

**DADDY BEN: (A STUDY IN BLACK
AND WHITE): BEING A STORY OF
THE LIVES OF REAL PERSONAGES
DURING THE CIVIL WAR**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649244737

Daddy Ben: (a Study in Black and White): Being a Story of the Lives of Real Personages During the civil War by Katharine Berrien

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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KATHARINE BERRIEN

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With the love of the author.

Berrien, Katharine

DADDY BEN

(A Study in Black and White)

Being a Story of the Lives of Real
Personages During the
Civil War.

SAVANNAH, GA.
THE SAVANNAH MORNING NEWS.

1898
P

1933 1933

PUBLIC LIBRARY

987754A

ACTON, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

F 1933 L

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PREFACE.

This story is founded upon facts, which occurred in *the life* of real personages during the Civil War. The license given to the author in general, being but sparingly indulged in.



DADDY BEN.

It was at the close of the year 1864, when homes were bare, and hearts were broken with the "hope deferred that maketh the heart sick." Destitution and penury had superseded affluence and luxury in the beloved "South Land." Every effort was being made to rally soul and body to the great point of further endurance. When this stage of life's drama has been reached, a numbness seems to settle down on everything. One lacks a purpose in having only to endure!

Our story opens in one of these homes, in which the tension was very great. The master was away at the call of his country, and the wife and children were left to the care of an old and faithful servant. He literally was their only protector, adviser, and provider. Away from the haunts of men—miles away—miles of desolation; for a victorious army counts but little the havoc made while passing through the

enemy's country. The homestead and the faithful old colored man summed up the earthly possessions of this straitened family. As we meet him for the first time, he stands leaning against the post of the avenue gate, looking over the broad fields lying untilled, and realizing how powerless he is to remedy matters. With the spirit of a hero he dares do all that may be done, but there is a limit to his capacity, unless like Briareus he possessed an overplus of hands. As he looks, he soliloquizes:

"I dunno wat for do. Eberyting gwine wrong. Nuttin doin. How I gwine to feed Mars Bob's wife an chillun? I dun promise him I would tek care ob dem—dat nuttin should harm dem. How I gwine to meet Mars Bob if I let dem starve? 'T'i only me one! Miss Lucy nebber du enny wuk in all her born days. De chillun is only for play wid. De niggers is gon! Diss freedom dun tun dem crazy. If I hab de money for pay de w I would be all right. I dunno wat for cos widout money neder white man nigger is anyting to talk bout. I Mars Bob would cum home an tell me

for do; I feel mighty lonesome to-night, all by myself. De owl bin hootin' in de big oak-tree eber since dark come. I feel bery much like I gwine to heah bad news."

The old man sat down on a stump near by, and ran his fingers through his short, crisp, curly hair, and began a vigorous scratching, as if by that process he hoped to extract a few ideas in this his great need. But ideas for money-making never come at will, and Daddy Ben passed through the disappointing experience of many others in like predicament.

Turning from the gate he proceeded to his cabin, which was a few yards from the "big house," as the family residence is called on all plantations. Here he proceeded to take off his hat and draw a chair up to the fireside, which opened like a great yawning cavern into the middle of the room. As he felt the glow from the oak logs, and saw the bright light filling the room from the pine knots, he began again to soliloquize:

"Dis is a funny ting ennyhow. Yere I is sittin' down in a warm cabin, by a good fire, an I only poor ole Daddy Ben; an