront, sooner or later, may be taught in the home, in the church, in the Sunday school, through the Bible, but the best place to reach all of the children is in the school—every school day of the year.

The process of giving a child an ethical weight in his mind, that he may determine what is his duty under given circumstances, comes through thought and instant adaptability. It requires a sense of idealism combined with practical experience. It is here that music plays such a vital part in education, because of the inimitable mental and physical drill that it invariably gives to every child who studies an instrument.

But wherein lies the value of music as an education for those children who will never use it professionally, who have perhaps not the natural aptitude ever to sing or play some instrument acceptably as an accomplishment? It is generally conceded that an all-round development, physical and mental, moral and spiritual, is the goal to which we all strive. Through an intelligent musical training may be developed patience and sympathy, perseverance, accuracy and precision. Perfect poise is developed, a relaxed although alert attitude of both mind and body. Such a condition must surely promote physical well-being. Then music plays a most impor-

DIXIE GROWERS AND SHIPPERS' ASSOCIATION NOTES

By DR. FRED COCHRAN, President

THE LARGE WHITE BURLEY TOBACCO SEEDS ARE NOW AVAILABLE AT GREEN'S GROCERY, MURPHY. THOSE AWAY FROM MURPHY AND ADJOINING SECTIONS MAY GET THEIR SEED DIRECT THROUGH ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS.

SOME PUBLIC QUESTIONS ANSWERED. 1.—Why different prices in memberships? Answer—We have so far, made two rates in memberships the straight rate of \$10 for land owners and those who plan to grow a full crop and take advantage of the full membership. Then, the Club Membership, which is issued to young people under the age of 20 and to women all are entitled to a half crop—half of the two acres. A club membership or two have been issued to old people who will grow only a small amount of tobacco. We base our principle of procedure upon business method and are willing to leave it to the judgment of fair-minded readers.

WHY HAVE SOME PEOPLE REALIZED SO LITTLE OUT OF THEIR TOBACCO CROPS IN THIS SECTION IN THE PAST?

There are several answers. The first is, possibly, the tobacco that these parties raised and marketed was of a very poor grade, as the mountain scrub tobacco often is; being of a very heavy, dark, strong, fiery type, good for nothing but to smoke out pole cats with. Again, possibly there were no tobacco fertilizers used under the tobacco mentioned. To-

day we have scientifically prepared tobacco fertilizers that greatly aid the tobacco crop in maturing early, with a good color and quality.

Again, the cutting and curing of the tobacco crop mentioned was of an unscientific type, without the right equalization of heat and shade process for a normal cure. These can be some of the answers given for the failure of a crop. The most important answer, and one that should be made public more than it has is the robberies that have taken place in tobacco marketing. No farmer or should turn his tobacco crop into the hands of any group of unreliable men to say what it is worth and how much it ought to bring. This is often the case. Again, there are tobacco speculators who go around spreading gloom about the markets being low and that tobacco will not be wanted this year, however, I will give you so much, etc." This is often pulled off. Farmers are the victims of more schemers than any group of people in the world. They are afraid of a good proposition.

Many people will wait to see the demonstration tried and wish this fall that they would have grown a tobacco crop. To illustrate... The writer has just been to Monroe County, Tenn., where a few farmers were finally gotten into the notion to grow a tobacco crop there last year. They followed directions and realized more off small plots of land than they did off all the rest of their farms. They grew the large white burley tobacco. This year more than a thousand farmers in that county will grow an extensive tobacco crop.

tant role in the curricula of our public schools. If it merely supplied the inspiration which made the child look toward nobler things, its place in the public school system would be justified. But the study of interpretative music does far more than this. It trains the mind to make exceeding rapid and accurate decisions and synchronizes it with bodily motions. In no other art is the soul from youth to old age so refreshed and edified. Dr. Charles Elliott of Harvard University is quoted as saying: "Music rightly taught is the best mind trainer on the list"—a forceful 20th century endorsement.

Every child should have the opportunity of a drill in learning to play an instrument as a regular part of his education. Of all the school studies music is the one which the average person will meet the most in later life. Every day in his home, at church and the theatre he will feel the ennobling influence of music.

These, then, are the reasons why music should be classed as important in our modern school curriculum as Reading, 'Ritin' and 'Rithmetic.

CULBERSON NOTES

The flu is still raging around Culberston.

We are very sorry to report the death of Mrs. Iven Harris, which occurred last Saturday morning.

Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Hawkins are on the sick list this week.

Mrs. Moody Mull is visiting home folk.

Mrs. L. M. Shiple has been quite sick for the past few days.

Rev. W. E. Truesdell and family are all sick with flu.

The fishing at Mr. Arthur Burns last Saturday night was enjoyed by a large crowd.

Mrs. Lillian Townson is visiting her mother, Mrs. Ed. Cearley this week.

Mr. Cecil Lance was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Townson Sunday.

Misses Sallie and Pauline Kisselburg are intending to enter school at Blue Ridge Monday.

Mr. W. A. Nichols has his store almost completed.

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