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MY FRIEND PHIL.

TO begin with, Phil was black ; and the reader will please understand that the word black is here used in its literal, not in its conventional, sense. Phil was actually as well as ethnologically black. There was no trace of a lighter tint anywhere in his complexion. Not a suspicion of brown appeared in his cheeks, and even his great thick lips, protruding far beyond the outposts of his nose, were as sable as the rest of his face. It was all a dead black too, unaccompanied by that lustre, which by surface reflection, relieves the shadow upon commonplace African faces.

And nobody knew all this better than Phil did.

"Phil ain't none o' yer coffee-colored niggas," he would say in moments of exultation, when his mood was to straighten his broad shoulders and boast a little—"Phil ain't none o' yer *alapakker* niggas nuther. I's black, I is. Dat's sho'. Ain't got no baconrind shine in *my* skin ; but I jes' tell you what, mosta, Phil kin take de very shut offen dem shiney niggas an' hoff an' hoff niggas, when't comes to de wuk."

(By "shut" and "wuk," Phil meant "shirt" and "work," just as he meant "birds" when he said "buds.")

"Drive? Kin I? Kin Phil drive? What you mean, mosta, by axin' sich a question." (N. B.—Nobody had asked anything of the kind, but Phil had some remarks to make on the subject of his

accomplishments in this respect, and, like the witness in a recent great trial, was disposed to answer what he wished somebody would ask.) "Drive? Course I kin. Der never was a hoss ner mule yit what ever had a mouf an' two legs dat Phil can't handle, an' you better b'lieve mosta, Phil kin piaunt de wheel 'twix' de acorn an' de shell."

If I report Phil's boastings, it is only because they constituted too large a proportion of what he said to be omitted. I do so to confirm, not to gainsay them, or to hold their author up to ridicule. He was my friend, the faithfullest one I ever knew—and he sleeps now. If he boasted now and then, no one could have had a better right. His was the pride of performance and not the vanity of pretension.

Phil was a Virginian—a gentleman in his way—and a slave, though I doubt if he ever suspected his gentility, or felt his bondage as a burden in the least. He had no aspirations for freedom, or for any thing else, I think, except jollity and comfort. I do not say that this was well, but it was a fact. The reader will understand that this paper is intended to be in no sense an essay on slavery. The "institution" is certainly past praying for, or against either, for that matter, and if I speak at all of some of its phenomena, I do so precisely as I should describe fossil remains of any sort, with none but an antiquarian interest in their peculiarities,