

# A FAITHFUL NEGRO.

[Communicated.]

Died, on the 1st September, 1865, at Zama Plantation, Miss., CLAY SMITH, well known for many years to the relatives and friends of the family as the foster-brother, friend and manager of Col. J. E. M. Claiborne. He had been the body servant of the late Gen. Ferdinand Lee Claiborne, of Natchez, and took part in the battle of the Holy Ground, where he was severely wounded. He was in Fort Mims, and only escaped that dreadful massacre by leaving with a dispatch for Gen. C. from the ill-fated commander, Major Brasley, two hours before the Indians surprised the fort. For Clay's good conduct during the Indian war, Gen. C. gave him his freedom, but he refused to accept it.

During the Murrell excitement in 1836, when the central counties of Mississippi were under martial law, from an apprehended insurrection of the negroes, and many persons, white and colored, were summarily executed, Clay had charge of 100 negroes in Madison county, the focus of the excitement, and by his prudence and discipline, and the universal confidence reposed in him, it was almost the only plantation in the country that escaped suspension. There was no overruler on the place; for six weeks he permitted no one to leave or enter the premises; and he stood guard every night around the dwelling of his mistress. On his master's return from Congress, he offered him his freedom and a farm, but he refused to accept them. The Governor of Mississippi (the late Hiram G. Rannels), who had been an eye-witness of his conduct, presented him a certificate, on parchment, of his fidelity; and Col. R. M. Williamson, Col. John M. Elder, Col. Fulton, Gen. G. M. Price, Col. G. R. Fall, and other distinguished citizens, made up a purse of \$300 for him.

When the emancipation proclamation appeared his master read it to him, and offered to send him to New Orleans with ample provision for his future comfort. He declined the boon, and to the last steadily exhorted his fellow-servants to remain at their homes, as the best way to enjoy their freedom. His last words were: "Master, be a friend to my children. children, master won't forget you."

He was buried with the ceremonies of the church; and, as a soldier of the war of 1813, would have been interred with military honors had the weather permitted.

Clay and his ancestors have been in the Claiborne family, in direct line, for 150 years, and from generation to generation have held confidential positions. His father, Jack Smith, coachman to Col. Thomas Claiborne, thirty years Member of Congress from Virginia, was captured by the famous British partisan, Tarleton, while driving his master's chariot. The four splendid bays were turned over to the dragoons, and Jack was made groom to the Colonel. A few nights afterwards he made his escape on Tarleton's favorite charger, Scipio, which was purchased from him by his master and presented to the Marquis de Lafayette. Jack Smith and his descendants, in memory of this achievement, have always had a horse named Scipio. On every plantation where one of the family is found the name has been preserved, abbreviated to Sip where the animal happens to be a scrub. After the surrender of Cornwallis Jack was emancipated, but continued in the service of the family, and came with the late Gov. Claiborne to Natchez in 1803. c.