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POST NUMBER EIGHT

By BEATRICE TUCKER.  
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During the Spanish-American war my regiment of United States Infantry occupied a single platoon in China. We were not very near a enemy and kept out on vedettes or pickets, the colonel being satisfied with the usual chain of sentinels. There was one sentry, beat overlooking a valley from which every man posted at the evening relief disappeared. No cry, no sound of any kind. The sentry post No. 8, but the sentry placed there was not found when the corporal of the guard took a man to relieve him, nor was he ever heard of afterward.

Some concluded that the enemy had slipped up from behind, but the sentry had been killed. Some concluded that the sentry was a ghost. When the first man disappeared the officer of the guard reported to the colonel. The colonel, thinking that it would be better that the next man to stand post on No. 8 should not know of the occurrence, ordered the officer to keep the matter a secret, and if there were inquiries about the missing sentry he was to give out that he had been ordered away on a special service. So the second man did not know of the mystery of the first, nor the third of the second, nor the fourth of the third. The fourth man was the last to vanish. For after he had gone the regiment was ordered to the front.

I was a member of Company C, and we knew more about the disappearance than the others. I had been ordered to stand post on No. 8. At first he pretended not to know me, but I looked him square in the eye and told him he couldn't fool me. Then he turned up and told me the following story:

"When placed on post and left by the relieving relief I stood for awhile uncertain whether to risk death by some unguaranteed means or by being shot for deserting. I attempted to hold it against natural and supernatural enemies and failed. While I was deliberating I heard a girl's laugh and, looking down, saw a white face and two black eyes peering up at me. The girl had a basket full of flowers and began to pet me with them. I supposed she was simply passing that way and didn't connect her with the ghost who had spoken away the other sentries. I returned to the post and saw that they were back at her. She was too pretty to keep at a distance, and I invited her to come up and sit with me on the slope. It wasn't long before I had my arms around her and stole a kiss.

"She spoke some English and pointed to a house below, told me she was on her way to a dance to take place there. We soon heard the sound of music, and the girl begged me to go down with her, have a dance and get back before the relief came. I was tempted and fell. I went with her, danced several times and was thinking of returning when I was surrounded by the men in the room and made a prisoner.

"They were about to take me out to shoot me when the girl who had arranged for my capture stood in the door and jabbered Spanish at them with constantly growing irritation. I didn't know then what she said, but learned afterward that, having given them three victims, she wished the fourth to be spared. Finally she prevailed, partly by threats to expose them to her troops above and partly by her influence over them. I was released and accompanied by the girl started up to camp. I had plenty of time to get there, but was dallying with her, she showing plainly enough that she had one draft on me. I tried to tear myself away from her, but couldn't. I knew she had betrayed three other men, but her preference for me caught me, and while I was trying to get away from her I heard the relief visit my post. Then I knew I would be shot for being absent on my post.

"That threw the whole matter into the hands of the girl. It was the same as having sold my soul to the devil. I deserted, and we went away together. She deserted too, for she never went back home. Her people were Spaniards, but the men who had been bent on shooting me were Spaniards. They lived about the girl's family, and she had the girl's family as she threatened to do, her colonel would have arrested and shot them. They had only consented to let me go on her promise that she would keep me from getting back to the command. Of course, I knew she had betrayed me. I didn't know this at the time or I should have been forewarned."

Henderson had married the girl and they had several children. In that country women fade early, and upon an introduction I found the wife none the less young enough to be a sweetheart. I have remembered the incident since as a warning to all men not to be led away from their duty by a pretty face. Henderson was living in terror, never sleeping for fear of a sweetheart, and all because he had listened to a story.

When Wild Plums Blossom

By JEANETTE H. WALTHRITH.  
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The ceremony of baptism had ever been performed for the benefit of Johnnie Ralston, he would have figured in the parish register as John C. Calhoun Ralston, but neither parish register nor baptismal font could have been found within twenty miles of the lonely plantation where he first saw the light.

Given locality and environment and the corruption of the boy's name was inevitable. In bestowing the name of the illustrious states' rights on his only son bluff Bruce Ralston had apparently trusted to his achieving greatness from association of ideas evidently, for Ralston to progress were conspicuously absent.

He was the last direct Ralston. There were collateral, nephews and cousins, but no straight descendant. The ceremony of baptism had ever been performed for the benefit of Johnnie Ralston, he would have figured in the parish register as John C. Calhoun Ralston, but neither parish register nor baptismal font could have been found within twenty miles of the lonely plantation where he first saw the light.

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Cholera Infantum Cured

By J. F. Dempsey, M.D.  
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"Something like two years ago my baby, then about a year old, was taken seriously ill with cholera infantum, vomiting and purging profusely, says J. F. Dempsey, of Dempsey, Ala. I did not know how to relieve her, but I had a good supply of Chamberlain's Colic, Cholera and Diarrhoea Remedy. I procured a bottle of it, went home as quickly as possible and gave the baby a dose of the remedy. It relieved her in 15 minutes and soon cured her entirely." For sale by Moro Pharmacy.

It was not practicable to carry him home behind the bars. He was laid in a coffin, and a white sheet hid his pallid face from the glittering stars that came into the evening skies long before the rhythmic beat of her oars. His sheeted dead lay in quiet state.

Perhaps reality might have been different if David Sturm at the crucial moment had not insolently taken a little blue silk handkerchief from his side pocket and drawn it with affected indifference across his brow before returning it to the pocket which covered a coward's heart.

A bit of the blue and white remained in view. John Ralston's strong right arm dropped nerveless. He could not gain at the kerchief which had lain on the deck. "It wasn't worth it," Black Prince moaned, groveling in abject misery before a household of stricken women.

It was Miss Martha who answered him, with a note of melancholy pride. "It was not for you, you fool, but for her. It was for his name's sake. A Ralston could have done no less."

It is Kate Vernon who spreads the wild plum blossoms over his grave, saying, "I was so glad to see you above her head since she has slain the one love of her life."

There was an unspoken law which impelled the people about Cross Bayou to rally once a year and "ketch up with local affairs."

No man assuming to be considered a good citizen dared absent himself from the general rally. Even Johnnie Ralston, the "chickadee" of the plantation, the groom lifted temporarily from his handsome face as he took the reins from his hostler and gave rein to his spirited bays and to his fancy.

Staining Old Floors

How to Make and Apply the Stains With Little Trouble.

Be sure your floor is clean before the stain is applied. If there should be small spots on it, clean off with caustic potash, and if there are any large cracks fill them with a mixture of turpentine and oil. The floor should be dry, and in this way you can easily determine the quantity of stain to use. It should be a rich walnut brown. Rub this thoroughly into your floor till the stain ceases to come off.

If the coloring is not dark enough when dry, give another coat. The floor should be dry, and in this way you can easily determine the quantity of stain to use. It should be a rich walnut brown. Rub this thoroughly into your floor till the stain ceases to come off.

A very easy stain is made by putting burnt umber in alcohol to make it the proper consistency for easy application and applying as above, then give a thin coat of shellac and when dry sandpaper to evenly and give a good flowing coat of common varnish, which will give it a splendid finish.

Fit For Tat. First Teacher—You told me to remind you to punish Willie Thompson this morning for impudence. Second Teacher—I'll do it tomorrow. Third Teacher—I'll do it tomorrow. I'm sorry for insubordination—Lippincott's.

Although England has long been aware that her naval supremacy is in danger of eclipse, the nation experienced a real shock when the premier gravely sprung the truth in parliament.

London suffragettes have established a magazine to boom the cause, and whether it is stocked with ideas or explosives, the end will probably be a blow-up.

Children Cry FOR FLETCHER'S CASTORIA

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