

ONLY A YANK: A MEMORIAL SKETCH.

THE village of M—— was directly in the line of Sherman's march to the sea, and had been the scene of a light skirmish between two small detachments of troops that had crossed each other's path after the main army had swept by. When the tide of battle rolled on there lay a score or more of men on the trampled, blood-stained sward, some in gray and some in blue. Of the former, the dead were laid out in decent form and the wounded tenderly cared for; of the latter, the dead were hurried under ground and the wounded—there was but one, a mere boy—was left to himself.

"Curse him 'n' all the other ornery blue coats!" the few men of the village said, and the women (they can be more cruel and unjust than men when once they set themselves) scorned him as he lay there under an old elm, so white and suffering.

But he did not complain, he was too proud, though it seemed he must have water at any cost.

The skirmish had taken place in the early dawn, and the noonday sun rode high ere relief came to the wounded soldier lad, whose life blood was fast ebbing away.

All that forenoon there had raged a contest in the big white house on the hill overlooking the common.

The LaVeres were the aristocrats of the town, and rebels of the deepest dye. Father and two sons were in the service, and in the house there only remained Valeria LaVere, the father's sister, and little Gwen, the only daughter and the idol of the men folks.

"Aunt Val" was not so blind, however, to the girl's failings, as she termed any trait that did not suit her, and poor Gwen was none too fond of the haughty, arbitrary lady who ruled her father's establishment with a high hand.

On this particular morning Gwen had cried until her pretty eyes were dim and her rosy face tear-sodden and swollen.

"I tell you, Aunt Val. I must go down and see if there is anything the poor fellow needs. See him lying there so helpless, and I am sure he is suffering."

"Gwen LaVere, you will do no such thing! Aint you ashamed to suggest it? It would be maidenly, wouldn't it? Besides, he ought to suffer, and die, too, if he wants to, for being such a monster; and you're a pretty filial daughter, aint you—your father's life in jeopardy every moment at the hands of just such men, and you wanting to go down there and cosset that one back to life? He will get well and go into the army, and your father or brother may die by a bullet from his gun."

"But I can not let him die there that way; I would feel like a murderer always. It is so different from

being in battle. I must at least send Mose to give him some water."

"You shall do no such thing, miss. I have said it; and when the LaVeres speak they mean it. You are all Swinton, just like your puny mother—"

Valeria LaVere had gone a step too far.

"Thank heaven if I am like my beautiful lady mamma, rather than like you! But you will find that I am all LaVere to-day, and mean just what I say," cried the girl in a fury, and before her aunt could reply she had dashed from the room and was calling imperiously—

"Mose, Mose!"

"Here, missie."

"Get some water and come with me to the wounded soldier down there. Hurry!"

"Lawd, missie!"

"Mind me." Then changing her tone she said something hurriedly that made the old negro trot off promptly to obey her.

"Gwen, Gwen LaVere!" Aunt Valeria was shrieking; but that little lady only hurried out of doors, catching her sun hat from its hook as she crossed the hall.

Five minutes later the wounded youth felt, rather than saw, that some one was beside him.

"Want some watah, massa?"

"Great heaven, yes!"

The voice was faint, but fervent. Some one held a cup to his lips, while a pair of sinewy arms held him up. The draught revived him, and lifting his heavy lids he started a little at sight of the pretty, girlish face with tear-dimmed eyes and quivering lips.

"Do you feel very bad, are you hurt much?" she asked, all reserve melting at sight of his suffering.

"I guess I am done for; but no matter now, if you will only leave the water."

He tried to speak bravely, but a spasm of pain distorted his countenance.

"Oh, I pity you so!" she cried, impulsively, "and I don't care if you are 'only a Yank!'"

Again the big, black eyes opened and scanned her face, something akin to a smile of amusement flitting over his own, but it was only momentary.

"Mose, what can we do? Aunt Val will die or kill me, I guess, if we take him to the house; but I can't leave him here."

The negro scratched his head, muttering—

"I donno, Missie Gwen, I 'clar I don'."

"Oh, Mose, I have it! Don't you think Mammy Sue would let us take him there?"

"Lawd, now, Missie Gwen, like ez nuf."

"You stay and I'll go and see," she said, quickly. She was gone but a few minutes, but it seemed to the wounded boy like an age.