

TOM NORWOOD: A STORY OF THE CIVIL WAR.*

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V.

GETTYSBURG! What scenes of deadly strife are called to mind at the mention of that terrible battle! Scattered throughout the vast extent of our country are thousands of brave men—some with an empty sleeve hanging by their side, others going through life with but one leg, the missing members being left on the historic field of Gettysburg. These men have a vivid recollection of the awful carnage which took place on the green hills surrounding that beautiful little Pennsylvania town.

It is in the front line of battle, as it is formed on Cemetery ridge, on that memorable 3rd of July, 1863, that we find Colonel Harrington with his regiment. They had taken part in the battle of the preceding day, in which the enemy had been repulsed with fearful loss. Gathering up his shattered and bleeding columns and all reserves, General Lee formed them in line, on the morning of the 3rd, for one more desperate effort to drive the hated Yanks from the hill. Posted along the crest of the hill lay the Union troops, awaiting the dawn of another day with feverish anxiety, realizing that a most desperate struggle for the possession of the hill, on which they maintained their line of battle, awaited them.

"I wonder where Sam is with our supper?" inquired Colonel Harrington of his adjutant, on the evening of the 2nd.

"The last I saw of Sam was this morning; then he was going over the ridge as fast as a pair of long, black legs could carry him," replied the officer.

Sam requires an introduction. He was the colonel's servant, and also did duty as the cook for the mess. He was a large African, with skin so black that charcoal would almost appear white in comparison, and which shone like ebony. Not unlike many of his kind, Sam was a great coward, and his sudden disappearance over the ridge in the morning, as related by the adjutant, was the direct result of the explosion of a shell from a rebel battery. Sam never stood on ceremony on occasions of this kind, but immediately decamped.

"I do think," said the colonel, not a little ruffled at the thought of going without his supper, "that Sam is the biggest coward I ever saw. I suppose we will go supperless to-night."

As the colonel finished speaking, Sam's voice was heard, saying, "See yar, marsa soger, can yer tell dis nigger whar marsa Colonel Harrington's company is?"

"Get out o' here, ye limb of Satan, or I'll be after breakin' ivery bone in yer black carcass," said the soldier addressed.

"Here, Sam, this way," cried the colonel as he recognized his servant's voice.

"Lor bress my soul, dat's marsa Colonel Harrington hisself!" cried Sam, as he made his way through the soldiers, who were busy preparing their supper of coffee and bacon.

"Where have you been, Sam?" asked the colonel, as that individual deposited his load of pans, kettles, etc., on the ground and made preparations to give them their suppers.

"Why, yer see, marsa colonel, dis yer mornin' I finds out we's got no mo' bacon; so, says I, 'Sam, dis yer will neber do, kase marsa colonel an' de rest o' de hosifers will be pow'ful hungry arter dey dun frashed dem seshers, an' you's got no bacon to give dem.' So, says I to myself, kase dar war no one wid me when I war lookin' ober de com'sary, 'Sam, yer jes' move yer trotters an' get some mo' dat nice bacon.' So I goes ober de ridge to dat plantation house, whar I's been befo', an' borrows some for de 'casion, an' dar it is, marsa, a sizzling in de pan, wid de rine takened off."

"You don't mean to tell us you borrowed it already cooked, do you Sam?" inquired one of the officers.

"Now, marsa cap'n, does yer s'pose dem folks dun knowed I's a comin', an' had de bacon cooked, ready fer dis yer nigger to tote away? No, sah; I jes' borrowed dis yer bacon an' comed away. I den goes to de back ob de hill yondah, makes a fire, fries de bacon an' biles de coffee, kase I knows you all be pow'ful hungry arter fightin' de rebs all day."

"Well, Sam, I must say you were very thoughtful," said the colonel, as he and his officers took their seats on the ground around the steaming coffee pot and pan containing the borrowed bacon.

"By the way, Sam," said the adjutant, "this meat tastes very much like that we had for breakfast this morning."

"Dat's jes' what I t'ought myself, arter I dun cooked some an' eat it. Says I, 'Pears like dis yer