

pitched at me when I takes gentlemen's hosses. I don' want no money—an' wouldn't know what to do wid it if I had it. My mosta takes a good car' o' me—an's long as dar's a piece o' meat in de smoke-house Phil knows he's gwine to have plenty to eat. My mosta gives me mo' clo'es 'an I kin war out—an' what in de devil I want to be makin' money for, I 'clar' I dunno."

It was no use to argue the matter. His mind was quite made up, and there was no possibility of changing it.

Phil's marital philosophy was rather unique. He changed wives perhaps half a dozen times while I knew him, but one set of rules governed his choice in every instance. There were certain qualifications of a rather singular sort which he deemed essential in a wife. She must not live on the plantation for one thing, or on one of those immediately adjoining, "'cause den we're sho' to see too much o' one anudder, an' 'll git tired o' the 'rangement." In the second place he would marry none but old women, "'cause de young uns is no 'count any way. Dey don't half take car' o' dere husban's stockin's an' things. 'F you want holes in your stockin's an' buttons always off'n yer shut collahs, jes' marry a young gal." The third requisite was that his wife should be a slave on both sides. This qualification he insisted upon even in the choice of masculine associations. His contempt for "free niggas" was supreme—almost sublime. He neglected no possibility of villifying them, and practiced no sort of economy in his expenditure of invective upon them.

Most of the Negroes, in Virginia at least, were very religious. Naturally their religion was intensely emotional in its character—ecstatic, somber, gloomy; and quite as naturally, it was largely colored with superstition. But religion of this kind had no charm for Phil, who, as the reader may possibly have guessed, prided himself upon being strictly logical in all his views and actions.

"Bro. Ben," he said to one of his fellows one day, "you's done got religion, I heah. Any way yer face 's twice 's long 's it ought to be. Has you got religion for sho?"

"Now, Phil, I don't want none o' your

wickedness. Bless de Lawd, I is got religion."

"Oh! you is got it, is you? Now lem me ask you a question or two. You's got religion, you say."

Ben. Yes I's got religion.

Phil. Well den, you're gwine to Heaven after all 'while—when you dies!

Ben. Yes, I's got de 'surance o' dat, Bro. Phil.

Phil. An' you'd 'a' gone to hell if you hadn't got de 'surance, as you calls it, wouldn't you?

Ben. If I'd 'a' died in my sins, course I'd 'a' gone to hell.

Phil. Well now, for a nigga wha't jes' made his 'rangements to keep out'n hell an' git to Heaven, you's got de mos' onaccountable long face I ever did see, an' dat's all about it.

When Ben had retired in disgust, I remonstrated with Phil.

"What do you tease Ben. for, Phil?" I asked. "You know better than to make fun o' religion."

"Course I do, mosta, an' dat's jes' it. Ben ain't got no religion, an' I knows it. He's jus' puttin' on that solemncholy face to fool de good Lawd wid. Ben 'll steal, mosta, whenever he gits a chance. He ain't no mo' religion an' a hog. Sho! What he know 'bout religion, goin' down under de hill to pray, an' all dat nonsense? Couldn't git him to sing a song now or whistle a tune on no 'count whatsumever, but he ain't no better nigga for dat. Didn't I see? He shouted mighty loud las' night, but he shuked his wuk dis maw'nin,' an' didn't half curry his mules; an' religion what don't make a nigga take good car' o' dumb creatures like mules ain't wuth nothin' at all, no way you kin fix it. When dey keeps de row up jes' a little better, an' don't cover up no weeds dey ought to cut down, an' takes good car' o' mules, an' quits stealin,' den I begins to 'spect 'em having de real religion. But dey can't fool Phil, wid none o' dere sham solemncholies."

Phil was a trifle hard and uncharitable, perhaps, in his judgments upon his fellows in matters of this kind, but there was, at any rate, no hypocrisy in his composition. And what is more singular still, I was never able to discover any trace of superstition in his conduct. He laughed to scorn the signs and omens with which