

**EDWARDS
HARRY
STILLWELL**

ENEAS AFRICANUS

Harry Edwards
Eneas Africanus

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Harry Stillwell Edwards

Eneas Africanus

Author's Preface

Dear to the hearts of the Southerners, young and old, is the vanishing type conspicuous in Eneas of this record; and as in a sidelight herein are seen the Southerners themselves, kind of heart, tolerant and appreciative of the humor and pathos of the negro's life. Eneas would have been arrested in any country other than the South. In the South he could have traveled his life out as the guest of his "white folks." Is the story true? Everybody says it is.

WHO HAS THIS CUP?

MAJOR GEORGE E. TOMMEY ADVERTISES FOR HIS SILVER CUP

Editor *Constitution*, Atlanta, Ga.

Dear Sir: I am writing to invoke your kind assistance in tracing an old family negro of mine who disappeared in 1864, between my stock farm in Floyd County and my home place, locally known as Tommeysville, in Jefferson County. The negro's name was Eneas, a small, grey-haired old fellow and very talkative. The unexpected movement of our army after the battle of Resaca, placed my stock farm in line of the Federal advance and exposed my family to capture. My command, Tommey's Legion, passing within five miles of the place, I was enabled to give them warning, and they hurriedly boarded the last south-bound train. They reached Jefferson County safely but without any baggage, as they did not have time to move a trunk. An effort was made to save the family silver, much of it very old and highly prized, especially a silver cup known in the family as the "Bride's Cup" for some six or eight generations and bearing the inscription:

"Ye bryde whose lippes kysse myne
And taste ye water an no wyne
Shall happy live an hersel see
A happy grandchile on each knee."

These lines were surrounded with a wreath and surmounted by a knight's head, visor down, and the motto: "Semper Fidelis."

This cup was hurriedly packed with other silver in a hair trunk and intrusted to Eneas with verbal instructions as to travel. He drove an old-fashioned, flea-bitten blooded mare to a one-horse wagon full of forage and carried all the Confederate money the family left, to pay his expenses. He was last seen, as I ascertained soon after the war from a wounded member of my command, about eight miles southeast of Atlanta, asleep in the wagon, the mare turning to the right instead of keeping the straight road to Macon. Eneas was a faithful negro, born and raised in the Tommey family and our belief is he was murdered by army stragglers and robbed of the trunk. He had never been over the road he was traveling, as we always traveled to North Georgia by rail, shipping the horses likewise. His geographical knowledge consisted of a few names – places to which I had at different times taken him, and in the neighborhood of my home, such as Macon, Sparta, Louisville, and the counties of Washington and Jefferson. If given a chance to talk he would probably confine himself to "Lady Chain," the mare he was driving; "Lightning," the noted four-mile stallion temporarily in my possession; the Tommey family and our settlement, "Tommeysville." On these topics he could talk eighteen hours a day.

I have no hope of ever seeing Eneas again, for if living he would have gotten back if he had to travel all over the South to do it, but there is a bare chance that the cup may be found, and I am writing to gratify my daughter, whose wedding day is approaching. All brides in the family, since 1670, have used this cup on their wedding days. If the cup was stolen, doubtless the thieves sold it, and if so, the holder may read these lines if they are given publicity. I am willing to waive any question of ownership and purchase the cup at the holder's valuation, if within my power; or, if unwilling to sell, he may loan the cup for a few days.

I shall be greatly obliged if you will publish this letter with a request that all Southern papers, daily and weekly, copy the same. Thanking you in advance and with all good wishes for your happiness and prosperity, I am, most respectfully,

Your obed't servant,
George E. Tommey,
Late Major, Tommey's Legion, C. S. A.
P. O., Louisville, Ga.

Althea Lodge, Fayette Co., Ga.
October 15, 1872.

Maj. Geo. E. Tommey,
Louisville, Ga.

Dear Major Tommey: I read with deep interest and sympathy your letter in the *Atlanta Constitution* inquiring of a negro named Eneas. This man, I am sure, came to my house about twenty miles south of Atlanta in 1864. I remember the occasion perfectly, because he mentioned your name and one of my boys was serving in your command. I gave him shelter for the night and food for himself and horse. He insisted on sleeping in his wagon. He told me that the mare was famous on the race track and very valuable and he was afraid to leave her. This struck me as singular, at the time, because she seemed old and broken down. I did not see any trunk, but his wagon was full of hay and fodder and he may have had one hidden under it. Eneas asked me to put him on the road to Thomasville – or so I understood him – and I gave him explicit directions as far as Newnan, advising him to get more at that point. He was gone when I arose next morning. I do hope you will find the old man, as well as the cup. I took quite a fancy to him. He gave me a very vivid description of yourself – whom I had long wished to meet – and of your home, the twelve-room house, lawn with its three fountains, beautiful lake and your hundred negroes in their painted cottages, etc.

Excuse this rambling letter. Your name has stirred an old woman's memories.

Sincerely your friend,
Martha Horton.

P. S. – My son William, who served in your command, married a Connecticut girl. Think of it, Major! But she proved to be a noble-hearted woman and has influenced him to give up tobacco and stimulants in every form. He travels this territory for a New York house. His wife is well connected, and one of her ancestors came over in the Mayflower. She is with me now and sends you her regards. Billy has convinced her that next to General Joseph Johnston, you were the bravest man in the Georgia armies.

M. H.

Talbotton, Ga., Oct. 18, 1872.

Major George Tommey, Louisville, Ga.

Sir: Read your letter in the *Columbus Enquirer*. I kept a livery stable here in '64 and saw the man you are huntin about that time. He drove a broken down old speckled grey mare he called Lady Chain, now that you mention it, and claimed she was in foal to "Lightning," the great four-mile horse. I took this for a joke along with some of the fairy stories he gave me about the Tommeys, but he was so polite and humble that I let him stay over night in the stable. Offered to pay me next morning, an seemed like he had about a bushel of Confedrit money; but I was long on Confed myself and didn't let him put any more on me. Don't remember seein any trunk. He was on his way to Thomasville, so he said, and I giv him as much directions as he could carry.

*Very truly,
William Peters.*

Thomas County, Oct. 19, 1872.

Major George Tommey, Louisville, Ga.

Dear Sir: My wife remembered your old nigger as soon as she read your letter in the paper, and so did I when she called it to my mind. He was a big talker all right, and sat on our back steps half the night talking about the Tommeys, their race horse, twenty-room house, yard with six fountains, and a whole tribe of niggers. We fed him and he slept in his wagon. Next day he wanted to pay me in Confederate money; was using a corn sack for a pocketbook, and it was most full. He moved on to Thomasville, about six miles from here, but I don't think it was the place he was looking for. I reckon it must have been "Tommeysville" he was looking for. Major, I took a good look at Lady Chain and you ain't lost much if you never get her back, but if you don't find the nigger, you've lost the champion liar of Georgia. I hope you get him back, but it's hardly possible a man talking like he did could last seven years on the public road.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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