

On the Trail of Negro Folk-Songs

HOUSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



R0115796030

HOUSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

HOUSTON, TEXAS

WITH THE BEST WISHES OF
THE AUTHOR

devothy Seaborn



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from
LYRASIS Members and Sloan Foundation

ON THE TRAIL OF NEGRO
FOLK-SONGS

LONDON : HUMPHREY MILFORD

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

ON THE TRAIL OF NEGRO
FOLK-SONGS

BY

DOROTHY SCARBOROUGH

Assisted by Ola Lee Gullledge



CAMBRIDGE
HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS

1925

89337

R01157 96030

COPYRIGHT, 1925
BY HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS

PRINTED AT THE HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS
CAMBRIDGE, MASS., U. S. A.

TO
COUSIN BYRON AND NINA
WITH LOVE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. ON THE TRAIL OF NEGRO FOLK-SONGS	3
II. THE NEGRO'S PART IN TRANSMITTING THE TRA- DITIONAL SONGS AND BALLADS	33
III. NEGRO BALLADS	63
IV. DANCE-SONGS, OR "REELS"	96
V. CHILDREN'S GAME-SONGS	128
VI. LULLABIES	144
VII. SONGS ABOUT ANIMALS	161
VIII. WORK-SONGS	206
IX. RAILROAD SONGS	238
X. BLUES	264

ON THE TRAIL OF NEGRO
FOLK-SONGS

NOTICE
Please do not write in this
book or turn down the pages

I

ON THE TRAIL OF NEGRO FOLK-SONGS

FOLK-SONGS are shy, elusive things. If you wish to capture them, you have to steal up behind them, unbeknownst, and sprinkle salt on their tails. Even so, as often as not they fly off saucily from under your nose. You have to speak them gently, and with magic words, else they will vanish before your ears. You must know how to mask your trembling eagerness in their presence, to pretend, if need be, that you are deaf and indifferent, to act as if vocal music were the last thing in life you ever gave a thought to. Folk-songs have to be wooed and coaxed and wheedled with all manner of blandishments and flatteries.

People who sing or hum to themselves hate to be overheard. It is as embarrassing as to be caught talking to one's self, and as indignantly resented; yet if you aspire to be a folk-song collector, you must cast aside the niceties of conduct, must shamelessly eavesdrop, and ask intrusive questions.

How often have I overheard alluring snatches of song, only to be baffled by denial when I asked for more! Kindly black faces smile indulgently as at the vagaries of an imaginative child, when I persist in pleading for the rest. "Nawm, honey, I wa'n't singing nothing — *nothing a-tall!*" How often have I been tricked into enthusiasm over the promise of folk-songs, only to hear age-worn phonograph records, — but perhaps so changed and worked upon by usage that they could possibly claim to be folk-songs after all! — or Broadway echoes, or conventional songs by white authors! Yet cajolements might be in vain, even though all the time I knew, by the uncanny instinct of folk-lorists, that *there were folk-songs there*.

How often, when seeking for dance songs, which Negroes call "reels," have I been told rebukingly that "sech things was sinful," that "wild folks sing reels," but church members must forget them, must do as one fat black girl recently converted said she did: "Ah devotes mah voice to God!" Such passionate rending of all worldly songs from the memory is impressive as an act of piety, but discouraging. Aged colored folk have intimated to me that they have rinsed their minds of all such revelry, have so completely put it aside that

they have forgotten even that they have forgotten it. But lovely as hymns and "spirituals" are in their place, if you are a collector, even a pious one, you feel a thrill of despair at hearing a voice, beautiful with the quavery sweetness of old age, trembling with unguessed traditions, sing *Hark from the Tomb*, when you had been "honing" for *Old Virginny Never Tire*, or *Chicken in de Bread-Tray*. You feel that puritanism can go a foot too far. Why has nobody ever discussed the puritanism among Negroes?

And even when you get a song started, when you are listening with your heart in your ear and the greed of the folk-lorist in your eye, you may lose out. If you seem too much interested, the song retreats, draws in like a turtle's head, and no amount of coaxing will make it venture back. And there is something positively fatal about a pencil! Songs seem to be afraid of lead-poisoning. Or perhaps the pencil is secretly attached by a cord (a vocal cord?) to the singer's tongue. It must be so, for otherwise, why has it so often happened that when I, distrustful of my tricky memory to hold a precious song, have sneaked a pencil out to take notes, the tongue has suddenly jerked back and refused to wag again? Yet that is not always the case, for sometimes the knowledge that his song is being written down inspires a bard with more respect for it and he gives it freely.

Sometimes shyness increases, and again it grows less, under guileful persuasion. Some people will confess to acquaintance with folk-songs, perhaps the very ones you may at the moment be most ardently pursuing, yet refuse to sing. They "never could sing," or they have quite forgotten how. Their voices have got rusty with disuse, or else never have been tuned for song. They are as Harris Dickson said he was, when I requested songs of him. "Yes, I know Negro songs — but the folks would n't let you print your book if you put in it the ones I know. And any way, I can't sing. Got no talent for music at all. If I put a nickel in a melodeon, the blamed thing stops playing." Or maybe they are like the young girl who was asked by Louis Dodge if she could sing. "No, sir, I could n't carry a tune if I had it in a bucket with a lid on it."

In such cases I often explain the difference between pleasure singing and singing for science. I dare hint delicately that while it is possible that neither the vocalist nor I might derive joy from the singing *as singing*, yet as a folk-lorist I should experience delight at hearing a folk-song put across in such way that I could capture it. I urge that as a song hunter I should rather hear a Negro in the cornfield or on the levee or in a tobacco factory, than to hear Galli-Curci grand-operize. I hint that humming a tune will do at a pinch, or even

whistling. Funny about whistling! Some folks who just will not sing at all, who could not be induced by torture or persuasion to attempt a song, will cheerfully pucker up their lips and whistle an air, while others would be far more embarrassed at trying to whistle than to sing. Some will pick a tune out on the piano, one slow finger at a time, every evidence of pain and strain on their set faces, while still others' hands are more bashful than their tongues or lips. Timidity strikes different organs, it seems.

Yet sometimes shyness blossoms into bravery. Persons who protest that they cannot sing a note, who lift their voices just to prove they cannot (and sometimes the proof is pretty conclusive), who whispering they will "ne'er consent," consent, sometimes surprise themselves by the result. Maybe they have been teased into singing one line to complete an unfinished ballad, but they gather voice and courage as they go on; "they look their minds over," as one colored woman promised me she would do, and they sing what they discover there. Presently it may be that they grow bold to interrupt others and correct their tunes; they insist on singing and quite enjoy the exercise. I find that nothing so livens up a party as to start folk-singing for science. A programme of vocal music rendered for entertainment might be listened to with as much patience as politeness gives a group; but let the sorriest singer in the world start a tune for a useful purpose and immediately every ear is keen. Soon timid guests are wrangling over versions and contending for the chance to sing what they know.

One needs to be pretty much of a detective if he is a successful collector of folk-songs, for he must be alert to guess the existence of songs in any locality or in the mind of any person, and patient to trace them down. He needs to be sound in wind and limb and pen. (I have waited for years to get certain songs I knew about, and have chased some of them half across the South. I have written countless letters and made innumerable visits in the course of my investigation.) One must know how to piece parts of a song together as a scientist joins the bones of discovered fossils. But it is even more delicate work, since you may find one bone in Texas, say, one in Virginia, and one in Mississippi. No right-thinking tyrannosaurus or tetrabeledon would dream of scattering his skeleton over the country like that. And his bones would never keep on growing, even if they did go on cross-country excursions — while folk-songs delight in adding to themselves and collecting parts of other songs that tag after them. I think they do it just to tease collectors. I am sure folk-songs have their own sense of humor.

Yes, the seeker of folk-songs must be up and doing, yet he has a good time. What game is more fascinating than the study of old songs, what adventure more entrancing than to go in search of them? And there is no closed season — though if collectors do not hurry up, the season will be closed forever as far as many precious old songs are concerned. Such an interest adds thrill and suspense to life, sponges up loose time that might otherwise be wasted, brings you in touch with entertaining people of all kinds, and lends an eager responsiveness to the call of the telephone or the postman. How could you be bored when any ring might mean a cordial stranger offering you a song? — or any letter a tune you had long yearned for? If weary financiers but knew the fun there is in this, they would quit their desks to go in search of songs, — or at least they would finance the quest for those who crave to get away, — instead of leaving the whole job to impecunious college folk and struggling artists. Why does n't some far-seeing state vote an appropriation for research as to its own songs, before they are permanently lost? Why does n't some millionaire endow a chair for folk-songs in some university? Even a modest footstool might do to start with. Think of having lively or lovely old songs rise up to call you blessed, and to go on giving pleasure to people long after you yourself have — presumably — started singing in other spheres!

Personally, I have had so much fun collecting Negro songs that I should regard any future deprivation or calamity as merely a matter of evening up. It is not fair for one being to have all the fun and enjoyment in life.

I have had this active interest as a collector for about ten years, but in reality I suppose I began in my cradle. Both of my grandfathers owned large plantations with many slaves, my Grandfather Scarborough in Louisiana and Grandfather Ellison in East Texas, and so my parents grew up amid a wealth of Negro folk-lore and song, which they passed on to us children. And most of my own life has been spent in the South, where I have had opportunity to know colored people as a race and as individuals. How many memories of my childhood and youth are associated with loved black faces! How I enjoyed the songs the Negroes sang, even though I was ignorant of their value! If only as I listened I had but learned them accurately, or had begun long ago consciously to collect them and record them, I should be fortunate now. If I might go back to that time and say,

Quick thy tablets, memory!

If I had realized that I should need to know music to get folk-songs later in life, my mother would not have had to hound me to the piano to practise, as she did. I wish I had made a study of folk-songs then instead of idling over Greek and Latin and other useless things — which never appear in proper darky folk-songs!

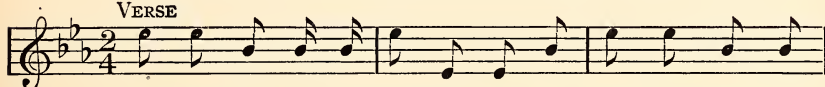
But though I have forgotten much, I have remembered much. My past is all mixed up with Negro songs, and I hope to see my future similarly entangled. Now when I hear a lawn mower, the sound of it brings back the songs that Uncle "Mon" used to sing, as he cut our grass; I hear, for example:

Paul and Silas layin' in jail,
De ark kep' a-rollin' on;
Lawd come down an' went deir bail;
De ark kep' a-rollin' on.

The ice-cream freezer's droning whirr sings to me now the airs that Johnny used to chant while he turned the handle on the kitchen steps when company was expected.

I WENT UP ON THE MOUNTAIN TOP

VERSE



I went up on the mountain top to give my horn a

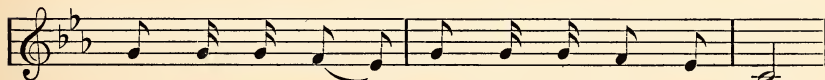


blow, An' I thought I heard Miss Li - zy say,

CHORUS



Yon - der . . comes my beau. Po' lit - tle Li - zy



Po' lit - tle gal . . Po' lit - tle Li - zy Jane;



Po' lit - tle Li - zy, Po' lit - tle gal . . She died on the train.

NEGRO FOLK-SONGS

I went up on the mountain top
 To give my horn a blow;
 An' I thought I heard Miss Lizy say,
 "Yonder comes my beau."

Chorus

Po' little Lizy, po' little gal,
 Po' little Lizy Jane!
 Po' little Lizy, po' little gal,
 She died on the train.

I went into the acre-fiel'
 To plant some 'lasses-cane,
 To make a jug of molasses,
 For to sweeten Lizy Jane.

Chorus

She went up the valley road,
 An' I went down the lane,
 A-whippin' of my ol' grey mule,
 An' it's good bye, Lizy Jane.

Chorus.

Certain songs are always mixed with soapsuds in my mind, for I see Susie, yellow, mountainous of bulk, poking clothes in the big iron washpot in our back yard on Monday mornings, her voice rising higher as the clothes bubbled and leaped. To me there was something witch-like in her voice and her use of the long stick in the boiling pot.

Go tell Aunt Patsy,
 Go tell Aunt Pa-atsy,
 Go tell Aunt Patsy,
 Her old grey goose is dead.

The one she's been saving,
 The one she's been sa-aving,
 The one she's been saving
 To make a feather bed.

Somebody killed it,
 Somebody ki-illed it,
 Somebody killed it,
 Knocked it in the head.

Susie looked like a feather bed herself.

Certain songs are inevitably a part of my memory of Aunt Myra, the faithful black soul who fed and scolded and bossed me in my childhood. She was at once sterner and more indulgent than mother

or father, and I both loved and feared her. She had certain songs which she sang when she was angry, and I came to know them as Aunt Myra's temper songs.

When I'm dead an' buried,
 Don't you grieve atter me;
 When I'm dead an' buried,
 Don't you grieve atter me;
 When I'm dead an' buried,
 Don't you grieve atter me,
 For I don't want you to grieve atter me.

When we heard that, we knew she was obliquely reminding us of how we should be smitten with sorrow and remorse if she were dead.

There was Tish, a young girl who worked for us when I was a child, a happy-hearted creature always laughing or singing. I recall scraps of her song, such as:

JULY ANN JOHNSON



July Ann Johnson,
 Don't you know,
 If you don't dress fine
 You can't catch a beau?

I see a procession of black and yellow and cream-colored faces that have passed through our kitchen and house and garden — some very impermanent and some remaining for years, but all singing. Now, when I sit on a porch at night, I am in fancy back at our old home, listening to the mellow, plaintive singing of a Negro congregation at a church a half-mile away — a congregation which “ne’er broke up” at least before I went to sleep, and which gathered every night in a summer-long revival. I can project myself into the past and hear the wailful songs at Negro funerals, the shouting songs at baptizings in the creek or river, old break-downs at parties, lullabies crooned as mammies rocked black or white babies to sleep, work-songs in cotton-

field or on the railroad or street-grading jobs. All sounds of human activity among the Negroes in the South used to be accompanied with song. It is so now to a certain extent, but less than before.

Even now that I am living in the North I spend a part of every year in the South and I eagerly listen for old tunes.

I began the work of definitely collecting Negro folk-songs about ten years ago, when I was for one year president of the Texas Folklore Association. I had to arrange for the annual programme, and to deliver the "presidential address." Some of the previous meetings had been sparsely attended and I had promised the organization that their sessions in Baylor University, at Waco, should have satisfactory audiences. I had to make good on that promise, and I did, but it took a lot of tongue- and pen-work. I could not see what would be of popular interest if folk-lore was not — and so I told everybody I saw that the programmes would be of great interest. I advertised the sessions in the news and society columns of our papers, and did all I could think of to attract crowds.

I chose for my subject "Negro Ballets and Reels," and I asked my students in Baylor University to help me collect material. Some insist that I bullied them shamefully, that I insinuated that no one who did not bring me folk-stuff would stand a chance of passing on the finals. One youth complained recently that he combed the Brazos Bottom, and did not dare stop till he had found at least one reel for me.

I myself haunted all sorts of places where Negroes gather for work or play. I visited my kitchen acquaintances, offering to help shell peas or dry dishes, if I might but listen to songs. I loafed on back steps, I hung guilefully over garden fences, I broiled myself beside cook stoves, and ironing boards, I stifled in dust on cleaning days — asking only that I might hear the songs the workers sang. I visited my colored friends and their friends' friends in their homes, begging for ballets.

I started out by describing the scientific nature of my quest, but I soon found that did not work well, and so I explained myself as merely interested in old songs, not realizing that by that time the mischief was done.

I remember stopping by to talk with a stout ginger-cake woman whom I saw rocking easefully on her front porch close by Waco Creek one afternoon. I did not know her, but I asked for songs. She desired to know why I wanted them. I explained elaborately that I *liked* old songs.

"What you gwine to *do* with 'em?" she persisted.

"Oh, — er, — remember them, and write them down so I can keep them," I parried.

She gave me a glance of scorn for my subterfuge, as she grunted, "You's Miss Dottie Scarber, and that meetin' of yores is on the twenty-fust!"

I had overlooked the fact of my press announcements!

But she consented to give me some songs — on condition that I go into the house, as she did not wish any church members to pass by and hear her singing reels.

Since various colleges and universities of Texas were to be represented on the programme for our meeting, I asked the president of Paul Quinn College, a Negro institution in East Waco, if he would not send his choral club to sing some of the genuine folk-songs for us. On the afternoon of their appearance, the last meeting of the association, the Chapel of Baylor University was filled with people — about twenty-five hundred in all. The colored singers came first on the programme, and were greeted with such a riot of enthusiasm that it seemed as if the remainder of the numbers would be anticlimatic. Again and again the club was called back for encores, and it was with difficulty that I persuaded the audience to hear the rest of us — and only by promising that the singers would come back at intervals during the programme. Yes, folk-lore can have popular appeal.

How often since then have I closed my eyes in memory and heard those rich, harmonious voices, with a wild, haunting pathos in their tones, singing,

Keep a-inchin' along, inchin' along,
 Jesus will come bye-an'-bye.
 Keep a-inchin' along like a po' inch worm,
 Jesus will come bye-an'-bye!

I hear again the mellow music of

I want to be ready, I want to be ready,
 I want to be ready
 To walk in Jerusalem just like John!

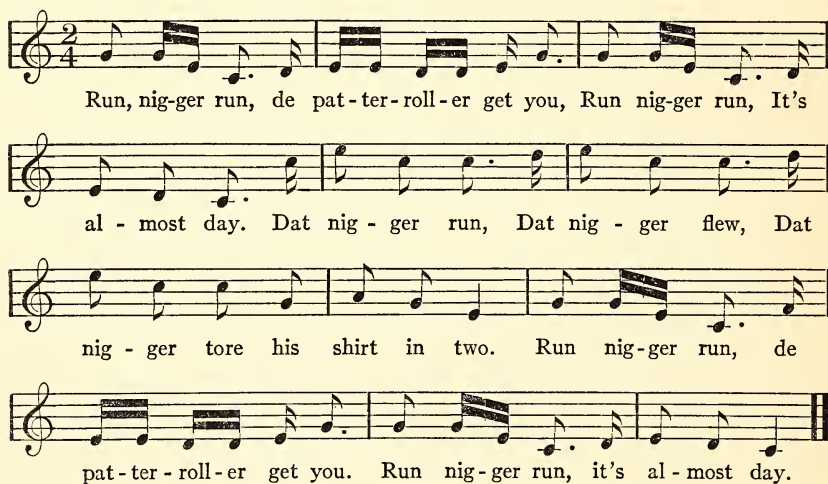
I can see their bodies swaying rhythmically, their faces alight with passionate feeling.

Since that time I have been definitely collecting Negro folk-songs. I used a number of them in my books, "From a Southern Porch," and "In the Land of Cotton," and found that readers were more interested in them than in anything I could write.

Sometimes I have chanced upon songs unexpectedly, as in Louis-

ville, Kentucky, several years ago, when I was waiting for a belated train. An old, old colored man, in ragged felt hat and clothes scarcely more than a collection of tattered patches, came along, followed by a flea-infested yellow dog. (I did not see the fleas, but the dog gestured of their presence.) In spite of his garb, the old man had a quaint, antique dignity, which seemed to say that clothes were of small moment; I am sure he had a soul above patches. As he walked along, singing to himself, I followed him to hear and take down his song. His voice was cracked and quavery, and with the peculiar catch that aged Negroes have in their singing, but it was pathetically sweet.

RUN, NIGGER, RUN



Run, nig-ger run, de pat-ter-roll-er get you, Run nig-ger run, It's
al - most day. Dat nig - ger run, Dat nig - ger flew, Dat
nig - ger tore his shirt in two. Run nig-ger run, de
pat - ter - roll - er get you. Run nig - ger run, it's al - most day.

If you get there before I do,
'Most done ling'rin' here;
Look out for me, I am comin', too,
'Most done ling'rin' here.

Chorus

I'm goin' away, goin' away,
I'm 'most done ling'rin' here;
I'm goin' away to Galilee,
And I'm 'most done ling'rin' here.

I have hard trials on my way,
'Most done ling'rin' here;
But still King Jesus hears me pray,
'Most done ling'rin' here.

In much the same way I chanced upon an old woman in Atlanta, Georgia, one summer, as I was sauntering down a street by myself. She tottered along, leaning on a cane, her face half hidden in a slat-bonnet, her frail body neat in a gray gingham dress. She was singing in a remote fashion, as if she herself were not aware of the song.

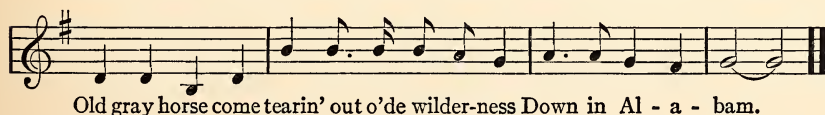
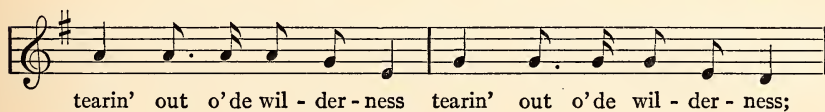
I bless the Lawd, I'm born to die;
 Keep me from sinkin' down;
 I'm gwine to jedgment bye an' bye;
 Keep me from sinkin' down.

She reminded me of old Aunt Peggy, whom I used to see in Waco, who said she was a hundred and fifteen years old and looked every day of it. Aunt Peggy used to walk around to visit her friends, supporting herself by a baby carriage which she pushed in front of her, and which she used as a convenient receptacle to hold gifts from her white friends. I spoke to this old woman and asked her if she knew any more songs.

"Yas'm, honey, I is knowed a passel of 'em, but dey's mos'ly fled away from me now-days. Dis misery in my back make me stedy 'bout hit mo' dan 'bout singing."

I remember a morning in Birmingham, Alabama, when I was strolling leisurely in the colored section of the town to hear what I could hear. I had been interrogating some small boys who had entered cordially into my quest for songs and had sung several for me. And then, having taken a friendly interest in my search, they followed me as I walked along. One of the urchins said, "Man comin' long in dat cart is singin' some sort o' song." I looked and saw a rickety wagon filled with junk, and a tall black man standing up to drive like a charioteer. He was singing lustily:

OLD GRAY HORSE COME TEARIN' OUT O' DE
 WILDERNESS



Old grey horse come a-tearin' out o' de wilderness,
 Tearin' out o' de wilderness,
 Tearin' out o' de wilderness;
 Old grey horse come a-tearin' out o' de wilderness,
 Down in Alabam!

Memory flashed me back to my childhood, and I heard my mother sing that rollicking old song:

Old grey horse, he come from Jerusalem,
 Come from Jerusalem,
 Come from Jerusalem;
 Old grey horse he come from Jerusalem,
 Down in Alabam!

If my wife dies, I'll get me another one,
 Get me another one,
 Get me another one.
 If my wife dies, I'll get me another one,
 Down in Alabam!

I followed the cart down the crowded street, the small boys following me, and I felt a home-sick pang to hear the last lines as the cart turned round the corner and out of sight.

Great big fat one, just like t'other one,
 Just like t'other one,
 Just like t'other one;
 Great big fat one, just like t'other one,
 Down in Alabam!

I remember many experiences I met in search of Negro folk-songs, each with its own interest for me. There was a baptizing that I went to in Natchez, Mississippi, for example, where I heard many of the genuine old songs. It was an impressive occasion. The immersions took place in a pond near the outskirts of town, on the grounds of what had once been the home of the first Spanish governor of Mississippi. The fine old house had been burned down, but the great marble stairway was still standing, and I stood for a while on the top steps to watch the services — though I presently moved down to be nearer the crowd.

The candidates for baptism met by appointment at a house some distance away; and when the crowd had gathered at the pond, they came in solemn file, robed in white, men and women alike, their robes tied about their knees by cords so that the skirts would not float in

the water, and their heads bound in white cloths. They came in procession, two by two, singing a dirge-like song, which the hundreds of Negroes waiting at the edge of the pond caught up and joined in.

The preacher stood in the water, with a half-dozen men by him, three on each side. I wondered what their office was, but I soon learned. They were needed. As a candidate was led into the water, the preacher lifted his voice in passionate exhortation, which swept his audience into fervor of response. Shouts and groans came up, and snatches of weird song.

I'm gwine down to Jordan — Hallelu!

I'm gwine down to Jordan — Hallelu!

Wid de elders in de lead.

I'm so glad I got my religion in time!

You said somep'n, now, brother!

Praise de Lawd!

I was told that the preacher charged a dollar a head for baptizing, — money in advance, — but I cannot vouch for that statement. I can only say that I think he earned his fees.

As the candidate was led to his place in the water, the preacher lifted his hand and said, "I, Elder Cosgrove, baptize you, Sister [or Brother] in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." One white youngster asked, "Why does he put hisself in front of God?"

The candidate as he was plunged beneath the water manifested lively motion, and emotion. He struggled, and thrashed about, till it required the services of the pastor and the six helpers to get him to his feet again. Some of the candidates, amid wild excitement, lost their balance and fell heavily back into the water, to be rescued with difficulty by the helpers, amid the groans and ejaculations of the congregation.

The small white boy asked, "What makes 'em wrastle so? Do they think the baptizin' would n't take if they did n't fight?"

With each immersion the excitement grew, the shouting became more wild and unrestrained, the struggles of the candidate more violent. Women ran up and down the banks of the pond, wringing their hands, groaning and crying. I thought of the priests of Baal who leaped and shouted as they called upon their god to hear them and send down fire to light their altar. The crowd surged back and forth, and as one bystander would rush to greet a candidate coming out of the water, shrieking forth joy and thanksgiving, the crowd would join in vehement song. Sometimes half-a-dozen shouters

would be in ecstasy at once, each surrounded by a group of admirers trying to control him, or her — usually her. Each group would be a centre of commotion in the general excitement.

The shouter would fall on the ground, writhing about as if in anguish, tearing her hair, beating off those who sought to calm her. Sometimes one, reeling too near in the throes of thanksgiving, would fall into the water and have to be fished out, somewhat subdued but still shrieking, and led off to dry in the sun.

I tried repeatedly to get a picture of the scene, but each time I adjusted the kodak, some shouter would start up beside me and all but push me into the pond. That little black box seemed to have an unfortunate effect on the crowd. One time I thought I would persist, but in the *mêlée* I was all but crushed. I was between the pond on one side and a barbed-wire fence on the other, with no chance for escape but a tree which I might have climbed had it not been a *bois-d'arc*, full of hard thorns. The crowd surged against me, and I had to put up my kodak hastily and become as inconspicuous as possible. I do not think they meant to harm me, but it was merely a matter of emotional excitement. Even my pencil taking down songs upset them.

Vendors of ice-cream cones and cigarettes went in and out through the crowd, selling refreshments to those who did not have their whole interest centred in the ordinance. I watched until the last candidate had been immersed and led off dripping across the field, and the last of the watchers had trickled away, singing snatches of song, shouting ejaculations, sometimes to each other and sometimes to the Lord.

There was an afternoon in Natchitoches, Louisiana, when I went to the Baptist church to see the janitor, who had promised to sing for me. A storm darkened and muttered in the distance, coming nearer and nearer, in awesome accompaniment to the gentle voice that echoed through the empty room as Parsons sang song after song. One that especially impressed me was about the cooling board, which means death-bed.

Gwine to lay me on a cooling board one of dese mornings,
 Gwine to lay me on a cooling board one of dese mornings,
 Gwine to lay me on a cooling board one of dese mornings,
 Hope I'll jine de band.

Chorus

Oh, my sister, oh, my sister, oh, my sister,
 Won't you come and go?

Gwine to lay me in my coffin one of dese mornings,
 Gwine to lay me in my coffin one of dese mornings,
 Gwine to lay me in my coffin one of dese mornings,
 Hope I'll jine de band.

Chorus

Gwine to wrap me in a white sheet one of dese mornings,
 Gwine to wrap me in a white sheet one of dese mornings,
 Gwine to wrap me in a white sheet one of dese mornings,
 Hope I'll jine de band.

Chorus

Oh, pore mourner, oh, pore mourner, oh, pore mourner,
 Won't you come and go wid me?

A cordial invitation, but one that did not tempt me to accept!

It was in Natchitoches Parish that Sebron Mallard, who had been one of my grandfather's slaves, came to see me. He said, "I was ploughing when I got the word that Mister Johnny's daughter was nigh here, and I drapped the plough and made tracks toward you." He could not sing, he told me, but he gave me information of value about some of the songs I was investigating, helping me to establish their antiquity by the fact that he had heard them in his childhood. He told me much about my grandparents — the grandfather and grandmother who had died long before I was born; and he gave me many little intimate details about my dead father's boyhood. He said, "Mister Johnny war de youngest of all de boys, but he knowed how to work harder and laugh more than any of 'em."

He said, "Li'l mistis, is you well? Is you happy?"

"Yes, Uncle Sebron, I'm always well, and I'm very happy," I told him.

He looked at me with dimming eyes.

"My ole pappy tol' me befo' he died that good luck would be bound to go with ol' Marster's fambly becace they was allus so good to their pore slaves. They brought us up mannerble, and I brought my chillun up thataway, too. And ain't none of us never been arrested nor had no trouble. But some of the young folks these days is n't that way and it makes trouble. Us old folks sees when dey do wrong, and it hurts us, but we can't do nothing, cause we's feeble and we's few.

"White folks and black folks look like they ain't live lovely together like they used to."

I got some interesting material from a Negro in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Some members of a colored church where I attended

service having told me that a night watchman at one of the railroad buildings knew a lot of songs, a friend and I went to the place that night and found a good-natured, middle-aged Negro man, who said he was a preacher as well as a watchman. He was just starting off to post the night mail when we arrived, but said if we could wait till he came back he would sing what he knew. So we sat down in the deserted building and awaited his return. I did not want to leave without songs, for I had lugged my phonograph along to take records and had no wish to waste that time or energy. After considerable time he came back and sang various spirituals for us.

My quest for songs brought me an invitation to visit Melrose, a big plantation in North Louisiana, whose owner, Mrs. Henry, wrote me that the region was rich in folk-song and tradition. Her plantation is in a section where few white people live, the district being almost entirely settled by Negroes and by what are called free mulattoes. The latter are descendants of Frenchmen who in early days homesteaded in that region and had mulatto children, to whom they left their property. So the region shows an interesting cleavage of color, the Negroes having their settlement, their churches, Methodist and Baptist, and their schools, while the mulattoes have their schools, their Catholic church and convent, and their separate social life. There is almost as little social commingling between the mulattoes and the blacks as between the whites and the mulattoes, I was told.

I talked with a number of the people there, both black and mulatto, and heard fascinating songs and stories of life before the war in Louisiana.

Among those whom I found especially interesting were Uncle Israel and Aunt Jane, he being ninety-one years old by his estimate of what he remembered, and she being ninety-four. He remembered seeing the stars fall, — that is the date by which most old colored people estimate their age, — and had witnessed a famous duel when he was a child, the duel between Gaigner and Boissier.

"I saw dem fight. One stood at de rising of de sun, one at de setting of de sun. I was a little boy, was carrying feed. Gen'l Boissier was plated — I mean he had silver plate all over hisself so de bullet would n't hu't him."

Uncle Israel walked with a limp and supported himself by his cane. He said, "It ain't ol' age dat makes me limp. I got a tap on my hip when I war a young man befo' I war married. I war a house servant, but when Marse 'Polyte would get mad at de house servants, he would send dem to de field to work. I was hoein' cotton, an' he called me an' said, 'Clean up dis row.' I thought I had it clean, but I

ain't. Mister 'Polyte kicked me on de hip. I done limped ever since. I war eighteen then."

"Were the slave-owners very cruel to their slaves?" I asked him.

"Some of 'em was," he answered. "Ol' Marse — would grease 'em with tallow and whup 'em till de blood run down. Den he would spread tallow over 'em and hol' a candle to it and burn 'em. De white folks took him up in law about it.

"Mister Alec had an overseer he called Mr. Cobb. His head 'most reached up to dat j'ist dere. He whipped Niggers wid a saw. Mr. Alec turned him off. Some of de free mulattoes was mo' cruel to deir slaves dan white folks."

Uncle Israel sang various songs for me.

AFRICAN COUNTING SONG



Ninni nonno simungi,
 Ninni nonno simungi,
 Ninni nonno sidubi sabadute simungi.
 Ninni nonno simungi,
 Ninni nonno simungi,
 Ninni nonno sidubi sabadute simungi.

"Dat's ol' African. I learned it fum my mother. She come telling us all these little tales. That was a count. The old outlandish man counted. When you said dat twice, dat's ten. My mother learned it fum an African fum her country."

Uncle Israel gave another song, which he said was African, but it is largely a mixture, of course, if there is any African in it.

All along, all along, all along,
 Linked in blue.
 I bet any man a pint of brandy
 All of me marks will be thirty-two.

Uncle Israel says, "Dat means a man countin' in his language in African."

He gave a riddle, which Professor Kittredge says is old, but adopted from the whites.

I went out to worldly wiggy waggy,
I saw Tom Tiggy-taggy.
I called Brown Wiggy-waggy
To drive Tom Tiggy-taggy
Out of worldly wiggy waggy.

He said, "Dat was a dog and a hog. De hog was in de field and de dog was sent to drive him out."

Uncle Israel was a delightful person to talk with, for he was so pleased at finding some one interested in what he knew and remembered, that he would talk endlessly, piling up reminiscences of by-gone days, singing scraps of song.

I went to see Aunt Jane in their cabin, for she was "feelin' po'ly, thank God," Uncle Israel said, and could not come to the big house to see me. I found her lying huddled in bed, a large, dignified woman. Her cabin was one to delight an antiquarian's heart, for it was just as it had been during slavery days. Meals were cooked over the open fireplace, in antique pots with little legs, and in long spiders, and so forth. The house itself was built of mud fastened together with moss black from age. In an adjoining room half-a-dozen children were entertaining themselves and looking after a baby while its mother was busy with her washing. The baby was rocking in a *bran*, a peculiar contrivance made of a large circular piece of wood, over which was stretched a sheep skin. This was hung from the ceiling so that it swayed and rocked gently, a comfortable nest for any baby.

Aunt Jane and Uncle Israel sang into my phonograph, and I can see now their shaking gray heads close together in front of the mysterious horn, and smile again at their childish delight at hearing the horn give their own songs back to them.

Uncle Israel and Aunt Jane gossiped of the mulattoes and of the various grades of color, of the "griffs," of the "freakides," who were "mo' white dan colored," of the "quateroons" — "not so deep colored." I learned of a quarrel Uncle Israel had had with one of the mulatto house servants about this question of color. She had disrespectfully called him a Nigger, and he had retorted:

"What if I is a Nigger? I b'longs to a race of people. But you ain't. I did n't never read in de Bible about whar it speaks of mulattoes as a race of people. You is *mules*, dat's whut you is."

The young mulatto had slung a skillet at him, and the argument ended. He said to me, "De mulattoes ain't live as long as white

folks or colored either. Dey ain't a healthy folks. I'll tell dat to deir face."

Aunt Jane talked of old days as she lay back against her pillow, and I sat in an ancient split-bottom chair beside her bed, while Uncle Israel potted about, poking the fire and fumbling among old papers to see what he could find to show me.

She said, "Dey tuck me fum my mammy when I was a baby. My ol' marster he died an' a ol' lady bought me. She so ugly I don't remember her name. She did n't buy my mammy. My mammy had to teck it, 'case she could n't he'p herself. She never sent me no papers, nor I her, and I don't know nothing 'bout her sence dat time. When I was a young girl I was sold at de block in New Orleans. Dey stood me up on de block in de slave-pen. De doctor 'zaminie me fust an' look at my teeth. I war sold for fifteen hunned dollars."

She gazed wistfully out of the door and said, "I study a lot 'bout my mammy. I wunner will I ever see her agin."

Poor old Aunt Jane! — since I saw her, she has died. Let us hope that she has found her mammy.

One of the mulatto men told me about how the Negroes would beat drums and cotton sticks, and chant,

Sing no more Creole — free nation.

Sing no more Creole — free nation.

I was told of the Creole dances and dance-songs.

I had a delightful time getting Creole songs in New Orleans, the songs in the Creole patois sung by the French-speaking Negroes. I had the privilege of meeting some charming Creole ladies, friends of one of the friends I was visiting in New Orleans, who sang into my phonograph lively songs they had learned from the French Negroes. That dialect is no more like correct French than Negro dialect is like ordinary English. The songs are difficult to capture, and very few of them have been printed. Here is a sample:

MAMAN DONNE MOIN UN PITIT MARI

Maman donne moin un pitit mari.

Bon Dieu, quel un homme comme li pitit!

Mo mette le couche dans mo lite,

Bon Dieu, comme li si t'on pitit!

Chatte rentre et prend li pour un sourit.

Bon Dieu, quel-ti un homme que li pitit!

MAMAN DONNE MOIN UN PITIT MARI

Ma-man don - ne moin un pitit ma - ri. Bon Dieu, quel un homme com-
me li - pi - tit! Mo mette le couch - e dans mo lite, Bon
Dieu, com-me li si t'on - pi - tit! Chatte ren-tre et prend li
pour un sou - rit. Bon Dieu, quel - ti un homme que li pi - tit.

A friend of mine on the Baptist Sunday School Board in Nashville, Tennessee, took me to see the venerable Dr. Boyd, head of the Baptist Publication Society for the colored people. Dr. Boyd, who was eighty years old, remembers much of interest concerning the old songs and the life in the South before the war. He said that he did not know the secular songs, the reels and dance-songs, because in his youth where he lived it was thought unpardonable to pick a banjo, and the person who did so was put out of the church. His mother left the church "because of an organ." He said that for a long time the religious songs of the Negroes almost died out, but a few people loved them and kept on singing them, till college people got to admitting that there was more music in them than in other songs. Then Fisk University took up the jubilee singing, and gradually the spiritual came back into its own place among the colored people. He said, "You can break loose with an old spiritual in a meeting and move the church."

Years ago Dr. Boyd arranged for the collecting and publishing of many of the old spirituals in a book which his publishing house brought out. Singers who could sing but did not write music went travelling through the South to learn the songs and fix them in their memory; and when they came back, a musician took down the tunes and wrote them out.

Dr. Boyd told me incidents of the history of various songs. For example, he said of the familiar old spiritual, *Steal Away*, that it was sung in slavery times when the Negroes on a few plantations

were forbidden to hold religious services. That was because the masters were afraid of gatherings which might lead to insurrections like some that had occurred. So the Negroes would gather in a cabin and hold their service by stealth. They would resort to a peculiar practice to prevent their singing from being heard at the big house. They would turn an iron washpot upside down on the dirt floor and put a stick under it, and would sing in such way that they thought the sound would be muffled under the pot. Dr. Boyd says that he had often gone to such services with his mother in his childhood and seen this done. He said that, in fact, he believed the white people knew of the gatherings and allowed them, though the Negroes were fearful of being found out.

In this quest of mine for songs I have received friendly aid from many people, who have given songs and information of value. For instance, I appealed to the late Dr. John A. Wyeth, of New York, who was a Southerner and knew the South of antebellum days. He answered that he would get his old banjo out of storage and play and sing for me songs that he had learned in his childhood from old Uncle Billy on his father's plantation. I spent a rapt evening listening to his songs and reminiscences.

He said of *Run, Nigger, Run*, a famous slavery-time song, which I had heard my mother sing, that it is one of the oldest of the plantation songs. White people were always afraid of an insurrection among the Negroes, and so they had the rule that no Negro should be off his own plantation, especially at night, without a pass. They had patrols stationed along the roads to catch truant Negroes, and the slaves called them "patter-rollers." The darkies sang many amusing songs about the patrols and their experiences in eluding them.

Dr. Wyeth told of Uncle Billy, who played and sang these songs and who taught them to his little master. When the boy became more proficient than the old men, Uncle Billy put away his banjo and never played again. Uncle Billy's throat was cut by a "scalawag" not long after the war was over — a scalawag being a Southerner who turned Republican. This was a Republican Negro.

Dr. Wyeth gave a reminiscent account of Uncle Billy's playing. The old darky would sing and play for a while, then stop and talk, after which rambling recitative he would resume his singing.

"Golly, white folks, I went down to see Sal last night," he would grunt. (Sal was his sweetheart on another plantation.) "Nigger heels are the toughest part of the foot. I wuz ten years old befo' my mammy knowed which end my toes come out of. Dat heel stretched an' stretched till I got clear away."

RUN, NIGGER, RUN

Very quickly

Run, nig-ger, run; de pat-ter-roll-er catch you; Run, nig-ger, run, It's
al-most day. Run, nig-ger, run, de pat-ter-roll-er catch you—
Run, nig-ger, run, and try to get a-way. Dis nig-ger run, he
run his best, Stuck his head in a horn-et's nest, Jumped de fence and
run fru de pas-ter; White man run, but nig-ger run fast-er.

Run, nigger run; de patter-roller catch you;
Run, nigger, run, it's almost day.
Run, nigger, run, de patter-roller catch you;
Run, nigger, run, and try to get away.

Dis nigger run, he run his best,
Stuck his head in a hornet's nest,
Jumped de fence and run fru de paster;
White man run, but nigger run faster.

Various versions of the nigger and his necessitous race are given by different persons; as the following from Mrs. Charles Carroll, of Louisiana, who learned it from her grandmother, who had learned it from the slaves on her plantation:

Run, nigger, run,
The patter-roller'll catch you;
Run, nigger, run,
It's almost day.

Dat nigger run,
Dat nigger flew,
Dat nigger lost
His Sunday shoe.

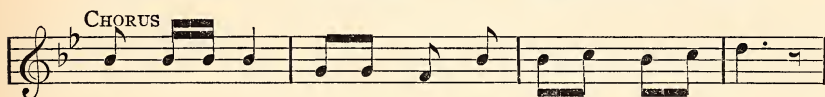
MOST DONE LING'RIN' HERE



If you get there be - fore I do. Most done ling'rin' here, Look



out for me I am com-in' too, Most done ling'rin' here.



I'm goin' a-way goin' a - way I'm 'most done ling'rin' here;



I'm goin' a-way to Gal - i - lee, And I'm 'most done ling'rin' here.

Run, nigger, run,
The patter-roller'll catch you;
Run, nigger, run,
And try to get away.

My sister, Mrs. George Scarborough, remembers the escaping darky as having lost his "wedding shoe" instead of merely his Sunday one, which, of course, made the calamity still greater.

W. R. Boyd, Jr., insists that

Dat nigger run,
Dat nigger flew,
Dat nigger tore
His shirt in two.

I learned an African chant from an old Negro woman in Waco, Texas, who had heard it in her childhood. Her grandmother had got it from an old man who had been brought from Africa as a slave. The woman who sang it for me could explain nothing of what the words meant or how they should be spelled. It seems to be a combination of African and English. The air recalls the beating of tom-toms in African jungles.

INGO-ANGO FAY

Go fay, go fay! In - go, an - go fay! Cir - cle this house in a
 hoo - sal - lay, In a - in - go - an - go fay. Go fay, go fay!
 In - go - an - go fay. Will jew my 'lig - ion a - way.
 Mum - bi, ki - ki, jo - ki lo, In a - in - go - an - go fay!

Go fay, go fay!
 Ingo-ango fay!
 Circle this house in a hoo-sal lay,
 In a-ingo-ango fay.
 Go fay, go fay!
 Ingo-ango fay!
 Will jew my 'ligion away.
 Mumbi, kiki, joki lo,
 In a-ingo-ango fay!

A wordless chant was given me by Miss Emilie Walter of Charleston, South Carolina. Miss Walter says, "There is one song in which no words are used, only the sound '*un*' sung through the nose, with the mouth open. This is a very sacred song, kept for the most exalted moment of getting religion. It is never sung in the presence of adult white persons, but a small white child had a keen musical ear and tenacious memory. The low voices begin it. It is taken up by the higher voices, then the top-notch sopranos come in and make a complete fugue. They sing this until the sinner is converted and the piercing shrieks of the converted finish the fugue."

Elizabeth Sullivan sent a couple of songs and an account of an unconventional singer. "The Reverend Paul Sykes, bishop, pastor and janitor of the First Straight Gate Church of Kingsfisher, Oklahoma, who sang these songs, is a most interesting old man. He founded his church, and in order to get funds with which to build it and keep it

CHANT



First time — beginning on D.

Second time — beginning on F-sharp.

Third time — beginning on A.

[Third voice written an octave lower as range is too high. Might be sung thus — with second voice a sixth lower instead of a third higher.]

going, he meets every train that goes through Kingsfisher (except on Sundays), and sings and dances on the station platform for the 'loaves and fishes,' the fishes being pennies and loaves anything larger. With this collection he pays his own salary and cares for the church, which he built from the same source of funds. He never dances except on the station platform, and for this church collection. After his dance is over, he carried himself with the dignity befitting the bishop, pastor and janitor of the Straight Gate Church. It is estimated that he has danced more than thirty thousand times and taken in more than fifteen thousand dollars.

"On Sundays he preaches in his church in the morning, and in the afternoon to street crowds, which are often made up mostly of white people. He is seventy-seven years old, and alone in the world since the death of his wife. He founded his church twenty-seven years ago."

THE OL' A'K'S A-MOVIN'

The ol' a'k's a-movin',
 A-movin' along, chillun,
 The ol' a'k's movin',
 A-movin' right along.
 Hebben's so high
 An' I'm so low,
 Don't know whuther
 I'll git thar or no.
 The ol' a'k's a-movin',
 A-movin' along, chillun,
 The ol' a'k's a-movin',
 A-movin' right along.

In 1923, just after the publication of my novel, "In the Land of Cotton," which contains a number of Negro folk-songs, I went back to Texas on a visit and spent a part of my time in research after others. In Fort Worth, the choir leader of the Mount Gilead Baptist Church, and her husband, the director of the colored Y. M. C. A., called on me at Mayor Cockrell's home, to express appreciation of my interest in the folk-music of their race, and offered to put on a special service of spirituals in place of the sermon at their evening service. They asked me if I would speak on the religious aspects of folk-song, and announcement was made that white people were invited. Half the house was reserved for white visitors, and so great is the love for the beautiful old songs that every seat was taken. The musical service was a moving and impressive one, many of the fine old spirituals being sung by the well-trained choir. I spoke briefly of the dignity and value of Negro folk-song, and urged that efforts be made to preserve the old songs. I said in closing that there was only one request I had to make in connection with my funeral, which I hoped was some time in the future. I should not be at all satisfied unless some of my colored friends were there and sang, *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*. As I sat down, the choir and congregation softly took up the strains:

Swing low, sweet chario-ot,
 Comin' for to carry me home!

I felt for the moment as if I were attending my own obsequies, and wondered if the instant response were a hint that an early demise was desirable. When the song was over, an elderly man, a teacher in a Negro high school in another town, rose and said: "This is one of

the happiest days of my life. It does my heart good to hear a white lady from a great university urge us to treasure our racial folk-songs because scholars prize them. We must all work together to collect them and save them for future generations."

While I was in Waco, my old home, Professor A. J. Armstrong of Baylor University, took me to a concert given by a Negro college there. The choral club rendered, for the pleasure of the general audience, such selections as the Sextette from Lucia, and for my special delectation some of the old folk-songs. And Judge West and Miss Decca West gave a garden party for me on the lawn at Minglewood, the chief feature of which was the singing of a number of folk-songs by the choral club of Paul Quinn College, who had sung at the Texas Folk-lore Association some years before.

Mrs. Tom Bartlett, of Marlin, who with the assistance of Mrs. Buie had given me a number of songs for my collection, invited me down to a "festibul" she was giving in my honor. For the benefit of uninitiate Northerners, I perhaps should explain that that is a term used in my childhood to designate the more pretentious social affairs given by colored folk. This was on the Bartlett lawn at sunset; and after speeches of welcome from Dr. Torbett and Tom Connally, Congressman from the district, the choir of the colored Baptist church gathered by the piano in the parlor and sang with beautiful harmony a number of the old songs that I loved best.

During one of the pauses, Aunt Bedie, an aged Negress who had been in the Bartlett family service for generations, came forward to the cement walk in front of us who were gathered on the lawn, and said, "Now I'm gwine to sing you my song."

With that she began an extraordinary chant which she said she had made up, "words and chune, too," the refrain of which was

I am Mary Maggalene,
Mary, the mother of Jesus.

No instrument could reproduce and no notation record the trills and quavers of that song. Presently she paused, and said, "Now I'm gwine to twist myself round a little." With that, she hitched up one shoulder, then the other, and began a shimmy to the rhythm of her chant, very fantastic, very passionate.

In a few minutes more she announced, "Now I'm gwine to turn myself loose a little." Thereupon she began to whirl like a dancing dervish, her chant growing louder and wilder, her motions more unrestrained, until Mrs. Bartlett led her away. I have never seen anything like it.

I enjoyed the singing of the choir so much that the next morning, which was Sunday, I attended services at the Baptist church in order to hear them again. They sang a number of the sweet old spirituals, their voices blending in that unstudied harmony that comes so naturally to the Negro choruses. After the song service was over, the preacher asked if I would "say a few words," and a young man teacher in the Negro school introduced me as a lady from New York who was touring the South in the interests of the colored race. He expressed the hope that I might stay in the South long enough to get to know the colored folk, and maybe to understand them and love them a little. I answered that I was a Southerner born and bred, and that I had been loving the southern Negroes ever since I could remember anything.

At the close of my brief talk, the elderly preacher thanked me quaintly. He said: "Lady, we feel so kind toward you. I feel about you like a colored man I once heard of. He and his pardner were working on top of a high, tall building, when he got too close to the edge and he fell off. His pardner called out to him, 'Stop, Jim, you 'se falling.' But he sang out, 'I can't stop. I 'se done fell.'

"His pardner leaned over the edge an' call to him an' say, 'You, Jim! You 'se gwine to fall on a white lady!' An' Jim stopped and come right on back up. That's the way we feel toward you."

I consider that the most chivalrous compliment that anyone ever paid me.

At this point the preacher was interrupted by Aunt Bedie, who tripped hobblingly up the front aisle and stood before the pulpit. "Now I'm gwine to sing you my song," she announced, addressing me. And then she started the same song and dance she had given at the "festibul."

The preacher looked at me in distress, but I indicated that I was not greatly shocked, and he seemed helpless to stop her. I learned afterward that Aunt Bedie had been expelled from the choir because she created so much disturbance. She had taken advantage of my folk-loristic interest to come forward once more; and she was truly an arresting sight, with her tiny hat perched on top of her head, and her diminutive frame contorted in a dance that would have thrilled Broadway.

I am told that Aunt Bedie has a passion for corsets and begs these cast-off garments of everyone she knows, so that her house is filled with them.

I even sought for folk-songs in the Governor's mansion, where I was a guest for several days. Governor Pat Neff told me of a song

sung for him on the occasion of one of his official visits to a state-prison farm. A Negro man came up to him after supper, and said, "Will you listen while I sing you a song?" He rendered a ditty whose refrain ran as follows:

If I had the gov'ner
Where the gov'ner has me,
Before daylight
I'd set the gov'ner free.

I begs you, gov'ner,
Upon my soul:
If you won't gimme a pardon,
Won't you gimme a parole?

I have received material from many sources. Teachers, preachers, plantation owners, musicians, writers — many people, white and black — have given aid in this search. I have received songs written in the trembling hand of age, and in the cramped scrawl of childhood. Hands more skilled at guiding the plough than the pen have written down old songs for me, and college professors have given me friendly help.

I have visited many institutions and heard many groups of Negroes sing — schools, colleges, churches, factories, and so forth. The girls' glee club of Straight College, New Orleans, gave a special concert for me during my stay in that town, and I greatly enjoyed their rendition of folk-songs. I attended chapel services at Fisk University, in Nashville, and heard the whole student body sing under the leadership of Matthew Work, who has done so much to collect and preserve Negro spirituals. I have heard the fine glee clubs of Hampton and Tuskegee, the Sabbath Glee Club of Richmond, and others. I remember the thrill with which I heard the singing of a group of college singers who gave some of the old spirituals before the Southern Baptist Convention at Chattanooga, Tennessee, one spring. I recall with especial pleasure the concert given by the Sharon Band, composed of one hundred seventy-five voices, from the colored employees of the P. Lorillard Tobacco Company in Richmond, Virginia, a year ago, when the Negroes sang their old songs to a large audience of white and colored people. *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, and *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*, were among the numbers they gave with best effect.

I have taken advantage of every opportunity to hear folk-songs, sung either by the Negroes themselves or by white people who

learned them from the Negroes. I have besought the aid of every person who I thought might know of songs, and have eagerly captured words or music where I could find them. I have had the assistance of many people—for such a quest would be useless if one relied on one's own resources. I have begged for songs from friends, acquaintances, and strangers, and have received coöperation for which I am most grateful. In later papers I shall tell of the various people who have helped me and the songs they have contributed, for the work which I am doing is to make a folk-book in truth.

My friend, Ola Lee Gullledge, has rendered invaluable aid in taking down songs at first hand, and in working them out from phonograph records which I took. We have collected several hundred songs, with variants to many of them, and have had a happy task of sorting them and putting them into shape for publication.

II

THE NEGRO'S PART IN TRANSMIT- TING THE TRADITIONAL SONGS AND BALLADS

ONE of the most fascinating discoveries to be made in a study of southern folk-lore is that Negroes have preserved orally, and for generations, independent of the whites, some of the familiar English and Scotch songs and ballads, and have their own distinct versions of them. I was vastly interested in this fact when I chanced upon it in research I was making in ballad material some years ago in Texas and Virginia. Unaware that other cases existed, I thought at first that what I found were only exceptions, accidents of folk-song, though I began to look for similar instances. I found enough to start a nucleus for a discussion of this aspect of folk-song, and so was especially interested in an article by C. Alphonso Smith, professor of English at the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis, commenting on his discovery of the same fact ("Ballads Surviving in the United States," in the *Musical Quarterly*, January, 1916). Professor Smith wrote, in answer to my appeal for suggestions for this book of mine: "It seems to me that you should devote at least a section of your work to the agency of the Negro in helping to preserve and to perpetuate and to popularize old-world lyrics — English and Scottish folk-songs that drifted across with our forbears and are not the products of Negro genius." I was delighted to find corroboration of my conclusions in such a quarter, and am indebted to Professor Smith for much information of value concerning this point.

To discuss this subject adequately would require research work and writing more extensive than I have time for now, and so I can hope only to give a suggestion as to the material, and leave it to some investigator who can spend much time in the field, to work it out in detail.

To understand this phenomenon we have to recall the history of our colonization, and remember that the South was settled largely by Cavaliers and Scotch people, both of whom loved song. Folk-songs took up no room in the ships that crossed the ocean to this adventur-

ous land, but they were among the most precious of the cargo that came over, and they have survived through the years, through the poverty, the hardships, and all the struggles of pioneer life, better than the material goods that accompanied them. While the hearts that cherished them, the lips that sang them, are indistinguishable dust, these songs live on. Students of balladry know that America is still rich in the traditional songs of the old country, that in remote mountain sections of the South to-day there is perhaps a rarer heritage of English and Scotch folk-songs actually being sung from oral tradition than in any part of Great Britain. The old songs and ballads have been lovingly remembered, transmitted orally from generation to generation, with variations such as inevitably come in a change of surroundings and social conditions. The old songs are alive among us, and the American versions are distinctive, as true to the traditions as those handed down on the other side of the water, though differing from them in details.

In the early days on the plantations in the South, when books and newspapers were less plentiful than now, songs formed a larger part of the social life than they do at present. At the "great house" the loved old ballads would be sung over and over, till the house servants, being quick of memory and of apt musical ear, would learn them, then pass them on in turn to their brethren of the fields. This process would be altogether oral, since the slaves were not taught to read or write, save in exceptional cases, and their communication with each other and with the outside world would of necessity be by the spoken word.

By cabin firesides, as before the great hearths in big houses, the old songs would be learned by the little folk as part of their natural heritage, to be handed down to their children and their children's children. Such a survival among the Negroes was remarkable, far more so than song-preservation among the whites, who in many instances kept old ballads by writing them down in notebooks, and learning them from old broadsides or keepsake volumes; while the Negroes had none of these aids, but had to sing each song as they learned it from hearing others sing it, and must remember it of themselves. And yet they cherished the old songs and had their own versions of them.

My first find of folk-material of this sort made a great impression on my mind. Some years ago I was sitting on the porch of my sister's home in Virginia, talking with a young colored maid who loafed on the steps. It was a warm summer afternoon when neither of us felt inclined to exertion, and Lucy was entertaining me with

songs and stories of her race. She told of a certain mountain section in North Carolina, where lived some people whom she described mysteriously: "Dey ain't niggers an' dey ain't whites. And yet you can't scarcely say dat dey's mulattoes. Dey is called by a curi's name — Ishies. Dey lives off to demselves an' sho is funny folks."

I learned later that the term used to designate them was "Free Issue," since they were the offspring of Negroes who were not slaves, and so these mulattoes, or their ancestors, had been born free.

The girl sat idly swinging her foot, and gazing across the lake, when suddenly she said, "I'll sing you a song about the Hangman's Tree."

She then gave a lively rendering of a ballad I had never heard sung before, making vivid gestures to dramatize her words. I asked Lucy to write it down for me, and here is her version, just as she copied it, with her own "stage directions":

(Spies Father at a distance, and sings)

Hangman, hangman, hangman,
Loosen your rope.
I think I spy my father coming.
He has come many a long mile, I know.

(To Father)

Father, have you come?
And have you come at last?
And have you brought my gold?
And will you pay my fee?
Or is it your intention to see me hung
Here all under this willow tree?

(Father to Son)

Yes, I 've come, I 've come.
I have not brought your gold.
I will not pay your fee.
'T is my intention to see you hung
Here all under this willow tree.

(Spies Mother)

Hangman, hangman, hangman,
Loosen your rope.
I think I spy my mother coming.
She has come many a long mile, I know.

(To Mother)

Mother, have you come?
And have you come at last?

NEGRO FOLK-SONGS

And have you brought my gold?
 And will you pay my fee?
 Or is it your intention to see me hung
 Here all under this willow tree?

(Mother to Son)

Yes, I 've come, I 've come.
 I have not brought your gold.
 I will not pay your fee.
 'T is my intention to see you hung
 Here all under this willow tree.

(Spies Brother)

Hangman, hangman, hangman,
 Loosen your rope.
 I think I spy my brother coming.
 He has come many a long weary mile, I know.

(To Brother)

Brother, have you come?
 And have you come at last?
 And have you brought my gold?
 And will you pay my fee?
 Or is it your intention to see me hung
 Here all under this willow tree?

(Brother to Brother)

Yes, I 've come, I 've come.
 I have not brought your gold.
 I will not pay your fee.
 'T is my intention to see you hung
 Here all under this willow tree.

(Spies Sister)

Hangman, hangman, hangman,
 Loosen your rope.
 I think I spy my sister coming.
 She has come many a long weary mile, I know.

(To Sister)

Sister, have you come?
 And have you come at last?
 And have you brought my gold?
 And will you pay my fee?
 Or is it your intention to see me hung
 Here all under this willow tree?

(Sister to Brother)

Yes, I 've come, I 've come.
 I have not brought your gold.
 I will not pay your fee.
 'T is my intention to see you hung
 Here all under this willow tree.

(Spies Lover)

Lover, have you come?
 And have you come at last?
 And have you brought my gold?
 And will you pay my fee?
 Or is it your intention to see me hung
 Here all under this willow tree?

(To the Loved One, his Answer)

Yes, I 've come, I 've come.
 I 've brought your gold,
 I 'll pay your fee.
 'T is not my intention to see you hung
 Here all under this willow tree.

(Locked arms and walked happily away)

I asked Lucy where she learned that, and she said, "Oh, the colored folks sing it. We've known it always."

When I inquired if she got it from a book or from hearing some white person sing it, she answered: "No, us colored folks jes' know it. It's jes' been sorter handed down amongst us. I don't know when I learned it."

She told me that Negro children sometimes made a little play of it and acted it out in parts. I was interested in her dramatic and vivid presentation of it, and in the fact that it was obviously not a natural part of the Negro repertoire; but the significance of the general knowledge of it among the Negroes did not impress me so much then as later. She could not give me any explanation for the girl's sentence to the gallows. "It jes' happened so." Nor did she know any plausible reason why her relatives should spurn her, and her True Love prove faithful when her own mother rejected her. All she knew was that it was an old song that they had always sung.

Students of folk-song will readily recognize this as the old English ballad, *The Maid Freed from the Gallows*, the American version of which has the title, *The Hangman's Tree*. The English version, No. 95 in Child's Collection, is from the "Percy Papers," given by the Reverend P. Parsons, of Wye, in 1770, from oral tradition. The

Scotch version has a stronger ending, for in it the maiden roundly accuses her delinquent relatives and invokes spirited curses upon them. Child says that there are many versions of this familiar ballad theme, from both northern and southern Europe. One tradition is that of a young woman captured by the corsairs, who demand heavy ransom, which her own family refuse to pay but which her lover gladly gives. Another tradition holds that the story is all allegory, the golden ball signifying a maiden's honor, which when lost can be restored to her only by her lover. That would explain the sentence of death; for, in old times, death by burning or hanging was the penalty for unchastity on the part of a maid or wife.

Miss M. A. Owen gives a different and more dialectic Negro version in "Old Rabbit, the Voodoo," the story of a Negro child to whom a golden ball is given at her birth by a "conjur man." He warns that she must never break the string which binds the ball about her neck. But she does break it, and the ball by its magic turns her into a beautiful white girl. The child's mother dies and a step-mother steals the ball, whereupon the girl is changed back into a Negro. As if that were not enough, she is accused of having murdered the white girl, who is now, of course, missing. She is sentenced to death, and appeals to her father.

Oh, daddy, find dat golden ball,
Ur yo' see me hung 'pun de gallus-tree!

But father does not aid, for "he go by," and all her relatives in turn fail her. In this case even her "beau" turns his back upon her, and she is about to be hanged. At the last moment the magician appears, disguised as a "beggar-man," and restores the golden ball to the girl, whereupon her fairness and beauty return. The beggar himself changes on the spot to a handsome young man, who vanishes with the girl into the side of a hill.

Professor Smith writes later: "It was a matter of profound interest to me to learn that *The Hangman's Tree*, or *The Maid Freed from the Gallows*, had been dramatized by the Negroes and was being played in many remote sections of Virginia. So far as I know, this was the first instance on record of the popular dramatization of a ballad in this country.

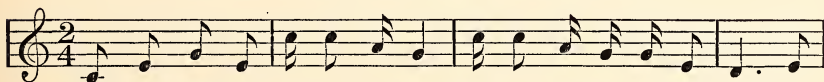
"Nothing has interested me more in the quest of the ballad than to find that for, doubtless, hundreds of years the Negroes have been singing and acting this haunting old ballad and nobody knew anything about it. In addition to the evidence adduced in my article, I have a letter from Mrs. Robert R. Moton, wife of the former president of Hampton, now Tuskegee, dated December 2, 1915, saying:

'When I was a child in Gloucester County, they used it as a game.' I have also a Negro version from Nelson County and an interesting account of its use there as a game among Negroes."

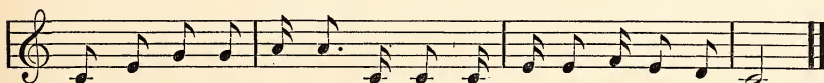
Another version, differing in the important respect that the sex of the condemned one has been changed, was given me by Mr. Edwin Swain, a baritone singer, now of New York City, but formerly of Florida. This is interesting as an example of the way in which changes may come. Mr. Swain says that in his childhood in Florida he saw the Negroes act out this song at an entertainment in the Negro schoolhouse. He gave a vivid account of the dramatization. The condemned — here a man instead of a woman (a curious change to take place in the case of a ballad whose title is *The Maid Freed from the Gallows*) — was all ready for hanging, with a real rope fastened round his neck. The hangman held the other end of the rope in his hand, ready to jerk the victim to his fate. The victim, a large black man, appealed for mercy, begged for a few minutes' reprieve, on the ground that he saw his father coming; but the father sternly repudiated him in gesture and song. His mother was equally obdurate, and likewise the brother and sister. The stage was fairly crowded with cold-hearted relatives — for Negroes in their singing love to reach out to all remote branches of relationship. At last the man begged for one more minute, for he saw his "True Love" coming. True Love came in, a yellow woman dressed in white, with a box of money, and dramatically won his release.

Mr. Swain's version goes as follows:

HANGMAN, SLACK ON THE LINE



Hangman, hangman, slack on the line, Slack on the line a little while, I



think I see my fath - er com - ing with mon - ey to pay my fine.

"Hangman, hangman, slack on the line,
Slack on the line a little while.

I think I see my father coming
With money to pay my fine.

"Oh, father, father, did you bring me money,
Money to pay my fine?
Or did you come here to see me die
On this hangman's line?"

"No, I did n't bring you any money,
Money to pay your fine,
But I just came here to see you die
Upon this hangman's line."

"Hangman, hangman, slack on the line,
Slack on the line a little while.
I think I see my mother coming
With money to pay my fine.

"Oh, mother, mother, did you bring me any money,
Money to pay my fine?
Or did you just come here to see me die
Upon this hangman's line?"

"No, I did n't bring you any money,
Money to pay your fine,
But I just came here to see you die
Upon this hangman's line."

"Hangman, hangman, slack on the line,
Slack on the line a little while;
For I think I see my brother coming
With money to pay my fine.

"Oh, brother, brother, did you bring me any money,
Money to pay my fine?
Or did you just come here to see me die
Upon this hangman's line?"

"No, I did n't bring you any money,
Money to pay your fine,
But I just came here to see you die
Upon this hangman's line."

"Hangman, hangman, slack on the line,
Slack on the line a little while;
For I think I see my sister coming
With money to pay my fine.

"Oh, sister, sister, did you bring me any money,
Money to pay my fine?
Or did you just come here to see me die
Upon this hangman's line?"

"No, I did n't bring you any money,
Money to pay your fine,
But I just came here to see you die
Upon this hangman's line."

“ Hangman, hangman, slack on the line,
Slack on the line a little while.
I think I see my true love coming
With money to pay my fine.

“ Oh, True Love, True Love, did you bring me any money,
Money to pay my fine?
Or did you just come here to see me die
Upon this hangman’s line? ”

“ True Love, I got gold and silver,
Money to pay your fine.
How could I bear to see you die
Upon this hangman’s line? ”

I found another version which differs somewhat in minor details from Mr. Swain’s, but like his has the central character a man instead of a woman. This was given to me by Mrs. Esther Finlay Hoevey, of New Orleans, through the courtesy of Miss Richardson, of Sophy Newcomb College. This was remembered from the singing of an old Negro woman, who had in her youth been put up on the slave block in Mobile and sold down the river. In this, as in Mr. Swain’s version, the condemned is a man and True Love a woman.

“ Hangman, hangman, slack the rope,
Slack the rope a while;
For I think I see my father coming,
Coming for many a mile.

“ Oh, my father, have you paid my fine,
Brought your gold along?
Or have you come here to-night for to see me hung,
Hung on the gallows tree? ”

“ No, my son, I have not paid your fine,
I’ve brought no gold along,
But I’ve just come to see you hung,
Hung on the gallows tree.”

“ Hangman, hangman, slack the rope,
Slack the rope a while;
For I think I see my mother coming,
Coming for many a mile.

“ Oh, my mother, have you paid my fine,
Brought your gold along?
Or have you come here to-night for to see me hung,
Hung on the gallows tree? ”

The mother refuses also, and after that the sister and brother. Then the hangman is implored to slack the rope, for True Love is coming.

“ True Love, True Love, have you paid my fine,
Brought your gold along?
Or have you come here to-night for to see me hung,
Hung on the gallows tree? ”

“ True Love, True Love, I have paid your fine,
I’ve brought my gold along,
I’ve come here to-night for to set you free,
Free from the gallows tree.”

This old ballad, which survives in England also under the title *The Prickly Bush*, or *The Briary Bush* (from which Floyd Dell takes the title for his novel), with a chorus not found in the American variants, has, as Professor Smith says in his article referred to above, become peculiarly the property of Negroes, at least in Virginia. He gives a variant received from a Negro girl in Gloucester County, who “learned it from her grandmother,” in which the treasure is a golden comb instead of a ball.

“ Oh, hangman, hold your holts, I pray,
O hold your holts a while;
I think I see my grandmother
A-coming down the road.

“ Oh, have you found my golden comb,
And have you come to set me free?
Or have you come to see me hanged
On the cruel hangman tree? ”

Another variant, which he gives as coming from Franklin County, shows, as in the case of Mr. Swain’s version from Florida and that from Louisiana, the victim as a man.

“ Oh hangerman, hangerman, slack on your rope
And wait a little while;
I think I see my father coming
And he’s travelled for many a long mile.”

Maximilian Foster has told me of a different version, which he heard companies of Negro soldiers in France singing, but which he has not been able to round up for me.

All these versions, different in each state, and each showing difference from the others, are true to the oral tradition which keeps the

story and the spirit of a ballad but changes the wording. The Negroes would be particularly attracted to this ballad because of its simple structure and its dramatic story. It is easy to remember, for its repetitions proceed regularly.

My next ballad discovery was made in Waco, Texas, when I was seeking material for an article on "Negro Ballets and Reels," for the Texas Folk-lore Association. I was wandering about in the suburbs of South Waco, in the Negro section, dropping in at various places. I passed by a cabin where an old woman sat on the steps, rocking a baby to sleep. The garden was neat with rows of vegetables and gay with old-fashioned flowers, Johnny-jump-ups, pinks, larkspur, petunias, and in the back the line showed snowy clothes drying in the sun. The old woman was crooning something to the child, as she swayed her body back and forth.

I turned in at the gate.

"How do you do?" I said. "That's a nice baby."

"Howdy, mistis," she answered cordially. "Yas'm, dat's mah great-grandchild. Ain't he a buster?"

"What was that song you were singing to him?" I inquired, as I sat down on an upturned box.

"Oh, dat's jes' an old thing, I don't recollect de name of it. I doan' know, in fac', ef it has ary name."

"Won't you please sing it for me, mammy?" I begged.

"Oh, I ain't kin sing wuth speaking of," she demurred. "I done los' mah voice."

"Oh, please, sing it for me."

And so she sang her version of the old ballad, *Lady Isabel and the Elf Knight*:

LADY ISABEL AND THE ELF KNIGHT

There was a tall an' handsome man, Who come a - court-in' me . . .

. . . He said "Steal out at - ter dark to - night an' come a - rid - in' with me . . .

. . . with me . . . An' come a - rid - in', with me . . .

There was a tall an' handsome man,
 Who come a-courtin' me.
 He said, "Steal out atter dark to-night
 An' come a-ridin' with me, with me,
 An' come a-ridin' with me.

"An' you may ride your milk-white steed
 An' I my apple bay."
 We rid out from my mother's house
 Three hours befo' de day, de day,
 Three hours befo' de day.

I mounted on my milk-white steed
 And he rode his apple bay.
 We rid on til we got to the ocean,
 An' den my lover say, lover say,
 An' den my lover say:

"Sit down, sit down, sweetheart," he say,
 "An' listen you to me.
 Pull off dat golden robe you wears
 An' fold hit on yo' knee, yo' knee,
 An' fold hit on yo' knee."

I ax him why my golden robe
 Must be folded on his knee.
 "It is too precious to be rotted away
 By the salt water sea, water sea,
 By the salt water sea."

I say, "Oh, sweetheart, carry me back home,
 My mother for to see,
 For I'm afeared I'll drownèd be
 In this salt water sea, water sea,
 In this salt water sea."

He tuck my hand and drug me in

.
 I say, "Oh, sweetheart, take me back!
 The water's up to my feet, my feet,
 The water's up to my feet."

He smile at me an' draw me on.
 "Come on, sweetheart, sweetheart,
 We soon will be across the stream,
 We've reached the deepest part, deepest part,
 We've reached the deepest part."

As I went on I cry an' say,
 "The water's up to my knees!
 Oh, take me home! I'm afeared to be drowned
 In this salt water sea, water sea,
 In this salt water sea."

He pull me on an' say, "Sweetheart,
 Lay all your fears aside.
 We soon will be across it now
 We've reached the deepest tide, deepest tide,
 We've reached the deepest tide."

I sank down in the stream an' cry,
 "The water's up to my waist."
 He pull at me an' drug me on;
 He say, "Make haste, make haste, make haste."
 He say, "Make haste, make haste."

I cry to him, "The water's up to my neck."
 "Lay all your fears aside.
 We soon will be across it now,
 We've reached the deepest tide, deepest tide,
 We've reached the deepest tide."

I caught hol' of de tail of my milk-white steed,
 He was drowned wid his apple bay.
 I pulled out of de water an' landed at my mother's house
 An hour befo' de day, de day,
 An hour befo' de day.

My mother say, "Pretty Polly, who is dat,
 A-movin' softly?"
 An' I say to my Polly, "Pretty Polly,
 Don't you tell no tales on me, on me,
 Don't you tell no tales on me."

An' my mother say, "Is dat you, Polly?
 Up so early befo' day?"
 "Oh, dat mus' be a kitty at yo' door,"
 Is all my Polly say, Polly say,
 Is all my Polly say.

There were gaps in the singing, for she said she could not remember it all, she was "so ol' now." I asked her where she learned it; she told me, "My mammy used to sing hit when I was a child. I doan' know where she larned hit."

She could not read or write, nor could her mother, and so this was

undoubtedly a case of oral transmission. Her use of such expressions as "apple bay" for "dapple gray" is naïvely interesting. This is more like version H, No. 4 in Child's Collection, than any other.

The change to the first person here is noteworthy. While one distinguishing trait of a ballad is its impersonality, the Negroes are fond of the dramatic "I."

In the course of my search for "ballets and reels," I was given a song learned from black mammies, which is obviously not of Negro origin, but dates back to England centuries ago. I located it through the aid of the "Analytical Index to the Ballad Entries in the Register of the London Company of Stationers," by Professor Hyder E. Rollins, of New York University, as having been registered November 21, 1580, and spoken of as *A Moste Strange Weddinge of the Frogge and the Mouse*. Professor Kittredge, of Harvard, mentions its antiquity and interest in the *Journal of American Folk-lore*, xxxv, 394. This lively old tale of the *Frog Went A-Courtin'* is widely current among colored people in the South, used by many a bandannaed mammy to reconcile her restless charge to slumber. The version was given me by Dorothy Renick, of Waco, Texas, as sung for her often in her childhood, by Negro mammies who, she said, never sang the stanzas twice in the same of order, but varied them to suit the whim the moment.

FROG WENT A-COURTIN'

Frog went a-courtin', he did ride,
Uh — hum!

Frog went a-courtin', he did ride,
Sword and pistol by his side,
Uh — hum!

Rode up to Lady Mouse's hall,
Uh — hum!
Rode up to Lady Mouse's hall,
Gave a loud knock and gave a loud call,
Uh — hum!

Lady Mouse come a-trippin' down,
Uh — hum!
Lady Mouse came a-trippin' down,
Green glass slippers an' a silver gown,
Uh — hum!

Froggie knelt at Mousie's knee,
Uh — hum!
Froggie knelt at Mousie's knee,
Said, "Pray, Miss Mouse, will you marry me?"
Uh — hum!

"Not without Uncle Rat's consent,"

Uh — hum!

"Not without Uncle Rat's consent

Would I marry the president,"

Uh — hum!

Uncle Rat he went down town,

Uh — hum!

Uncle Rat he went down town

To buy his niece a weddin' gown,

Uh — hum!

Where shall the wedding supper be?

Uh — hum!

Where shall the wedding supper be?

Way down yonder in a hollow tree,

Uh — hum!

First come in was little seed tick,

Uh — hum!

First come in was little seed tick,

Walkin' wid a hick'ry stick,

Uh — hum!

Next come in was a bumberly bee,

Uh — hum!

Next come in was a bumberly bee,

To help Miss Mouse po' out the tea,

Uh — hum!

Next come in was a big black snake,

Uh — hum!

Next come in was a big black snake,

In his mouth was a wedding cake,

Uh — hum!

Next come in was Uncle Rat,

Uh — hum!

Next come in was Uncle Rat,

With some apples in his hat,

Uh — hum!

What shall the wedding supper be?

Uh — hum!

What shall the wedding supper be?

Catnip broth and dogwood tea,

Uh — hum!

Then Frog come a-swimmin' over the lake,
 Uh — hum!
 Then Frog come a-swimmin' over the lake,
 He got swallowed by a big black snake,
 Uh — hum!

Another Texas version, words and music, was given me by Ella Oatman, who remembers the song from having heard it in her childhood.

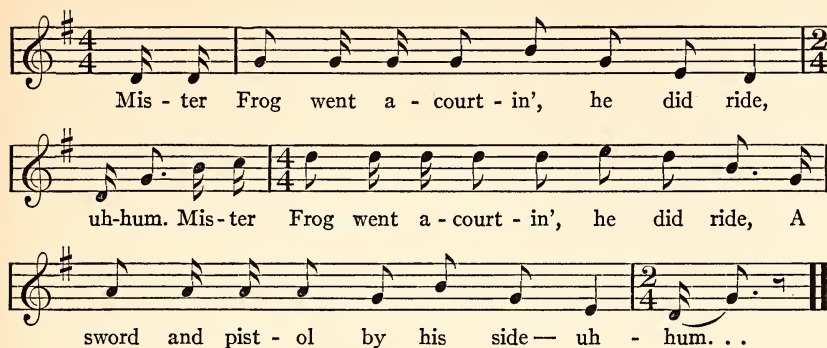
Froggy went a-courtin', he did ride,
 Umph — humph!
 Froggy went a-courtin', he did ride,
 A sword and pistol by his side,
 Umph — humph!
 He came to Lady Mousie's door,
 Umph — humph!
 He came to Lady Mousie's door,
 He knocked and he knocked till his thumb got sore,
 Umph — humph!
 He took Lady Mousie on his knee,
 Umph — humph!
 He took Lady Mousie on his knee,
 He says, "Lady Mouse, will you marry me?"
 Umph — humph!
 Oh, where shall the wedding supper be?
 Umph — humph!
 Oh, where shall the wedding supper be?
 Way over yonder in a hollow tree,
 Umph — humph!
 Oh, what shall the wedding supper be?
 Umph — humph!
 Oh, what shall the wedding supper be?
 Two blue beans and a black-eyed pea,
 Umph — humph!

Still another variant was given me by Louise Laurence, of Shelbyville, Kentucky, who says that her mother learned it in her childhood from Negroes in Kentucky.

MISTER FROG

Mister Frog went a-courtin', he did ride,
 Umph — humph!
 Mister Frog went a-courtin', he did ride,
 A sword and pistol by his side,
 Umph — humph!

MISTER FROG



He rode up to Miss Mouse's hall,
Umph — humph!

He rode up to Miss Mouse's hall,
Long and loudly did he call,
Umph — humph!

Said he, "Miss Mouse, are you within?"
Umph — humph!

Said he, "Miss Mouse, are you within?"
"Oh, yes, kind sir, I sit and spin,"
Umph — humph!

He took Miss Mousie on his knee,
Umph — humph!

He took Miss Mousie on his knee,
Said he, "Miss Mouse, will you marry me?"
Umph — humph!

Miss Mousie blushed and she hung down her head,
Umph — humph!

Miss Mousie blushed and she hung down her head.
"You'll have to ask Uncle Rat," she said,
Umph — humph!

Uncle Rat laughed and shook his fat sides,
Umph — humph!

Uncle Rat laughed and shook his fat sides,
To think his niece would be a bride,
Umph — humph!

Where shall the wedding supper be?
Umph — humph!

Where shall the wedding supper be?
Way down yonder in a hollow tree,
Umph — humph!

What shall the wedding supper be?

Umph — humph!

What shall the wedding supper be?

Two big beans and a black-eye pea,

Umph — humph!

The first that came was a possum small,

Umph — humph!

The first that came was a possum small,

A-totin' his house upon his tail,

Umph — humph!

The next that came was a bumberly bee,

Umph — humph!

The next that came was a bumberly bee,

Bringing his fiddle upon his knee,

Umph — humph!

The next that came was a broken-backed flea,

Umph — humph!

The next that came was a broken-backed flea,

To dance a jog with the bumberly bee,

Umph — humph!

The next that came was an old grey cat,

Umph — humph!

The next that came was an old grey cat,

She swallowed the mouse and ate up the rat,

Umph — humph!

Mr. Frog went a-hopping over the brook,

Umph — humph!

Mr. Frog went a-hopping over the brook,

A lily-white duck came and gobbled him up,

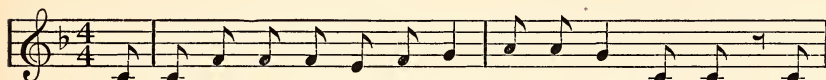
Umph — humph!

Dr. Charles C. Carroll, of New Orleans, Louisiana, gave another variant, which his mother had heard from Negro slaves. So there are versions from three different states, showing points of difference, but each retaining the real tradition of the story and music. It is easy to imagine that the preservation of this entertaining and touching story of Froggy's fate was due to the pleasure that children took in it, for it seems always to have been sung to children by older people, and to have been retained as a nursery song.

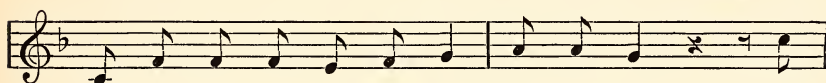
Another delightful old song, of ancient tradition, *Ole Bangum*, was given me by Mrs. Landon Randolph Dashiell, of Richmond, Virginia, who sends it "as learned from years of memory and iteration."

The music was written down from Mrs. Dashiell's singing by Shepard Webb, also of Richmond. Mrs. Dashiell says that her Negro mammy used to sing it to her, and that the song was so indissolubly associated with the sleepy time that she doubted if she could sing it for me unless she took me in her lap and rocked me to sleep by it.

OLD BANGUM



Ole Bang-um, will you hunt an' ride? Dil-lum down dil-lum? Ole



Bang-um, will you hunt an' ride? Dil-lum down? Ole



Bang-um, will you hunt an' ride, Sword an' pist-ol by yo' side?



Cub-bi Ki, cud-dle dum— Kil-li quo quam.

Ole Bangum, will you hunt an' ride?

Dillum down dillum?

Ole Bangum, will you hunt an' ride?

Dillum down?

Ole Bangum, will you hunt an' ride,

Sword an' pistol by yo' side?

Cubbi Ki, cuddle dum

Killi quo quam.

There is a wil' bo' in these woods,

Dillum down dillum.

There is a wil' bo' in these woods,

Dillum down.

There is a wil' bo' in these woods

Eats men's bones and drinks their blood.

Cubbi Ki, cuddle dum

Killi quo quam.

Ole Bangum drew his wooden knife,

Dillum down dillum.

Ole Bangum drew his wooden knife,

Dillum down.

Ole Bangum drew his wooden knife
 An' swore by Jove he'd take his life.
 Cubbi Ki, cuddle dum

Killi quo quam.

Ole Bangum went to de wil' bo's den,
 Dillum down dillum.
 Ole Bangum went to de wil' bo's den,
 Dillum down.
 Ole Bangum went to de wil' bo's den,
 An' foun' de bones of a thousand men.
 Cubbi Ki, cuddle dum

Killi quo quam.

They fought fo' hours in that day,
 Dillum down dillum.
 They fought fo' hours in that day,
 Dillum down.
 They fought fo' hours in that day,
 The wil' bo' fled an' slunk away.
 Cubbi Ki, cuddle dum

Killi quo quam.

Ole Bangum, did you win or lose?
 Dillum down dillum?
 Ole Bangum, did you win or lose?
 Dillum down.
 Ole Bangum, did you win or lose?
 He swore by Jove he'd won the shoes.
 Cubbi Ki, cuddle dum

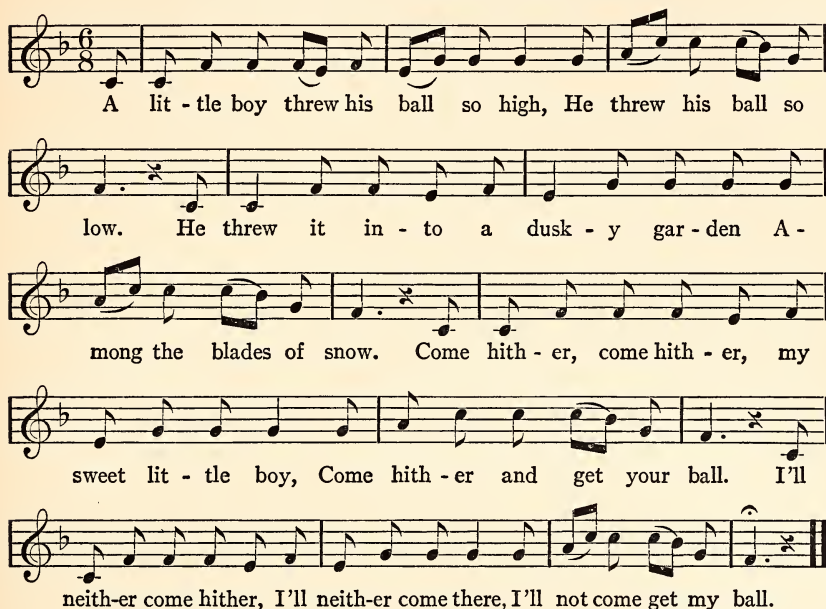
Killi quo quam.

Professor Kittredge speaks of this song in a discussion in the *Journal of American Folk-lore*. Mrs. Case says: "Both General Taylor and President Madison were great-great-grandchildren of James Taylor, who came from Carlisle, England, to Orange County, Virginia, in 1638, and both were hushed to sleep by their Negro mammies with the strains of *Bangum and the Boar*." The version he gives is different in some respects from that given by Mrs. Dashiell.

I am indebted to Mrs. Dashiell for the words and music of another ballad of ancient tradition, *A Little Boy Threw His Ball So High*, of which she says: "I give it just as my childhood heard it. The old nigger always said dusky for dusty, and I really think she showed great discernment, as 'dusky garden filled with snow' and 'dusky well' seem more appropriate and probably more horrible." This also

was learned from the singing of her Negro mammy, who rocked her to sleep by it. "Imagine innocence going to sleep after such a lullaby!" Mrs. Dashiell comments.

A LITTLE BOY THREW HIS BALL



A lit - tle boy threw his ball so high, He threw his ball so
low. He threw it in - to a dusk - y gar - den A -
mong the blades of snow. Come hith - er, come hith - er, my
sweet lit - tle boy, Come hith - er and get your ball. I'll
neith-er come hither, I'll neith-er come there, I'll not come get my ball.

A little boy threw his ball so high,
He threw his ball so low.
He threw it into a dusky garden
Among the blades of snow.

"Come hither, come hither, my sweet little boy;
Come hither and get your ball."
"I'll neither come hither, I'll neither come there,
I'll not come get my ball."

She showed him an apple as yellow as gold,
She showed him a bright gold ring,
She showed him a cherry as red as blood,
And that enticed him in.

Enticed him into the drawing-room
And then into the kitchen,
And there he saw his own dear nurse
A-pi-i-cking a chicken!

"I've been washing this basin the live-long day
To catch your heart's blood in."

"Pray spare my life, pray spare my life,
Pray spare my life!" cried he.

"I'll not spare your life, I'll not spare your life," cried she.

.

"Pray put my Bible at my head,
My prayer-book at my feet.
If any of my playmates ask for me,
Oh, tell them I'm dead and asleep."

She dragged him on his cooling-board,
And stabbed him like a sheep.
She threw him into a dusky well
Where many have fallen asleep.

This is recognizable as the old ballad, *The Jew's Daughter*, telling a tale of the supposed murder of a little boy by a Jewess. Matthew Prior refers to the occasion which is thought to form the basis for this, as of the date of 1255. Chaucer uses the plot for his "Prioress's Tale," the piteous story of the innocent done to death.

William Wells Newell, in his "Games and Songs of American Children," gives another variant, called *Little Harry Hughes*, and says that he was surprised to hear a group of colored children in the streets of New York singing it. He questioned the children and traced their knowledge of the song to a little Negro girl who had learned it from her grandmother. The grandmother, he found, had learned it in Ireland.

Professor Smith gives an interesting version, which was given to him by a student at the University of Virginia, who had learned it from his Negro mammy on a plantation in Alabama.

My ball flew over in a Jew's garden,
Where no one dared to go.
I saw a Jew lady in a green silk dress
A-standin' by the do'.

"O come in, come in, my pretty little boy,
You may have your ball again."

"I won't, I won't, I won't come in,
Because my heart is blood."

She took me then by her lily-white hand,
And led me in the kitchen,
She sot me down on a golden plank,
And stobbed me like a sheep.

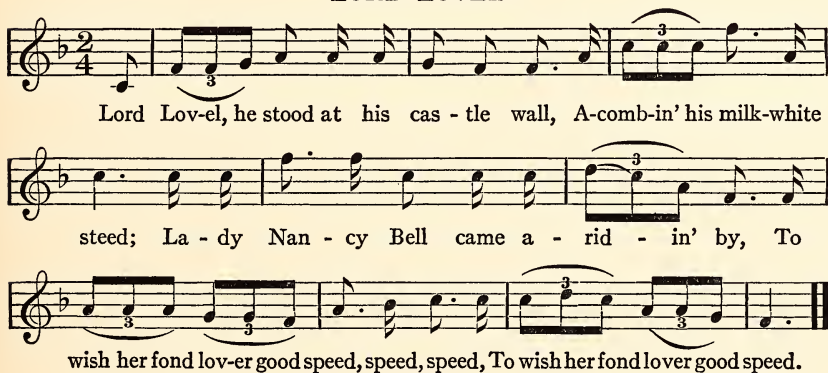
"You lay my Bible at my head,
And my prayer-book at my feet,
And if any of my playmates ask for me,
Just tell them I've gone to sleep."

This was published in the *University of Virginia Magazine*, December, 1912, and also in Professor Smith's article in the *Musical Quarterly*.

It is interesting that the Negro variant that Mrs. Dashiell knew has discarded the element of Jewish persecution and transformed the theme into a general terror tale, while the Negro version from Alabama has retained the older motivation. Since the Negroes have not been associated directly with any idea of Jews murdering Christians in this fashion, it is natural that the theme should fade away in their rendering of the song. Here, as in the version of *Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight*, the ballad form is changed to the first person.

Lord Lovel, as might be expected of one of the best-known ballads, appears in a Negro version in North Carolina. It was taken down from the singing of Mr. Busbee, who learned it in his childhood from his Negro nurse, Mammy Mahaly.

LORD LOVEL



Lord Lov-el, he stood at his cas - tle wall, A-comb-in' his milk-white
steed; La - dy Nan - cy Bell came a - rid - in' by, To
wish her fond lov-er good speed, speed, speed, To wish her fond lover good speed.

Lord Lovel, he stood at his castle wall,
A-combin' his milk-white steed;
Lady Nancy Bell came a-ridin' by,
To wish her fond lover good speed, speed, speed,
To wish her fond lover good speed.

"Oh, where are you goin', Lord Lovel?" she said.

"Oh, where are you goin'?" said she.

"I'm goin' away for a year an' a day,
Strange countries for to see, see, see,
Strange countries for to see."

He had n't been gone but a year an' a day,
 Strange countries for to see,
 When very strange thoughts came into his head
 About his Lady Nancy-cy-cy,
 About his Lady Nancy.

He rode an' he rode all a long summer day,
 Till he came to London town.
 An' there he met a funeral,
 An' the people a-mournin' around, round, round,
 An' the people a-mournin' around.

"Oh, who is dead?" Lord Lovel he said,
 "Oh, who is dead?" said he.
 "It's my lord's lady," an old woman said,
 "Some call her the Lady Nancy-cy-cy,
 Some call her the Lady Nancy."

He ordered the bier to be opened wide,
 The shroud to be folded down.
 An' then he kissed her clay-cold lips,
 An' the tears they come trinklin' down, down, down,
 An' the tears they come trinklin' down.

Lady Nancy she died as it mought be to-day,
 Lord Lovel he died to-morrow.
 Lady Nancy she dies ouden pure, pure grief,
 Lord Lovel he died ouden sorrow-row-row,
 Lord Lovel he died ouden sorrow.

Lady Nancy they buried by the tall church spire,
 Lord Lovel they buried beside her.
 And ouden her bosom they grew a red rose,
 And ouden his'n a brier-rier-rier,
 And ouden his'n a brier.

They grew an' they grew to the tall steeple top,
 An' there they could get no higher.
 An' there they entwined in a true lovers' knot,
 Which all true lovers admire-riere-riere,
 Which all true lovers admire.

Miss Lucy T. Latane reports a version entitled *Lord Lovell and Lady Nancy Bell*, which her mother and aunt learned from their Negro mammy in Louisa County, Virginia, in the forties.

A Negro version of the story of the Babes in the Wood was given to me by Talmadge Marsh, of Straight College, New Orleans, through the courtesy of Worth Tuttle Hedden. Talmadge says that

his old aunt used to sing this to him. She sang it to various tunes, none of which he remembers well enough to reproduce.

Once upon a time, long, long ago,
Two little babes were lost in the woods.
They wandered and wandered all through the woods.
The sun went down, and the moon gave no light.
The two little babes they died in the woods.

Then a robin came whose breast was so red,
He spread green leaves over the dead babies.
And this is the song that he did sing.
Two little babes were lost in the woods.
The sun went down and the moon gave no light.
And the two little babes, they died in the woods.¹

A Negro song, which is a version of *Three Jolly Welshmen*, an old English song, was given me by Mrs. J. S. Diggs, of Lynchburg, Virginia, as she says that this is a very old song and that it was sung years ago by Negroes in Campbell and Bedford Counties.

SO WE HUNTED AND WE HOLLERED

So we hunted and we hollered,
And the first thing we did find
Was a barn in the meadow,
And that we left behind.

One said it was a barn,
And the other said, "Nay!"
They all said a church
With the steeple washed away.

So we hunted and we hollered
And the next thing we did find
Was a cow in the meadow,
And that we left behind.

One said it was a cow,
And the other said, "Nay!"
One said, "It's an elephant
With the snout washed away."

¹ This is a version of an old children's song, printed in America as early as 1818, to which Professor Kittredge gives a number of references in the *Journal of American Folklore*, XXXV, 349, in connection with a report of it in an article by Albert H. Tolman and Mary O. Eddy. The ballad is found in Percy's *Reliques*.

So we hunted and we hollered
 And the next thing we did find
 Was an owl in the ivy bush,
 And that we left behind.

One said it was an owl,
 And the other said, "Nay!"
 One said it was the devil,
 And we all ran away.

The Forum (Philadelphia Press, March, 1908) gives a song, called *Old Circus Song*, as sung in Alabama by Negroes seventy years ago, which is evidently a variant of the song Mrs. Diggs learned in Virginia.

OLD CIRCUS SONG

I went a-whooping and a-hollering, for the first thing I could find
 Was a frog in a well, and that I left behind.
 Some said, "It's a frog," but I said, "Nay!"
 Some said "It's a sea-bird with its feathers torn away.
 Look a-there, now!"

I went a-whooping and a-hollering, for the next thing I could find
 Was an ice-pond in the meadow, and that I left behind.
 Some said, "It's an ice-pond," but I said, "Nay!"
 Some said, "It's a pane of glass, but it's nearly washed away.
 Look a-there, now!"

I went a-whooping and a-hollering, for the next thing I could find
 Was an old house on the hill-top, and that I left behind.
 Some said, "It's an old house," but I said, "Nay!"
 Some said, "It's a barn, but it's nearly rotted away.
 Look a-there, now!"

I went a-whooping and a-hollering, for the next thing I could find
 Was an owl in a thorn-tree, and that I left behind.
 Some said, "It's an owl," but I said, "Nay!"
 Some said, "It's the devil, and let us run away!
 Look a-there, now!"¹

¹ Professor Kittredge writes: "Similar version in Cox, 'Folk-Songs of the South,' No. 165, where I have given a number of references. That the song was known as early as 1668 is shown by a passage from Davenant's comedy, *The Rivals* (licensed and printed in that year), Act 3 (4to, p. 34; 'Dramatic Works,' 1874, v, 264):

"'There were three Fools at mid-summer run mad
 About an Howlet, a quarrel they had,
 The one said 't was an Owle, the other he said nay,
 The third said it was a Hawk but the Bells were cutt away.'"

A Negro version of *Barbara Allan*, from Virginia, was sent to me by Professor C. Alphonso Smith. I had wondered if the Negroes had failed to appreciate and appropriate this most familiar and beloved of all the ballads, and so I was pleased at this contribution. This is sung in Albemarle, Wythe, and Campbell Counties, Virginia.

In London town, whar I was raised,
Dar war a youth a-dwellin',
He fell in love wid a putty fair maid,
Her name 't war Bob-ree Allin.

He co'ted her for seben long years;
She said she would not marry;
Poor Willie went home and war takin' sick,
And ve'y likely died.

He den sen' out his waitin' boy
Wid a note for Bob-ree Allin.
So close, ah, she read, so slow, ah, she walk;
"Go tell him I'm a-comin'."

She den step up into his room.
And stood an' looked upon him.
He stretched to her his pale white hands:
"Oh, won't you tell me howdy?"

"Have you forgot de udder day,
When we war in de pawlor,
You drank your health to de gals around,
And slighted Bob-ree Allin?"

"Oh, no; oh, no — my dear young miss;
I think you is mistaking;
Ef I drank my healt' to de gals around,
'T war love for Bob-ree Allin."

"An' now I'm sick and ve'y sick,
An' on my deathbed lyin',
One kiss or two fum you, my dear,
Would take away dis dyin'."

"Dat kiss or two you will not git,
Not ef your heart was breakin';
I cannot keep you from death,
So farewell," said Bob-ree Allin.

He tu'n his pale face to de wall,
An' den began er cryin';
An' every tear he shed appeared
Hard-hearted Bob-ree Allin.

She walked across de fiel's nex' day
 An' heerd de birds a-singin',
 An' every note dey seemed to say:
 "Hard-hearted Bob-ree Allin."

She war walkin' 'cross de fiel' nex' day,
 An' spied his pale corpse comin'.
 "Oh, lay him down upon de groun',
 An' let me look upon him."

As she war walkin' down de street
 She heerd de death bells ringin',
 An' every tone dey seemed to say:
 "Hard-a-hearted Bob-ree Allin."

"Oh, fader, fader, dig-a my grave,
 An' dig it long an' narrow;
 My true love he have died to-day,
 An' I must die to-morrow.

"Oh, mudder, mudder, make-a my s'roud
 An' make it long and narrow;
 Sweet Willie died of love for me
 An' I must die to-morrow."

Sweet Willie war buried in de new churchyard,
 An' Bob-ree Allin beside him.
 Outen his grave sprang a putty red rose,
 An' Bob-ree Allin's a briar.

Dey grew as high as de steeple top,
 An' could n't grow no higher,
 An' den dey tied a true-love knot,
 De sweet rose roun' de briar.

Professor Smith, who is custodian of the archives of the Virginia Folk-lore Society, tells of other instances of Negro versions of ballads, as found by members of the society.

The Old Man in the North Countree (Child, No. 10) was taken down from the singing of Negroes in Fairfax County.

The Cherry Tree Carol (Child, No. 54) is said to be current among the Negroes of North Carolina as well as of Virginia. Professor Smith was the first to discover this ballad in America, and gives the first stanza of it in the *Bulletin of Virginia Folk-lore*.

Joseph was an old man,
 An old man was he,
 And he married Mary,
 The Queen of Galilee.

This is reported from the singing of an old Negro in Spottsylvania County, Virginia, who originally belonged to a family in Orange County.

Miss Martha Davis, of Winthrop College, Rock Hill, South Carolina, writes to Professor Smith of the finding of this old ballad in South Carolina:

"A few months ago several of the teachers here went to hear a Negro preacher one night, a picturesque exhorter of the old type. They came back with a story, marvelous to them, of Joseph and May Virgin pickin' cherries from a cherry tree, a part of the Gospel, according to the preacher. Well, old ballads are often found in strange company."

Lord Arnold's Wife (Child, No. 81) has been heard sung by Negroes in Campbell County, Virginia.

Mr. John Stone, now president of the Virginia Folk-lore Society, reports that he has heard of the Negroes in Virginia singing several of the songs about which I wrote to inquire. "But I myself have collected only a fragment of *Dandoo*, which was learned from a white man, a tune to the *Cherry Tree Carol*, and a tune to *Pretty Polly*."

Child, in his third volume, page 515, says that *Lamkin* has been sung in Prince William County by Negroes who learned it from Scotch settlers.

Professor Smith says that the ballad *Our Goodman*, or *Hame Cam Our Gudeman*, which has spread from Great Britain into Germany, Hungary, and Scandinavia, is sung among the Negroes of Campbell County, Virginia, as *Hobble and Bobble*.

This humorous old ballad has had wide circulation as a broadside, having been translated into German in 1789. Its simple form of structure and its cleverness of folk-humor are such as would naturally appeal to colored people.

A song which Professor Kittredge writes me is an old Irish song has been adopted over here among the Negroes so successfully that even some folk-lorists put it down as a Negro ballad.¹ An article in *Lippincott's Magazine* for December, 1869, says:

"Many years ago there originated a Negro ballad founded on the incidents of a famous horse-race, on which large sums were staked.

¹ Professor Kittredge says: "*Skewball* is Irish. I enclose a text. The piece is common in English broadsides. Readings vary in details. You will note that the Squire is the owner, not the judge. It's obviously absurd for the Squire to talk to the rider (as in stanza 5). Probably, if we had a correct text, it would be *Skewball* who addresses the rider — just as he spoke to his master in an earlier stanza. *That* would be a good touch. And, in fact, in one version (in a broadside) I find — in addition to the stanza in which the Squire speaks to the rider — the following:

Its popularity among the Negroes throughout the slave-holding states was great, and it was their nearest approach to an epic. It

“‘When that they came to the middle of the course,
Skewball and his rider began a discourse,
Come, my brave rider, come tell unto me,
How far is Miss Grizzle this moment from me.’

This is a Manchester (England) broadside (Bebbington, No. 206). In this version the mare with whom Skewball races is called ‘Miss Grizzle.’”

(From *The Vocal Library*, London, 1822, p. 526.)

1424. SKEW BALL

Come, gentlemen sportsmen. I pray, listen all,
I will sing you a song in the praise of Skew Ball;
And how he came over, you shall understand,
It was by Squire Mervin, the pearl of this land.
And of his late actions as you’ve heard before,
He was lately challeng’d by one Sir Ralph Gore,
For five hundred pounds, on the plains of Kildare,
To run with Miss Sportly, that famous grey mare.

Skew Ball then hearing the wager was laid,
Unto his kind master said — Don’t be afraid;
For if on my side you thousands lay would,
I would rig on your castle a fine mass of gold!
The day being come and the cattle walk’d forth,
The people came flocking from East, South, and North,
For to view all the sporters, as I do declare,
And venture their money all on the grey mare.

Squire Mervin then, smiling, unto them did say,
Come, gentlemen, all that have money to lay;
And you that have hundreds I will lay you all,
For I’ll venture thousands on famous Skew Ball.
Squire Mervin then, smiling, unto them did say,
Come, gentlemen sportsmen, to morrow’s the day,
Spurs, horses, and saddles and bridles prepare,
For you must away to the plains of Kildare.

The day being come, and the cattle walk’d out,
Squire Mervin order’d his rider to mount,
And all the spectators to clear the way,
The time being come not one moment delay.
The cattle being mounted away they did fly,
Skew Ball like an arrow pass’d Miss Sportly by;
The people went up to see them go round,
They said in their hearts they ne’er touch’d the ground.

But as they were running in the midst of the sport,*
Squire Mervin to his rider began his discourse:
O! loving kind rider, come tell unto me,
How far at this moment Miss Sportly’s from thee;
O! loving kind master, you bear a great style,
The grey mare’s behind you a long English mile.
If the saddle maintains me, I’ll warrant you there,
You ne’er shall be beat on the plains of Kildare.
But as they were running by the distant chair,†
The gentlemen cry’d out — Skew Ball never fear,
Altho’ in this country thou wast ne’er seen before,
Thou hast beaten Miss Sportly, and broke Sir Ralph Gore.

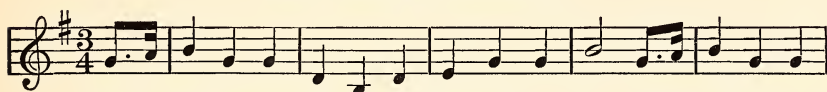
* Read “course” (as in the broadside)?

† Var. (broadside): “But as she was running by the distance chair.”

was generally sung in chanting style, with marked emphasis and the prolongation of the concluding syllables of each line. The tenor of the narrative indicated that the 'Galliant Gray Mar' was imported from Virginia to Kentucky to beat the 'Noble Skewball,' and the bard is evidently a partisan of the latter."

This article gives disconnected stanzas of the ballad, evidently considering that the reader would not be interested in the whole of it.

THE NOBLE SKEWBALL



When the day was ap-point-ed for Skew-ball to run, The hors-es was



read-y, the peo-ple did come, Some from old Vir-gin-ny, and



from Ten-nes-see— Some from Al-a-bam-a, and from ev-ry-where.

O! ladies and gentlemen, come one and come all;
 Did you ever hear tell of the Noble Skewball?
 Stick close to your saddle and don't be alarmed,
 For you shall not be jostled by the Noble Skewball.

.

Squire Marvin is evidently a judge of the race, for one stanza appeals to him.

Squire Marvin, Squire Marvin, just judge my horse well,
 For all that I want is to see justice done.

.

When the horses were saddled and the word was give, *Go!*
 Skewball shot like an arrow just out of the bow.

The last stanza given is in complimentary vein.

A health to Miss Bradley, that Galliant Gray Mar,
 Likewise to the health of the Noble Skewball.

E. C. Perrow (in an article, "Songs and Rhymes from the South," in the *Journal of American Folk-lore*, 1915, XXVIII, 134) has a song from Mississippi Negroes which is apparently sung by the jockey who rode the "Noble Skewball" in the famous race.

Ol' Marster, an' ol' Mistis, I'm er reskin' my life
Tryin' to win this great fortune for you an' your wife.

Oh, was n't I lucky not to lose?
Oh, was n't I lucky not to lose?
Oh, was n't I lucky not to lose?

Ol' Skewball was a gray hoss, ol' Molly was brown;
Ol' Skewball outrun Molly on the very fust go-round.

Oh, was n't I lucky not to lose?
Oh, was n't I lucky not to lose?
Oh, was n't I lucky not to lose?

My hosses is hongry an' they will not eat hay,
So I'll drive on a piece further, an' I'll feed on the way.

Oh, was n't I lucky not to lose?
Oh, was n't I lucky not to lose?
Oh, was n't I lucky not to lose?

Doubtless a definite search for this sort of material would show a number of other traditional ballads surviving among the Negroes of the various southern states, especially those of an older civilization. It is an investigation that should be made soon, however, for the old songs are being crowded out of existence by the popularity of phonographs and the radio, which start the Negroes singing other types of song, to the exclusion of the fine old ballads and their own folk-songs. This research might form the basis for an extremely interesting and scholarly piece of work, which would have sociological as well as literary value.

III

NEGRO BALLADS

THE Negro loves a ballad, his own or another's. Fond as he is of a story, and using song as his second speech, he is particularly happy in combining the two into one product. He cherishes the traditional ballads that have come down from the white men, adding his distinctive touches to them till his versions are his own; and likewise he makes his racial versions of modern ballads of the whites, as *Casey Jones*, for example, the tale of the brave engineer. But he is not content with that. He must make his own ballads, sing his own stories in song. The Negro is by nature a mimetic creature, dramatizing all he knows, his experiences and the life about him, expressing everything in form and motion. Abstract ideas appeal to him less than action, and his poetry in general loves to symbolize and personify his philosophizings. Even his religious songs tell definite stories more often than not, balladize "Norah" and his ark, Cain and Abel, Samson and "Delijah," and the rest, with well-defined plots and climatic progression of events.

The Negro is a born dramatist. Who else is capable of such epic largeness of gesture, such eloquent roll of eye, such expressive hesitation in speech? Any old darky in the cornfield or cabin can put life and color and movement into a narrative that in a white man's speech might "come limping," to use the Negro's term. So it is natural that the ballad form, with its distinct personalities, its action and dialogue, should be dear to the Negro heart, as indeed it is to all of us until we ignorantly become too learned to realize the simpler values. And sometimes a scholar makes of the living ballad a thing of dust and dry bones — which the Negro would never be guilty of. He loves it for itself, not for any theories concerning it.

One interesting variation that the Negro shows in his treatment of the ballad is to use the first person whenever he likes. While impersonality is held one distinguishing mark of the ballad as traditional with the whites, and a lack of identification with any specific author or transmitter is considered a merit, the Negro freely uses the first person in his racial ballads and also in those he has taken over from the whites. He brings in his "I" prominently in his versions of the

traditional ballads learned generations ago from his white masters, which does not mean that he is claiming authorship of the ballad, but merely that he thinks it more dramatic, more instant in its effect if it is put in that form.

For example, the version of *Lady Isabel and the Elf-Knight* which an aged Negro woman in Waco, Texas, gave me, as learned from her mother, uses the first person. And the Negro version of *The Jew's Daughter*, reported by Professor Alphonso Smith, uses the same person — a quaint device in this case, where the narrator is made to recount his own murder! That illogic evidently gave no offence to Negro singers or hearers.

John A. Lomax quotes a version of a Negro ballad, *The Boll Weevil*, where the singer (not necessarily the one who originated the song) felt impelled to affix his identification mark in the final stanza.

If anybody axes you who writ this song,
Tell 'em it was a dark-skinned Nigger
Wid a pair of blue-duckins on,
A-lookin' fur a home,
Jes' a-lookin' fur a home.

A song of slavery times, which is still widely current in the South, varying somewhat in different localities, is concerned with a "yaller gal" that somebody's "ole mars'r" had. This version was given me by Dr. Charles Carroll, of New Orleans.

OLE MARS'R HAD A YALLER GAL

Ole Mars'r had a yaller gal,
He brought her from the South;
Her hair it curled so very tight
She could n't shut her mouth.

Her eyes they were so very small
They both ran into one,
And when a fly got in her eye,
'T was like a June-bug in the sun.

Her nose it was so very long
It turned up like a squash,
And when she got her dander up,
It made me laugh, by gosh!

Ole Mars'r had no hooks or nails,
Nor anything like that,
So on this darling's nose he used
To hang his coat and hat.

One day he went to get his hat and coat
 And neither one was there.
 For she had swallowed both . . .

He took her to the tailor shop
 To have her mouth made small;
 The lady took in one big breath
 And swallowed tailor and all.

A variant is given by Miss Emilia Walter, of Charleston, South Carolina. She says that this was sung to the banjo and guitar and used often as a serenade. This has a chorus, which was lacking in the other.

OL' MARS'R HAD A PRETTY YALLER GAL

Ol' Mars'r had a pretty yaller gal,
 He brought her fum de Souf;
 Her hair it curled so berry tight
 She could n't shut her mouf.

Chorus

Way down in Mississippi
 Where de gals dey are so pretty,
 W'at a happy time, way down in old Car'line!
 Dis darky fell in love
 Wid a han'some yaller Dinah.
 Higho — higho — higho!

Louise Laurens of Shelbyville, Kentucky, contributes a version with a different chorus.

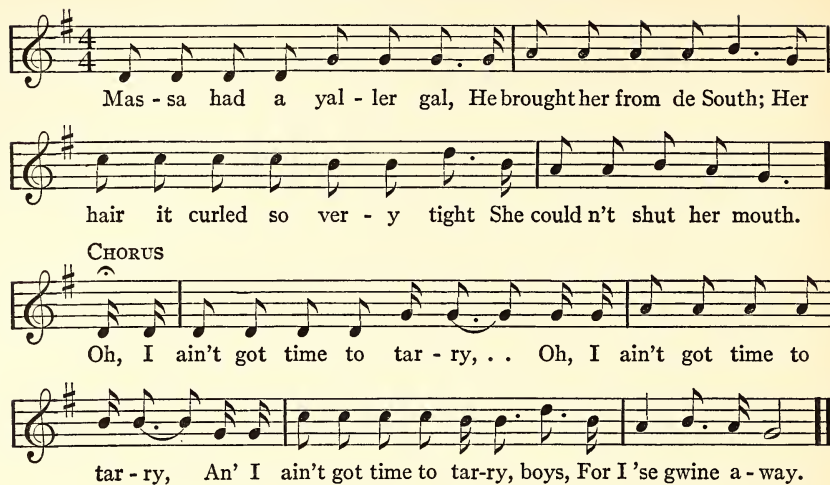
MASSA HAD A YALLER GAL

Massa had a yaller gal;
 He brought her from de South;
 Her hair it curled so very tight
 She could n't shut her mouth.

Chorus

Oh, I ain't got time to tarry,
 Oh, I ain't got time to tarry,
 An' I ain't got time to tarry, boys,
 For I'se gwine away.

MASSA HAD A YALLER GAL



Mas - sa had a yal - ler gal, He brought her from de South; Her
hair it curled so ver - y tight She could n't shut her mouth.

CHORUS
Oh, I ain't got time to tar - ry, . . Oh, I ain't got time to
tar - ry, An' I ain't got time to tar-ry, boys, For I 'se gwine a - way.

He took her to de tailor,
To have her mouth made small.
She swallowed up the tailor,
Tailorshop and all.

Chorus

Massa had no hooks nor nails
Nor anything like that;
So on this darky's nose he used
To hang his coat and hat.

Chorus

A less comely person of a different sex is celebrated or anathematized in another song, which seems to be fairly well known in the South, as parts of it have been sent in by various persons. According to the testimony of several people who remember events before the war, this is an authentic slavery-time song. The air and some of the words were given by my sister, Mrs. George Scarborough, as learned from the Negroes on a plantation in Texas, and other parts by an old man in Louisiana, who sang it to the same tune. He said he had known it from his earliest childhood and had heard the slaves sing it on the plantations. A version was also sent by a writer whose pen name is Virginia Stait.

COTTON-EYED JOE



Don't you re-mem-ber, don't you know, Don't you re-mem-ber

Cot-ton-eyed Joe? Cot-ton-eyed Joe, Cot-ton-eyed Joe,

What did make you treat me so? I'd 'a' been mar-ried

for-ty year a-go Ef it had n't a-been for Cot-ton-eyed Joe.

Don't you remember, don't you know,
 Don't you remember Cotton-eyed Joe?
 Cotton-eyed Joe, Cotton-eyed Joe,
 What did make you treat me so?
 I'd 'a' been married forty year ago
 Ef it had n't a-been for Cotton-eyed Joe!

Cotton-eyed Joe, Cotton-eyed Joe,
 He was de nig dat sarved me so, —
 Tuck my gal away fum me,
 Carried her off to Tennessee.
 I'd 'a' been married forty year ago
 Ef it had n't a-been for Cotton-eyed Joe.

His teeth was out an' his nose was flat,
 His eyes was crossed, — but she did n't mind dat.
 Kase he was tall, and berry slim,
 An' so my gal she follered him.
 I'd 'a' been married forty year ago
 Ef it had n't a-been for Cotton-eyed Joe.

She was de prettiest gal to be found
 Anywhar in de country round;
 Her lips was red an' her eyes was bright,
 Her skin was black but her teeth was white.
 I'd 'a' been married forty year ago
 Ef it had n't a-been for Cotton-eyed Joe.

Dat gal, she sho' had all my love,
 An' swore fum me she 'd never move,
 But Joe hoodooed her, don't you see,
 An' she run off wid him to Tennessee.
 I'd 'a' been married forty year ago
 Ef it had n't a-been for Cotton-eyed Joe!

Another ballad, which is said to be very old, since, as Mr. Charley Danne, of Trevilians, Virginia, who gave it to me, said, "The song about the fox was recalled at the request of my wife by an elderly gentleman who remembers having heard it often sung by slaves," is typical in that it shows the Negro's fondness for dramatic dialogue and his interest in animals. One can imagine how vividly the plantation slaves must have sung this spirited song recounting the wily fox's exploits and misfortunes.

The fox and the lawyer was different in kind.
 The fox and the lawyer was different in mind.
 The lawyer loved done meat because it was easy to chaw.
 The fox was not choice but would take his blood raw.

Out from his den on a moonshiny night
 The fox caught a fat hen by his cunning and sleight.
 On the very same night, straight back to his den,
 Next morning surrounded by the tracks of dog men.

Men says, Surrender, Mister, I am at your door,
 For you shall never eat of my hens any more;
 For I shall never trust you out of my sight
 Till you and these dog men shall take a fair fight.

O, how can you call such a fight as this fair
 When there is but my one self and all these dogs hair [here]?
 I'll take a fair race with the best dog you've got,
 And if he will catch me I'll die on the spot.

Ah no, Mister, that scheme will not do,
 For I never intend to trust you nor none of your crew;
 For none but dog lawyers can plead on dog side
 And if they condemn you they'll tear off your hide.

Another song, said to be very old, was given me by Reverend J. G. Dickinson, of Evergreen, Alabama. It was sung by slaves on plantations before the war, and is still cherished, in some white families at least, until now. Elizabeth Dickinson, now of Columbia Univer-

sity, says that her father was accustomed to use the first stanza as a "waking-up" song for his children, and that she hated to hear the strains of *Old Jesse* start up, especially on a morning like that described in the initial stanza.

OLD JESSE

One cold an' frost - y morn-in' Just as de sun did riz, De
pos - sum roared, de rac-coon howled, 'Cause he be - gun to friz. He
drew his - se'f up in a knot Wid his knees up to his chin, An'
ev - 'ry - thing had to cl'ar de track, When he stretched out a - gin.

CHORUS

Old Jes-se was a gem-man, A-mong de old - en times.

One cold an' frosty mornin'
Just as de sun did riz,
De possum roared, de raccoon howled,
'Cause he begun to friz.
He drew hisse'f up in a knot
Wid his knees up to his chin,
An' ev'rything had to cl'ar de track,
When he stretched out agin.

Chorus

Old Jesse was a gemman,
Among de olden times.

Nigger never went to free school,
Nor any odder college,
An' all de white folks wonder whar
Dat nigger got his knowledge.

He chawed up all de Bible
 An' den spat out de Scripiter,
 An' when he 'gin to arger strong,
 He were a snortin' ripter!

Chorus

Nigger used to pick de banjo,
 He play so berry well [strong?];
 He allus play dat good ole tune,
 "So Go It While You're Young."
 He play so clear, he play so loud,
 He skeered de pigs an' goats.
 He allus tuck a pint ob yeast
 To raise his highest notes.

Chorus

Virginia Stait sends a ballad which she thinks is old. It certainly recounts incidents that are of slavery times. The Negro's terror and his devices to escape attack are dramatically presented, and one aspect of slave life is shown which might tempt some present-day Negroes to regret emancipation — the daily ration of liquor given by the master.

'T WAS ON DE BLUFF

'Twas down on de bluff, in de state ob Indiana,
 Dat's where I uster lib, chick up in de banner,
 Ebery mornin' nearly, my marster gib me liquor,
 An' I took a little boat an' pushed out de quicker.

Oh, 'twas up de river drif' an' 'twas in er little skiff,
 An' I caught as many cat-fish as any nigger lif'!

I turns around my skiff — think I see a alligator,
 I picked up my rod an' I chunked a sweet potato.
 I picked up my pole and I tried for to vex him,
 But I could n't fool him bad, noways I could fix him.

So I up with a brick and fotched him sech a lick
 I found 't was a pine knot upon a big stick.

Then I turn around my skiff, think I see a white man comin';
 "Lord," says I to myself, "here's no time for runnin'!"
 So I jumped on my horse, threw my cloak around my shoulders,
 An' I stood jes' as still as a old militia soldier.

An' he pass all around, like a hound upon de soun';
 He took me for a mile-post, stuck into de ground.

An' my ol' marster died on the leventeenth of April.
 Jack dug de hole at de root de sugar maple.
 He dug a big hole, right down upon de level,
 An' I have n't got a doubt but he went to de —.

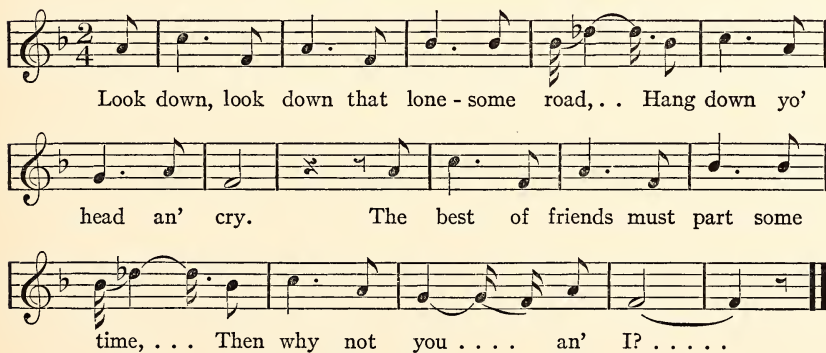
Evelyn Cary Williams, of Lynchburg, Virginia, sends a brief ballad which is difficult to place with respect to time. It may be a genuine Negro ballad, or it may be one remembered from the singing of the whites. I have seen it nowhere else, and so I cannot say. There are certain typical Negro touches about it, for the "lonesome road" is often referred to in Negro songs, and in Negro ballads one often hangs down his head and cries, as in one of the religious songs, for example:

"What you gwine to do when Death comes tippin' in yo' room?"
 "I'm gwine to hang my head, I'm gwine to hang my head and cry."

"True love," also is a favorite term with Negro songsters, and appears in numerous love ditties.

On the other hand, there is a sort of literary simplicity about it that is like the lovely little Caroline songs of England. I wish that I knew the history of this. Miss Williams gives it as taken down from the singing of Charles Galloway, a black man, uneducated, a worker on the roads in Virginia.

THE LONESOME ROAD



Look down, look down that lone - some road, . . Hang down yo'
 head an' cry. The best of friends must part some
 time, . . . Then why not you an' I?

"Look down, look down that lonesome road,
 Hang down yo' head an' cry.
 The best of friends must part some time,
 An' why not you an' I?"

"True love, true love, what have I done,
 That you should treat me so?
 You caused me to walk and talk with you
 Like I never done befo'."

These old songs are interesting in themselves, as survivals of the ballad-making art in America, apart from their racial significance. They show that America, while cherishing with delight the traditional ballads of England and Scotland, the weightless cargo of song brought over in brave adventurous ships, while not forgetting the quaint and lovely tales told in verse that generations now dead took pleasure in, has produced ballads of its own as well. This new land, too, has had the power to seize upon an incident and make it memorable in words that sing themselves, to tell in picturing lines a story of some local character, some hero or some villain of this side the water.

One does not need, in order to appreciate them, to argue for these Negro ballads of slavery times the literary quality that inheres in those our Scotch and English forbears composed. One may value them for their homely simplicity, their rough humor, their awkward wistfulness; and though they would not stand the rigid tests of poetry, they are indigenous ballads, made in America and based on native characters and happenings; hence are worth our study. They are newer than the ballads of the old country, but they are as unidentified as to authorship, and they circulated among the people of the South, both white and black, having been sung on many plantations where song lightened labor and made the Negro almost forget that he was working, so great was his pleasure in his song.

In 1904, Professor Kittredge, in his introduction to the one-volume edition of Child's "English and Scottish Popular Ballads," wrote: "Ballad-making, so far as the English-speaking nations are concerned, is a lost art; and the same may be said of ballad-singing."

In a letter to Professor Alphonso Smith, dated February 20, 1915, he says: "When I wrote 'the same may be said of ballad-singing,' I was, of course, in error. Ballad-singing is by no means a lost art, either in Great Britain, or in America. The evidence for its survival has come in since I wrote. If I were now summing up the facts I should modify my statement."

I wonder if Professor Kittredge would not modify also his statement that ballad-making is a lost art, if he were to review the Negro folk-songs of to-day. The Negroes in the South are now singing ballads which of necessity are of recent composition, since they celebrate recent happenings. These ballads are as far from being linked with the names of specific authors as are those in Child's collections, so that if the impersonality of composition be a proof of ballad art, that is not wanting here. No Negro can tell you who made the song he sings, for he is not at all interested in author, or "maker," but in

the story, in the incident and character the song relates. A collector may ask in vain as to authorship, for he finds nothing.

These ballads of to-day, as sung by the Negroes of the South, are as fluid in form, as changeable in version, as different in varying localities, as ever were English or Scotch songs of centuries ago. They are being made now, as in the past, and are the products of recognized individual composers rather than of many singers. What is communal origin, if it does not imply that different singers contributed their share to the making of a song? One does not need to believe that the ballad was made all at once, that spontaneous group-singing on one occasion produced it. But these Negroes illustrate their type of communal composition when they add to or subtract from or change the songs they sing. Many times I have been told by Negro singers that they vary their song to suit their mood, that they rarely sing stanzas twice in the same order, and that individual singers will add to the song at will.

The printed page has nothing to do with the Negro's circulation of his ballads. The Negro who is fondest of his ballads is the one who is not interested particularly in print, perhaps is altogether ignorant of it. (That is not true in all cases, of course.) The ballad is scattered over a state by the singing of the care-free vagrant Negroes who go from place to place in search of work, or are sent about on construction gangs, and so forth. Songs lightly pass the borders of states, stealing a ride as casually as the tramps who ride the sleepers. Tunes may persist while the words vary, or words may remain somewhat the same and be sung to different airs. In different states a song may celebrate different local characters, bring in names of different towns, and in each locality be thought of as a purely native product. But a careful comparison may show that the versions are but variants of one ballad, started by some unknown soldier of song, and kept alive by thousands of others. A song passes from lip to lip, till it is almost unrecognizable, and yet is the same.

The Negro has no theory of ballad origin to expound or explode. Communal composition as a theory of literary art concerns him not at all, but he makes use of it as a practice in his spontaneous singing. The Negro is a born improviser, and takes delight in adding to a song, his own or another's. A spiritual or a shout-song sung at a camp meeting may be prolonged indefinitely, as any individual singer may start a new stanza, which is easy to construct because of the simple framework. The congregation will quickly catch it up, and perhaps it becomes a permanent part of the song after that, or perhaps it is never thought of again. Mrs. Busbee, of North Caro-

lina, tells of an occasion on which she says she was "present at the birth of a ballad." The Negro preacher at a camp meeting quoted a verse of scripture and then chanted a stanza of a song he improvised from it. The congregation instantly caught the tune and sang the stanza after him. Before the song was ended, the congregation was improvising additional stanzas, and the whole was sung enthusiastically and repeated many times thereafter. Mrs. Busbee says that she was the only white person present at the meeting and was tremendously impressed by the folk-loristic significance of the occurrence.

Hatcher Hughes reports having been an auditor at the origin of a spontaneous communal ballad in the mountain districts of North Carolina some time ago. A shiftless character whose first name was John, and whose last name, while known, is charitably withheld, had maliciously killed a fine hunting dog, Old Lead, a favorite "tree dog" for hunting squirrels. The community was greatly incensed over the occurrence, accused John of wishing to eat the dog, and threatened to beat him severely. His wife, Mary, wept and begged for mercy for him. The neighbors were gathered together discussing the situation, when, after some tentative tuning up, a ballad flashed into being. Mr. Hughes can recall only the first stanza:

Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,
Killed Old Lead and home he run.
Old Lead was eat, and John was beat,
And Mary ran bawling down the street.

Mr. Hughes says that the word "street" was used purely for effect of rhyme! He says that others present improvised additional stanzas, and that the song was added to and sung in the community for a long time, as a genuine example of spontaneous communal composition of folk-song.

John A. Lomax argues for the communal authorship of *The Boll Weevil*, saying in an article in the *Journal of American Folk-lore*, volume xxviii: "The ballad of *The Boll Weevil* and other songs in my collection are absolutely known to have been composed by groups of people whose community life made their thinking similar, and present valuable corroborative evidence of the theory advanced by Professor Gummere and Professor Kittredge concerning the origin of the ballads from which come those now contained in the great Child collection."

This ballad of *The Boll Weevil* can be more definitely placed with respect to location and time than can many folk-songs. It must

naturally have had its origin in a cotton-growing state, and it could not have been composed, communally or otherwise, before the insect in question crossed the Rio Grande and began its depredations in Texas. That was about thirty years ago, which fact fixes the song as of recent origin.

Each cotton-growing state has its own version of *The Boll Weevil*, which varies in length and incident from other versions, but is essentially the same. Here is a version given by Roberta Anderson, of Texas, that differs somewhat from the one I used in my book, "From a Southern Porch," but is like it.

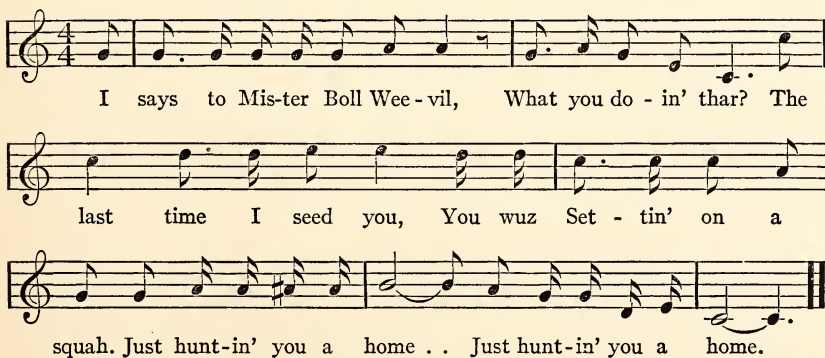
I found a little boll weevil,
An' put 'im on de ice.
Thought dat dat 'ud kill him,
But he say, "Oh, ain't dat nice?"
Dis is mah home, dis is mah home!"

Found anodder little weevil,
Put 'im in de sand.
Thought dat sure would kill 'im,
But he stood hit lack a man.
Dat was his home, dat was his home!

De farmer say to de merchant,
"Oh, what you think of dat?"
I found a little weevil
In mah new Stetson hat,
Huntin' a home, huntin' a home!"

Another Texas form of the ballad runs as follows. I give only the first stanza.

MR. BOLL WEEVIL



I says to Mis-ter Boll Wee - vil, What you do - in' thar? The
last time I seed you, You wuz Set - tin' on a
squah. Just hunt-in' you a home . . Just hunt-in' you a home.

I says to Mister Boll Weevil,
 "What you doin' thar?
 The last time I seed you,
 You wuz settin' on a squah,
 Just huntin' you a home,
 Just huntin' you a home."

Another version is given by Louise Garwood, of Houston, Texas.

Oh, have you heard de latest,
 De latest all yore own?
 All about de Boll Weevil
 Whut caused me to lose mah home?

First time ah saw de Boll Weevil
 He was settin' on de squah.
 Next time ah saw dat Weevil
 He was settin' everywhah,
 Jes' a-lookin' foh a home, — lookin' foh a home!

Fahmah say to de Weevil,
 "Whut makes yore head so red?"
 Weevil say to de fahmah,
 "It's a wondah ah ain't dead,
 Lookin' foh a home, lookin' foh a home!"

Nigger say to de Weevil,
 "Ah'll throw you in de hot sand."
 Weevil say to de nigger,
 "Ah'll stand hit lak a man.
 Ah'll have a home, ah'll have a home!"

Says de Captain to de Mistis,
 "Whut do you think ob dat?
 Dis Boll Weevil done make a nes'
 Inside mah Sunday hat;
 He'll have a home, — he'll have a home!"

Ef you wanta kill de Boll Weevil
 You betta staht in time.
 Use a little sugar
 An' lots o' turpentine,
 An' he'll be dead, — an' he'll be dead!

Mrs. Henry Simpson, of Dallas, Texas, remembers this version as she heard it sung by the workers on a plantation in the Brazos Bottom. Most of the stanzas conform generally to other versions, but these two are different:

Said the merchant to the farmer,
 "We're in an awful fix!
If things go on in this way,
 You'll have me in the sticks,
 Without a home, without a home!"

"Oh, Wife!" said Honey,
 "I don't know where we're at.
If the Boll Weevil goes on like this,
 We'll all be busted flat,
 We'll have no home, we'll have no home!"

Mabel Cranfill, also of Dallas, recalls a form of the ballad that has the refrain:

Boll Weevil's got a home, Babe,
Boll Weevil's got a home.

Lizzie Coleman, principal of a Negro school in Greenville, Mississippi, writes: "*The Boll Weevil* was composed by a man in Merivale, I believe. It is like many other ballads written by men in this state. The tune is made, the writer sings it and sells his song. His hearers catch the sound — and on it goes."

The boll weevil is a promising subject for balladry, since he furnishes many romantic motifs. He is an outlaw, hunted in every field. He has apparently superhuman powers of resistance to hardship, exposure, and attacks from man, the individual, and from organized society. He has an extraordinary cunning and trickery, can outwit and flout man, and go his way despite all human efforts to stop him. He is coming to be a beloved rascal like Bre'r Rabbit, his exploits and cunning joyed in even by those he defies; a picaresque hero with an international reputation for evil; a Robin Hood of the cotton-patch, admired while he is hunted down.

Doubtless in time a cycle of ballads will spring up with him as central character, a compensation in song for the economic ruin he has brought. Some of the versions of the ballad now in existence are said to have the mythical "hundred stanzas," so that already contemporary legendry is playing with this tiny, powerful villain. One correspondent writes, "I wish you could see the Negroes' faces light up when I mention *The Boll Weevil*, and they all say they could think of many stanzas if they had time."

Another ballad which appears in various sections of the South and is widely current among the Negroes, one of their most popular songs, relates the misadventures of a Negro woman and her faithless spouse. The title varies, being called in different versions *Franky*,

Pauly, Lilly, Georgy, Frankie and Johnnie, Franky and Albert, Franky Baker, and so forth. The stanzas are changed in order and in wording, but the chief incidents of the tale remain the same. I have a number of versions, no two of which are identical. The popularity of the song and the extent to which it is known were illustrated recently when F. P. A. of the *Tribune* "Conning Tower" played with it for some time, issuing from day to day parodies of the ballad, or different versions sent in by readers. Some stanzas and some versions are said to be unsuitable for print. I used one version in my "From a Southern Porch," a somewhat different form from these herein included.

The first is contributed by Roberta Anderson, of Texas, and tells the tragedy succinctly and with no waste verbage.

FRANKIE AND ALBERT

Frankie was a good woman,
As everybody knows.
She bought her po' Albert
A bran' new suit o' clo'se.
Oh, he's her man,
But he done her wrong!

Barkeeper said to Frankie,
"I won't tell you no lies:
I saw yo' po' Albert
Along with Sara Slies.
Oh, he's yo' man,
But he done you wrong!"

An' then they put po' Albert
In a bran-new livery hack,
Took him to the graveyard
But they never brought him back,
Oh, he's her man,
But he done her wrong!

Louise Garwood, of Houston, Texas, gives the following version of the catastrophe, a little fuller in detail:

Frankie was a good woman,
Everybody knows.
Paid about a hundred dollars
For the making of Albert's clothes.
"Oh, he was my man,
But he done me wrong!"

Standing on the street corner,
Did n't mean no harm.
Up in the second-story window
Saw Alice in Albert's arms!
 "Oh, he was my man,
 But he done me wrong!"

Frankie went down to the saloon,
Did n't go there for fun;
Underneath her silk petticoat
She carried a forty-one gun.
 "Oh, he was my man,
 But he done me wrong!"

"Listen here, Mister Bartender,
Don't you tell me no lies.
Have you seen that Nigger Albert
With the girl they call the Katy Fly?
 Oh, he was my man,
 But he done me wrong!"

Frankie shot Albert once,
Frankie shot Albert twice,
Third time she shot poor Albert
She took that Nigger's life.
 "Oh, he was my man,
 But he done me wrong!"

Rubber-tired carriage,
Kansas City hack,
Took poor Albert to the cemetery
But forgot to bring him back.
 "Oh, he was my man,
 But he done me wrong!"

W. H. Thomas, professor of English at Agricultural and Mechanical College, of Texas, and formerly president of the Texas Folk-lore Society, reported another version, in a paper read before the society.

Frankie went to the barkeeper's, to get a bottle of beer;
She says to the barkeeper: "Has my loving babe been here?"
 He was her man, babe, but he done her wrong.

The barkeeper says to Frankie: "I ain't going to tell you no lie;
Albert passed 'long here walking about an hour ago with a Nigger
 named Alkali."
 He was her man, babe, but he done her wrong.

Frankie went to Albert's house; she did n't go for fun;
 For underneath her apron was a blue-barrel forty-one.
 He was her man, babe, but he done her wrong.

When Frankie got to Albert's house, she did n't say a word,
 But she cut down upon poor Albert just like he was a bird.
 He was her man, babe, but she shot him down.

When Frankie left Albert's house, she lit out in a run,
 For underneath her apron was a smoking forty-one.
 He was her man, babe, but he done her wrong.

"Roll me over, doctor, roll me over slow.
 'Cause when you rolls me over, them bullets hurt me so.
 I was her man, babe, but she shot me down."

Frankie went to the church house and fell upon her knees,
 Crying, "Oh, Lord, have mercy, won't you give my heart some ease?
 He was my man, babe, but I shot him down."

Rubber-tired buggy, decorated hack,
 They took him to the graveyard, but they could n't bring him back.
 He was her man, babe, but he done her wrong.

Mrs. Tom Bartlett, of Marlin, Texas, sends a version with comment on that given by Professor Thomas. "You will notice that Mr. Thomas calls the cause of dissension between Frankie and Albert, 'Alkali,' but I am sure he is wrong. All who have given me any version at all agree that Alice caused the trouble, and one went so far as to name her Alice Fly. Some Negroes sing this, 'Georgia was a good woman,' but most of them agree that it was Frankie. Some say she paid only \$41 for his suit of clothes. All who have given me versions end up each stanza with, 'Oh, he was my man, but he done me wrong!' whereas you will note that Mr. Thomas says, 'He was her man, but she shot him down!'"

FRANKIE AND ALBERT

Frankie was a good woman,
 Everybody knows.
 Paid one hundred dollars
 For Albert a suit of clothes!
 For he was her man, but he done her wrong!

Frankie went to Albert's house
 And found little Alice there!
 Pulled out her forty-five
 And brought him to the floor!
 "He was my man, but he done me wrong!"

Frankie went to the courthouse;
 Courthouse look so high!
 Put her foot on the bottom step
 And hung her head and cry,
 "Oh, he was my man, but he done me wrong!"

"Roll me over, doctor,
 Roll me over slow.
 Bullet in my left side
 And it pain my body so!"
 "Oh, he was my man, but he done me wrong!"

Frankie had two children,
 A boy and a girl;
 Never see their papa any more
 Till they meet him in another world!
 "Oh, he was my man, but he done me wrong!"

There are two tunes for the song. The more common air, taken down from the singing of W. H. Thomas and several others, and also sent in by Mrs. Bartlett, is the one I have always heard in Texas. Any of the versions of the song heretofore given can be sung to it, though the adaptable Negro voices have to do a reasonable amount of slurring and spreading out in places. One Texas stanza will serve to illustrate the tune:

FRANKIE

Frankie was a good wo-man, Ev-'ry-bod-y knows... Gave
 for-ty-one dol-lars.. For her Al-bert.. a suit of clothes..
 Oh, he's... my man, babe,.. but he done me wrong.....

Frankie was a good woman,
 Ev'rybody knows,
 Gave forty-one dollars
 For her Albert a suit of clothes.
 Oh, he's my man, babe, but he done me wrong!

This is extraordinarily effective when sung by a group of colored people, with its wailful refrain.

Another variant of the ballad has a different tune, somewhat more sophisticated. The words and the air are less frequently heard than the others, yet they are fairly popular in the South.

FRANKIE AND ALBERT

Frankie and Al - bert were lov - ers. O, lord-y, how they did
 love! Said they'd be true to each oth - er, . . . True as
 the bright stars a - bove. He was her man, but he done her wrong.

Frankie and Albert were lovers.
 Oh, lordy, how they did love!
 Said they'd be true to each other,
 True as the bright stars above.
 He was her man, but he done her wrong.

Glenn Mullin is using one form of this version, somewhat different from any that I have, in his forthcoming book, "Adventures of a Scholar Tramp." He captured it in the Texas Panhandle, and it contains some fascinating details.

Loraine Wyman sent me a version she had got from the singing of Robert Buchanan, from Beaver Creek, Ash County, North Carolina, which has additional details and varying refrains at the end of the stanzas.

There is something elemental about the passions and the swift action of this ballad that makes it popular. Jealousy, whether of a husband or a lover, is a comprehensible and common emotion, so that the reader's sympathy is divided between the indignant wife, swift to avenge her injury, and "her man" who "done her wrong." We do not know and perhaps shall never discover—so lame is scholarly research—where this militant woman lived, nor when she used her pistol with such telling effect. We do not know who Franky was—or Lilly, or Pauly, or Georgy, as the case may be. We cannot tell whether her erring spouse was Albert or Johnny, but whether or not he was a Baker, his cake was all dough when Franky—or Pauly, or

Lilly, or Georgy — learned of his Sly defection. And her name — though varied in different versions of the song so that perhaps she would not recognize it herself if she heard it sung in other sections of the South — will go down among those of other romantic heroines who have been handy with weapons in emergency.

Duncan and Brady is another ballad of recent origin. It is fairly well known among the Negroes in Texas. Mrs. Tom Bartlett, of Marlin, writes concerning it:

"The *Duncan and Brady* song is a gem, and I will not rest in peace till I get it all for you. It is a genuine ballad in that it celebrates the final adventures of a 'bad Nigger' who shot up the town. No other place than Waco was the scene of the fray, and that probably accounts for its great popularity in this region. . . . I am exerting myself greatly to get this song, having offered various Negroes of my acquaintance bribes in the way of Mr. Bartlett's old hats and shoes; and if you know their weakness for these two objects of apparel, you may feel confident of my success."

DUNCAN AND BRADY

Duncan and Brady had a talk;
Said Duncan to Brady, "Let's take a walk,
Go down to the colored saloon
And whip out all the colored coons."

Went down to the colored bar,
First a drink and then a cigar.
Duncan thought Brady was a bluff,
Brady showed Duncan he was the stuff.

Next mornin' at half-past nine
Buggies and hearses formed in line,
Takin' ol' Brady to the buryin' ground.

Later on, Mrs. Bartlett writes:

"This is all I have ever been able to trace of the famous *Duncan and Brady* ballad. As you see, it is not the same as the first one I sent you, and Mr. Bartlett and Dr. Shaw (a highly respectable gentleman from whom I got most of the following rather questionable ditties) had hot and bitter words over this particular song, Mr. Bartlett contending that the other (the first) was the only true and original *Duncan and Brady*, and Dr. Shaw contesting as feverishly that his own version was the authentic one. I give it and leave you the responsibility of a decision in favor of one or the other.

“Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
 Brady come down on — Gabriel car,
 Kickin’ out windows and knockin’ out doors,
 Tryin’ to play even with Diamond Joe!
 Been on a jolly so long!

“(Follows a thrilling account of his adventures, but I can get no details); then:

“Brady, Brady was a big fat man;
 Doctor caught hold of Brady’s hand,
 Felt of his pulse and shook his head.
 ‘I believe to my soul old Brady’s dead!’
 Been on a jolly so long!

“Soon’s the women heard Brady was dead
 They went straight home and dressed in red.
 Came a-skipin’ and toddlin’ along,
 ‘Cause they’s glad old Brady was gone.
 Been on a jolly so long!

“It is easy to see that Diamond Joe had the ladies with him in the unfortunate affair. ‘Women’ is not the word actually used in the song.”

Louise Garwood, of Houston, contributes a version of this song:

TWINKLE, TWINKLE, LITTLE STAR

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
 Brady came home on a cable car.
 Well, he was drunk and out of sight,
 Had n’t been sober in many a night.

Mr. Duncan was a heap big squaw;
 Met Big Jim and he had a taw.
 Well, he carried him down to the colored saloon,
 Gonna kill himself a very heavy-set coon.

Mr. Duncan was behind the bar,
 When in walked Brady with a shining star;
 Cried, “Duncan, Duncan, you are under arrest!”
 An’ Duncan put a bullet in Brady’s breast.

Brady fell down on the barroom floor;
 Cried, “Please, Mr. Duncan, don’t you shoot no more!”
 The women cried, “Oh, ain’t it a shame,
 He’s shot King Brady — gonna shoot him again!”

Mrs. Brady was at home in bed,
 When she got de telegram that Brady was dead.
 Cried, "Chillun, chillun, chillun, put yore hats on yore head,
 And let's go down an' see if old King Brady is dead."

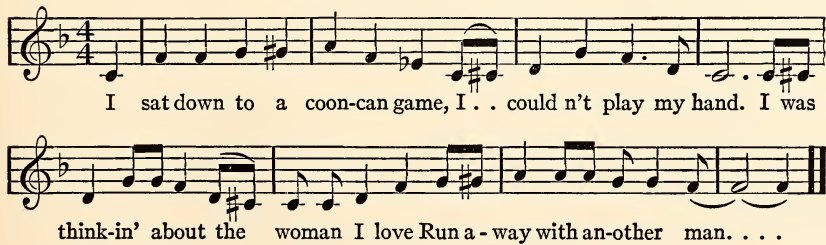
"Brady, Brady, why did n't you run?
 When you saw that Duncan had a forty-four gun?
 Oh, Brady, Brady, Brady, you should oughter have run;
 You had n't oughter faced that great big Gatling gun!"

Well, the women cried for many a day,
 "Brady's gone an' he's gone to stay!"
 For many a month there was crape on the door.
 Brady's gone an' ain't coming back any more!

The Coon-Can Game is another ballad sent by Mrs. Bartlett. Coon-can is said to be a complicated card-game, something like rummy, my correspondent suggests, only more scientific, and is a great favorite with Negroes. It is also played by certain fashionable white people at present.

The music to this, as to the other songs that Mrs. Bartlett sent, was written down by Mrs. Buie, of Marlin. Mrs. Bartlett writes: "I cannot begin to tell you of the difficulties Mrs. Buie met with in trying to translate the songs 'from African to American music,' as she expresses the process. There are slurs and drops and 'turns' and heaven knows what of notes not to be interpreted by any known musical sign. You are experienced enough with Negro music to know that it is entirely different as sung, from the regular accompaniment. I think, though, that Mrs. Buie has been very successful in getting the native curlicues, the melody and rhythm. She has truly worked against odds."

THE COON-CAN GAME



I sat down to a coon-can game, I . . . could n't play my hand. I was
 think-in' about the woman I love Run a - way with an-other man. . . .

I sat down to a coon-can game,
 I could n't play my hand.
I was thinkin' about the woman I love
 Run away with another man.

 Run away with another man,
 Poor boy!
 Run away with another man.
I was thinkin' about the woman I love
 Run away with another man.

I went down to the big depot,
 The train came a-rumblin' by.
I looked in the window, saw the woman I loved,
 And I hung my head and cried.

 I hung my head and cried,
 Poor boy!
 I hung my head and cried.
I looked in the window, saw the woman I loved,
 And I hung my head and cried.

I jumped right on the train platform,
 I walked right down the aisle.
I pulled out my forty-some odd
 And I shot that dark-skinned child.

 I shot that dark-skinned child,
 Poor boy!
 I shot that dark-skinned child.
I pulled out my forty-some odd
 And I shot that dark-skinned child.

They took me down to the big court house;
 The judge, he looked at me.
I said, "Oh, kind-hearted Judge,
 What am it gwine to be?"

 What am it gwine to be,
 What am it gwine to be,
 Poor boy?
 What am it gwine to be?
I say, "Oh, kind-hearted Judge,
 What am it gwine to be?"

The judge he heard the contract read,
 The clerk, he took it down.
They handed me over to the contractor,
 And now I'm penitentiary-bound.

And now I'm penitentiary-bound,
 Poor boy!
And now I'm penitentiary-bound.
They handed me over to the contractor,
And now I'm penitentiary-bound.

The night was cold and stormy,
 It sho' did look like rain.
I ain't got a friend in the whole wide world,
 Nobody knows my name.

Nobody knows my name,
 Poor boy!
Nobody knows my name.
I ain't got a friend in the whole wide world.
 Nobody knows my name.

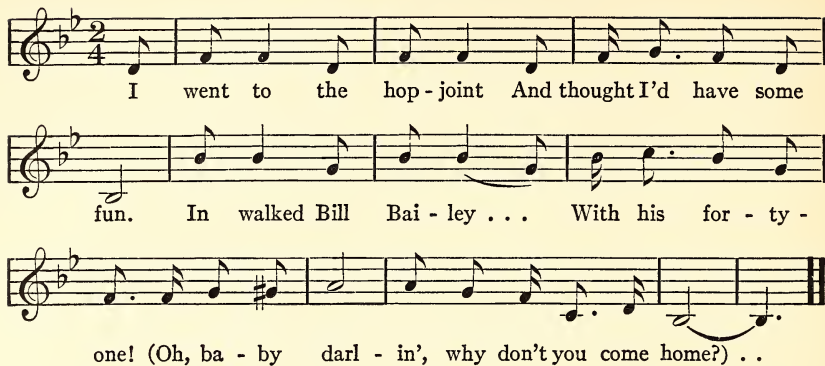
My mother's in the cold, cold ground,
 My father ran away.
My sister married a gamblin' man,
 And now I'm gone astray.

And now I'm gone astray,
 Poor boy!
And now I'm gone astray.
My sister married a gamblin' man,
And now I'm gone astray.

Another picaresque ballad, *The Hop-Joint*, which is a fit companion piece for *The Coon-Can Game*, is also sent by Mrs. Bartlett, who says:

"There are many more stanzas to *The Hop-Joint*, but I have had a hard time getting even these. The 'respectable' Negroes don't like to confess that they know any of it, because it is a disreputable song, and they are quite averse to having the shadow cast on their good name that any acquaintance with the song would, to their mind, shed. You know a hop-joint is the vernacular for a drug-shop, and all that implies, and 'drug' to a Negro means cocaine, 'coke,' 'dope,' etc., being synonymous with 'hops.' I have heard the term 'hop-head,' or 'hop-eater' applied to 'dope-fiends.' Of course, the hop-joint is the very lowest imaginable rendezvous for the most thoroughly submerged of the colored underworld. No wonder they all disclaim the song."

I WENT TO THE HOP-JOINT



I went to the hop-joint And thought I'd have some
fun. In walked Bill Bai-ley . . . With his for-ty -
one! (Oh, ba - by darl - in', why don't you come home?) . .

I went to the hop-joint
And thought I'd have some fun.
In walked Bill Bailey
With his forty-one!
(Oh, baby darlin', why don't you come home?)

First time I saw him
I was standin' in the hop-joint door.
Next time I saw him,
I was lyin' on the hop-joint floor.
(Oh, baby darlin', why don't you come home?)

Shot me in the side
And I staggered to the door.
Don't catch me playin' bull
In the hop-joint any more!
(Oh, baby darlin', why don't you come home?)

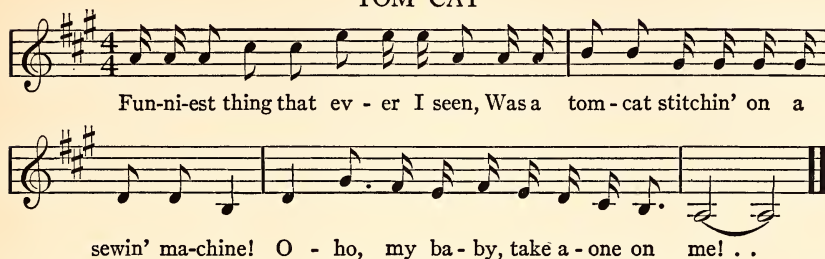
Some rides in buggies,
Some rides in hacks.
Some rides in hearses,
But they never come back!
(Oh, baby darlin', why don't you come home?)

Mrs. Bartlett says, "There is another version which is hardly fit for publication. I have had a hard time getting any of the words at all.

"I went to the hop-joint,
I could n't control my mind.
Pulled out my forty-five
And shot that gal of mine.
(Oho, my baby, take a-one on me!)

"From the refrain I am inclined to connect this version with that once widely sung ditty:

TOM CAT



"Funniest thing that ever I seen,
Was a tom-cat stitchin' on a sewin' machine!
Oho, my baby, take a-one on me!

"Sewed so easy and he sewed so slow,
Took ninety-nine stitches on the tom-cat's toe.
Oho, my baby, take a-one on me!

"The above words were subject to much juggling, and I am sure that many different words could be found, but I doubt if any would pass the censor save the two stanzas that I have given. The tune to the tom-cat song is slightly different from that of the regular *Hop-Joint*, and the refrain, or chorus, of so many of the songs will differ somewhat.

"Here are more stanzas to *The Hop-Joint*, 'Refined edition!'

"Went up to the courthouse,
My pistol in my hand;
Says to the sheriff,
'I'm a guilty man!'
Oh, my baby, why don't you come home?

"The judge he struck sentence,
The jury they hung.
'Gimme ninety-nine years, judge,
For that awful crime I done!'
Oh, my baby, why don't you come home?

"Dr. Shaw sings the refrain,

"Looking for my little baby,
Honey, why don't you come home?"

A ballad recounting the adventures of another colored bravo with a reckless gun is *Stagolee*. We may note how vivid (in the Negro's

rendering of the event) is the shooting-iron with which a crime is accomplished. The pistol, or "gun" as the Negro calls it, is one of the *dramatis personæ*, by no means inactive or silent — for it has a speaking part all too often, with no request for encore, however, and is fondly and intimately described, usually as a forty-one, or a forty-five. Fewer crimes of violence are committed in the South now that prohibition has gone, even partially, into effect, and laws against "toting a pistol" are better enforced, which desirable state of affairs may perhaps result in a not so desirable paucity of stirring ballads in the future.

Howard W. Odum, professor in the University of North Carolina, in an article in the *Journal of American Folk-lore*, reports several versions of Stagolee's carryings on. The first is sung by Negroes in Mississippi, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Alabama, as well as by Negro vagrants as they travel casually.

STAGOLEE

Stagolee, Stagolee, what's dat in yo' grip?
 Nothing but my Sunday clothes; I'm goin' to take a trip.
 Oh dat man, bad man, Stagolee done come!

Stagolee, Stagolee, where you been so long?
 I been out on de battle-fiel' shootin' an' havin' fun.
 Oh dat man, bad man, Stagolee done come!

Stagolee was a bully man an' ev'ybody knowed,
 When dey seed Stagolee comin', to give Stagolee de road.
 O dat man, bad man, Stagolee done come!

Stagolee started out, he give his wife his han';
 "Good-bye, darlin', I'm goin' to kill a man."
 O dat man, bad man, Stagolee done come!

Stagolee killed a man an' laid him on de flo'.
 What's dat he kill him wid? Dat same ol' fohty-fo'.
 O dat man, bad man, Stagolee done come!

Stagolee killed a man an' laid him on his side.
 What's dat he kill him wid? Dat same ol' fohty-five.
 O dat man, bad man, Stagolee done come!

Out o' de house an' down de street Stagolee did run,
 In his hand he held a great big smoking gun.
 O dat man, bad man, Stagolee done come!

Stagolee, Stagolee, I'll tell you what I'll do,
If you'll git me out o' dis trouble, I'll do as much for you.

O dat man, bad man, Stagolee done come!

Ain't it a pity, ain't it a shame,
Stagolee was shot, but he don't want no name!

O dat man, bad man, Stagolee done come!

Stagolee, Stagolee, look what you done done.
Killed de bes' ole citizen; now you'll have to be hung.

O dat man, bad man, Stagolee done come!

Stagolee cried to de jury an' to de jedge: "Please don't take my
life;

I have only three little children an' one little lovin' wife."

O dat man, bad man, Stagolee done come!

A version with a different tune is sung more commonly in Georgia.

I got up one morning jes' 'bout four o'clock;
Stagolee an' big bully done have one finish fight;
What 'bout? All 'bout dat rawhide Stetson hat.

Stagolee shoot Bully; Bully fell down on de flo'.
Bully cry out, "Dat fohty-fo' hurts me so."
Stagolee done killed dat Bully now.

Sent for de wagon, wagon did n't come;
Loaded down wid pistols an' all dat Gatlin' gun
Stagolee done kill dat Bully now.

Some giv' a nickel some giv' a dime;
I did n't give a red copper cent, 'cause he's no friend of mine.
Stagolee done kill dat Bully now.

Carried po' Bully to de cemetery; people standin' round,
When preacher say Amen, lay po' body down.
Stagolee done kill dat Bully now.

Fohty-dollar coffen, eighty-dollar hack,
Carried po' man to de cemetery, but failed to bring him back.
Ev'ybody been dodging Stagolee.

The stanza relating the contributions of various amounts, as a nickel or a dime, refers to a racial custom in certain colored districts which has interest for folk-lorists. When a Negro dies with no visible funds to provide the funeral considered desirable, a collection is taken up to defray expenses. Dr. Sidney Williams, of Mississippi, recently told me of a dramatic instance of this kind. One dark Mississippian

had "passed out," as they say, and his friends had made up the amount of ten dollars to buy his coffin. A colored man was started to town on a mule to buy the coffin. On his way he passed a couple of Negroes by the roadside, shooting craps. He could not resist joining them, though he had no money of his own; and so he yielded to the impulse to stake the funeral money. Throwing his ten dollars down dramatically, he staked it all on one throw. "Two coffins or none!" he cried.

It turned out to be none, and so the corpse was buried wrapped in a sheet. I do not know what the contributors of the embezzled ten dollars did to the gambler.

Worth Tuttle Hedden, formerly instructor in English in Straight College, New Orleans, sent a ballad which was sung by a student in the college, a young Galveston Negro. He reports that it is rather widely sung among the Negroes in Galveston, and he calls it "a love ballad." The hospital referred to is a local institution, and so the song undoubtedly must have originated in Galveston, and is probably of somewhat recent origin.

HOW SAD WAS THE DEATH OF MY SWEETHEART

I went to John Seley's hospital;
The nurse there she turned me around.
She turned me around, yes, so slowly,
An' said, "The poor girl is sleepin' in the ground."

I was walkin' down Walnut Street so lonely,
My head it was hanging so low.
It made me think of my sweetheart,
Who was gone to a world far unknown.

Let her go, let her go.
May God bless her, wherever she may be.
She is mine.
She may roam this wide world over
But she will never fin' a man like me.

While walkin' I met her dear mother,
With her head hangin' low as was mine.
"Here's the ring of your daughter, dear mother,
And the last words as she closed her eyes:

"Take this ring, take this ring,
Place it on your lovin' right hand.
And when I am dead and forgotten
Keep the grass from growing on my grave.' "

The following sorrowful lines were given by Mrs. Busbee, of North Carolina, who says that they are sung by both whites and Negroes in her state. The diction and sentence arrangement do not seem particularly negro in type, though it might be the composition of some colored preacher who loved high-sounding words and stilted sentence structure, while on the other hand, the intense emotion and the strong religious sentiment are characteristic of Negroes, and so the ballad may be theirs. At all events, it is theirs by adoption.

THE LOST YOUTH

I saw a youth the other day,
All in his bloom look fair and gay;
He trifled all his time away
And dropped into eternity.
Oh, my soul! my soul!

While lying on his dying bed,
Eternity he seemed to dread.
He said, "Oh, Lord, I see my state,
But I'm afraid I'm come too late.
Oh, my soul! my soul!"

His kindly sisters standing by
Saw their dear brother groan and die.
He said, "Oh, sisters, pray for me,
For I am lost in eternity.
Oh, my soul! my soul!"

His loving parents standing round,
Their tears were falling to the ground.
He said, "Oh, parents, farewell!
By deeds I am drugged to hell.
Oh, my soul! my soul!"

I think I heard some children say
They never heard their parents pray.
And think, dear parents, you must die,
And like this youth, you, too, may cry,
"Oh, my soul! my soul!"

Numerous other ballads of the Negroes might be given if space permitted, but these will serve to illustrate the types, both of the slavery-time ballads and of the present. The subjects of song change as social and economic changes come, but the spirit of song persists, and the Negro to-day, as before the war, loves to preserve in picturing lines the events and characters that take his fancy, whether they be

from the Old Testament or from the factory or construction gang with which he works. His concepts take concrete form and show dramatic action. We can know but little of the ballads to-day as of the past; can rarely tell whence they arise or whither they go, borne on what vagrant winds of fancy to ephemeral or permanent remembrance, or to swift forgetfulness. They come as obscurely as the boll weevil which they celebrate, so that we cannot be sure just how or when; we can know only that they are here to-day, perhaps to remain, or perchance to vanish as secretly as they appeared. Many, we may be certain, have sprung up, but failed of the fostering voice which might have carried them on to wider knowledge, of the friendly imagination which added to them here and there, while others no more worthy in themselves have happily caught the fancy of good "songsters" and passed from lip to lip till many learned them and cherished them.

These ballads are crude, yes, but they have vitality, and they deserve our study, since they are products of our own land, reflections of aspects of our own society. There is no need to scorn them on the ground that they were not made by gentlefolk, as some of the English and Scotch ballads were; but we should do well to study them, both for their interest and for their association with the race from which they spring. If we would know the Negro, let us study his songs. Who can say to what extent the Negro's life has been shown in his songs, or how much they have influenced it?

IV

DANCE-SONGS OR "REELS"

DOWN through the years the old dance tunes tinkle gaily. They have a vitality to match that of the boll weevil sung of in the darky's ballad, for they survived not only time but the stern discouragement of man. They have a brave laughter that endured in spite of public disfavor and threatening thunders from the pulpit. In many sections of the South, the Negro, who by nature is aquiver with rhythm, was forbidden to give expression to his impulse in the dance; and to the collector of folk-lore it is a mournful thing that many of the old dance-songs should have been allowed to die. But many survived — as the dance persisted despite opposition.

This ban on dancing was set up, not by the white masters, but by the Negroes themselves, or by their religious leaders. The dances that the captured slaves brought over with them from Africa were heathen and obscene, and so they must be "laid aside" in the new life. They were permitted, with certain restrictions, in the sections under Latin influence, — French and Spanish, — but not elsewhere. And even the crude plantation dances were thought reprehensible in many other districts. Wherever the Negro was under strong religious influence, Methodist or Baptist, he thought dancing a sin — to be held to defiantly by the unregenerate but to be given up with fervor by the converted. Dancing was apparently an evil more terrible than most of the offences mentioned in the Decalogue, and the darky must have wondered why the Almighty was so absent-minded as to have left it out of his ten commandments. Certainly the Negro preacher was guilty of no such omission. So gay defiant youth danced on, while elders shuddered. But when the youth "got religion" and joined the church, he was expected to forego such revelry and cleanse his mind of "devil songs."

He did this so effectively that it is next to impossible to coax any dance-song from an elderly colored person. White heads wag reproachfully at me when I beg for "reels."

"Dem is devil songs, mistis, an' I doan hold with sech," an old man in Birmingham told me.

"But did n't you use to know them when you were young? Did n't you dance them?" I persisted.

"Yes, mistis, I is been a powerful sinner in mah day. But bress de Lawd, I'se got religion in time!"

"Don't you remember them?"

He fixed an eye of rebuke upon me. "Yes, mistis, I knows dem. But I ain' gwine backslide by talkin' 'bout 'em. Ef you wants 'reels' you'll have to go hunt up some o' dem young sinner folks. Not me, naw, not me!"

There was an old woman in Mississippi, almost a hundred years old, who said:

"Honey, I'se got one foot in de grave. I'se done made mah peace wid Hebben. You ain' want me to draw back now, is you?"

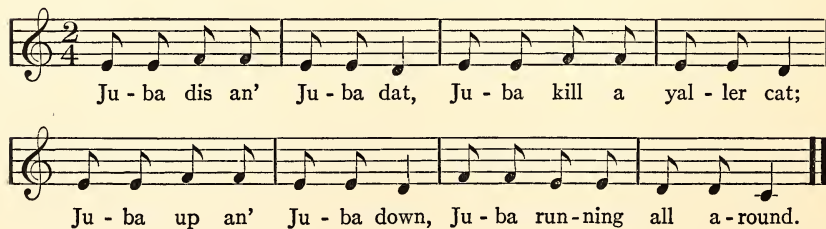
In some sections, the church leaders tried to compromise with the desire to dance by encouraging "shouts," which were spirited, religious marchings or dancings in the church, to be indulged in by the irrepressible young and tolerated by the elders. This is an expression of the same spirit which substituted the song-games for dancing, among the whites, whose old play-party songs still have a lusty vitality in outlying districts.

Some of the dances were so simple that they could be danced without the aid of instruments. All that was needed was someone to "pat and sing," to mark the rhythmic time by clapping of the hands. Even the reptiles knew those measures, for does n't the song-fragment tell us

As I come 'long de new-cut road,
Met Mister Terrapin and Mister Toad.
De Toad begin to pat an' sing,
While Terrapin cut de pigeon-wing.

One of the best known of the simple old dances was *Juba*, the tune of which is so elemental that it has practically but two notes — no more. The late Dr. John A. Wyeth gave me the air to this, and the words were sent in by various contributors.

JUBA



Juba dis an' Juba dat,
 Juba kill a yaller cat;
 Juba up an' Juba down,
 Juba running all around.

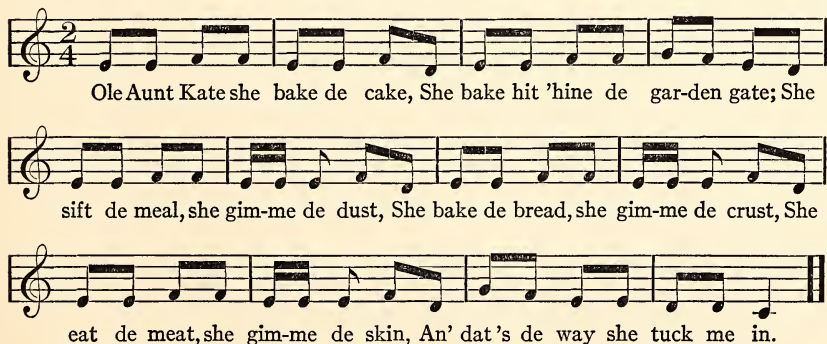
Dr. Wyeth said that this is one of the best known of the "jig," or short-step, dance tunes of the old South. It was very effective when played on the banjo, as it has a lively tempo. Some reporters give an ending, "Jump, Juba."

Dr. Wyeth said that this is an old African melody. The primitive African music has few tones, and the dance is more in unison with the beat of the drum than the more elaborate instruments. *Juba* has a rat-tat and a *skirl* reminiscent of the tom-toms. The Negroes said that Juba was an old African ghost.

The primitive dancing of the Negro is simple. Dr. Wyeth said: "The Negro's idea of harmony is right on the earth, deals only with the material, showing his low order of development. In dancing, his steps must go on to the ground. The Negro must pat, must make some noise on the earth to correspond, whereas an Indian in his dancing deals with an emotion away from the earth."

Dr. Wyeth gave another jig, *Ole Aunt Kate*, which he said was elaborated from *Juba*. The words to this and the two songs following are included in his book, "With Sabre and Scalpel." The tune is very like *Juba*, but there are more than two tones. This also expresses a primitive mood and is wholly negro in conception and expression.

OLE AUNT KATE



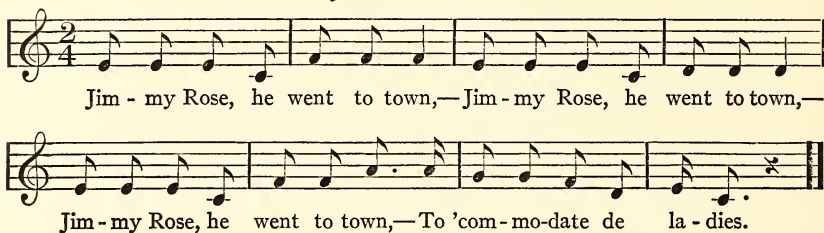
Ole Aunt Kate she bake de cake, She bake hit 'hine de gar-den gate; She
 sift de meal, she gim-me de dust, She bake de bread, she gim-me de crust, She
 eat de meat, she gim-me de skin, An' dat's de way she tuck me in.

Ole Aunt Kate she bake de cake,
 She bake hit 'hine de garden gate;
 She sift de meal, she gimme de dust,
 She bake de bread, she gimme de crust,
 She eat de meat, she gimme de skin,
 An' dat's de way she tuck me in.

It has a little swing that is individual and yet characteristically "darky."

The Negro's music goes from one harmony to another, with no discord, and is like the harmony of nature. Dr. Wyeth gave an old dance-song, *Jimmy Rose*, which he said a Negro on his plantation had made up. "You can just hear in it a darky jog along in a jog-trot on a mule."

JIMMY ROSE



Jimmy Rose, he went to town,
 Jimmy Rose, he went to town,
 Jimmy Rose, he went to town,
 To 'commodate de ladies.

Fare ye well, ye ladies all,
 Fare ye well, ye ladies all,
 Fare ye well, ye ladies all,
 God Ermighty bless you!

Dr. Wyeth performed magical tricks with a banjo, as he had been taught by old Uncle Billy in slavery times. He evoked melodies of wistful gaiety by drawing a handkerchief across the banjo strings, and lively tunes by playing it with a whisk-broom. And when he danced some of the old breakdowns for me, just to show how they went, I felt transported to an old plantation of days before the war.

Another of the dance-songs he gave me was *Johnny Booker*.

I went down to de back of de fiel';
 A black snake cotch me by de heel.
 I cut my dus', I run my bes',
 I run right into a horney's nes'.

Chorus

Oh, do, Mr. Booker, do! Oh, do, Mr. Booker, do!
 Oh, do, Mr. Booker, Johnny Booker,
 Mr. Booker, Mr. Booker, Johnny Booker, do!

The instruments used by the Negroes in early times were crude and for the most part home-made. As one Negro musician of the South said to me recently, "It seems sad to think that the Negro, who so loved music, in the old days had no chance to learn it properly and no suitable instruments to play on." Yet he worked miracles of music with what he could construct himself. He had, first and foremost, the fiddle, — which he played for the dances at the "great house," — which was a fiddle and never a violin. Then he had the banjo, a native contrivance dear to his heart. Thomas Jefferson in his "Notes on Virginia" (1774) says that the Negroes are naturally musical. "The instrumental proper to them is the 'banjar,' which they brought hither from Africa." This instrument had four strings (instead of five as now) and the head was covered with rattlesnake skin.

Dr. Wyeth, who spent his childhood and youth on a large plantation in the South, said that the banjo was the favorite musical instrument of the Negroes as he knew them. They fashioned this crude device for themselves, out of such materials as they could find. They could make a banjo from a large gourd — that useful growth which served many purposes in old times, and still does in certain country places where it is the drinking cup. The gourd for the banjo must have a long straight neck or handle. The bowl would be cut away level with the handle, the seeds taken out, and a cover of tanned coonskin stretched tightly over it like a drumhead. The strings, of crude material, were passed over a bridge near the centre of the drumhead and attached to the keys on the neck.

An old song given me by Joseph A. Turner, of Hollins, Virginia, mentions a crude banjo. The music to this was written down for me by Ruth Hibbard, of Hollins College.

BROTHER EPHRUM GOT DE COON AND GONE ON

I went down to my pea-patch
To see if my ole hen had hatch.
Ole hen hatch and tellin' of her dream,
And de little chickens pickin' on de tambourine.

Chorus

Brother Ephrum got de coon and gone on and gone on and gone on,
Brother Ephrum got de coon and gone on
And left me here behind.

I see a rabbit a-runnin' down de fiel';
I say, "Mister Rabbit, whar you gwine?"

She say, "I ain't got no time for to fool wid you,
Dar's a white man comin' on behind."

Chorus

Marsa bought a yaller gal,
He brought her right from de South,
And de hayr on her head was wrop so tight
Dat de sun shone in her mouth.

Chorus

Lips jes' like a cherry,
Cheeks jes' like a rose.
How I loves dat yaller gal
Lord Almighty knows!

Chorus

I had a little banjo,
De strings was made of twine,
And de only tune dat I could play
Was, I wish dat gal was mine!

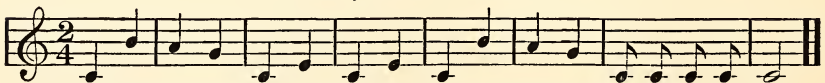
Chorus

Mr. Turner says, "There are numerous other verses to this song, but these are all that I can recall at this time. I am sure that others will be contributed from other sources."

Another favorite instrument was the jawbone. This has been described to me by various people who knew the South in slavery times. It was the jawbone of a horse or ox or mule, with the teeth left in, which made a queer sound when a key or other piece of metal was drawn across the teeth. This is mentioned in a letter from an elderly Virginia woman.

"I have in times past tried to learn something from old darkies here in Charlottesville, darkies even that had belonged to Thomas Jefferson, but without any success. There is one exception to this statement. When I was about ten years old a family from Fluvanna County settled within half a mile of us. They had several slaves who sometimes came to our house at night and gave us music, vocal and instrumental, the instruments being banjo, jawbone of horse, and bones (to crack together, two held in one hand). In singing, the player took any part. He would sing a few words here and there and let his banjo fill in the gap. One piece only do I remember anything about, and all I remember is:

RISE, OLE NAPPER



Rise, ole Napper, ketch him, ketch him. Rise, ole Napper, ketch him by de wool.

"Rise, ole Napper, ketch him, ketch him.
Rise, ole Napper, ketch him by de wool.

"This bit of song was sung some seventy years ago."

Another ancient fragment given by Katherine Love, of Virginia, whose grandmother learned it from the slaves on her plantation, mentions the jawbone.

I went to old Napper's house,
Old Napper was n't at home.
I took my seat by the pretty yaller gal
And I picked upon the old jawbone.

Refrain

Oh, Susanna, don't you cry for me.
I'm jus' from Alabama with my banjo on my knee.

Dr. John A. Wyeth sang for me an old bit of song about the jawbone:

De jawbone walk,
And de jawbone talk,
And de jawbone eat
Wid a knife and fork.
I lef' my jawbone on de fence,
An' I ain't seed dot jawbone sence.

The jawbone is mentioned in an old song sent by Joseph Turner, of Hollins, Virginia. Ruth Hibbard wrote down the music for this also.

DWELEY

Me and Dweley standing in the rain, Dweley,
Me and Dweley standing in the rain, Dweley, Eeeooo!
Me and Dweley standing in the rain,
Some folks say we was insane, Dweley!

Git up son, done sleeper too late dis mornin'!
Git up, son, done sleeper too late dis mornin', Eeeooo!
Git up son, done sleeper too late,
Crawfish man done pass your gate, dis mornin'!

What do you reckon de lighternin' done dis mornin'?
What you reckon de lighternin' done dis mornin', Eeeooo?
What you reckon de lighternin' done?
It come to my house and killed my son dis mornin'!

Jawbone hangin' on de fence dis mornin',
Jawbone hangin' on de fence dis mornin', Eeeooo!
Jawbone hangin' on de fence
And I ain't seen my jawbone since dis mornin'!

Miss Jean Feild reports a variant.

LULA GAL

CHORUS

Lu - la gal, Lu - la gal, Lu - la gal, Lu - la gal—

Tie ma shoe, boy, tie ma shoe. Tie ma shoe, boy, tie ma shoe.

VERSE

Jawbone walk and a jawbone talk,— Jawbone eat with a knife and fork.

Lef' ma jawbone in de cawnah ob de fence, An' I hab not seen ma jawbone sence.

Jawbone walk and a jawbone talk,
 Jawbone eat with a knife and fork.
 Lef' ma jawbone in de cawnah ob de fence,
 An' I hab not seen ma jawbone sence.

Chorus

Lula gal, Lula gal, Lula gal, Lula gal,
 Tie ma shoe, boy, tie ma shoe.
 Tie ma shoe, boy, tie ma shoe.

This gruesome instrument, whose crude music livened many a country dance, is mentioned in various songs. The versatile ducky, deprived of instruments that others use, could contrive his own, which gave him vast pleasure though they could not satisfy his music-loving soul.

Other instruments were bones held between the different fingers of one hand and rattled with gay lugubriousness. Then, lacking anything else, a Negro could draw wailful music from a comb covered with tissue paper, which he used as a mouth instrument. These were used until recently — and may still be found, as I have often heard music of bones and comb.

A well-known dance-song of the old times was *Josey* or *Jim A-long*, *Josey*, which I have often heard my mother sing. My cousin, Mrs. E. H. Ratchliffe, of Natchez, Mississippi, also gave me a part of the version given below.

JIM A-LONG, JOSEY

O, I'se from Louisiana, as you all know,
 Dar whar Jim a-long, Josey's all de go.
 De niggers all rise when de bell do ring,
 And dis is de song dat dey do sing:

Chorus

Hey, get a-long, get a-long, Josey,
 Hey, get a-long, Jim a-long, Jo!
 Hey, get a-long, get a-long, Josey,
 Hey, get a-long, Jim a-long, Jo!

My sister Rose de udder night did dream
 Dat she was floating down de stream,
 When she woke up she 'gin to cry,
 And de white cat picked out de black cat's eye.

Chorus

Away down south, a long ways off,
 A bullfrog died wid de whooping-cough,
 And t'other side of Mississippi, as you know,
 Was whar I was called fust Jim a-long, Jo.

Chorus

O, when I gets dat new coat dat I hopes to hab soon,
 I'll walk my gal by de light of de moon;
 As I walks up and down de road wid my Susanna,
 De white folks gwine take me to be Santa Anna.

Chorus

The reference to Santa Anna seems to establish a fair antiquity for the song.

We find reference to this old song and dance in a dance-song given me by Mr. W. R. Boyd, Jr. This is danced like a Virginia reel.

HOLD MY MULE



Hold my mule while I dance Jos-ey, Hold my mule while I dance Josey,



Hold my mule while I dance Jos - ey, Oh, Miss Sus - an Brown.

Hold my mule while I dance Josey,
 Hold my mule while I dance Josey,
 Hold my mule while I dance Josey
 Oh, Miss Susan Brown.

Would n't give a nickel if I could n't dance Josey,
 Would n't give a nickel if I could n't dance Josey,
 Would n't give a nickel if I could n't dance Josey,
 Oh, Miss Susan Brown.

Had a glass of buttermilk and I danced Josey,
 Had a glass of buttermilk and I danced Josey,
 Had a glass of buttermilk and I danced Josey,
 Oh, Miss Susan Brown.

Here is a variant of the Josey song, that combines stanzas from other well-known favorites. This was sent to me by Virginia Fitzgerald, from Virginia.

As I was going up a new-cut road,
 I met a Tarrepin an' a Toad.
 Every time the Toad would jump,
 The Tarrepin dodge behine a stump.
 O! rall, rall, Miss Dinah gal,
 O! do come along, my darling!
 O! rall, rall, Miss Dinah gal,
 O! do come along, my darling!

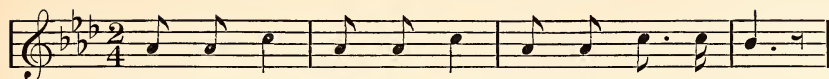
My ole Missis promise me
 When she died she'd set me free;
 Now ole Missis dead an' gone,
 She lef' ole Sambo hillin' up corn.
 Hey, Jim a-long, Jam a-long, a-Josie,
 Hey, Jim a-long, Jam a-long, Joe!
 Hey, Jim a-long, Jam a-long, from Baltimo'!

You go round an' I go through,

 You get there befo' I do,
 Tell 'em all I'm comin', too.
 Hey, Jim a-long, Jam a-long, Josie!
 Hey, Jim a-long, Jam a-long, Joe!
 Hey, Jim a-long, Jam a-long, from Baltimo'!

Another famous old dance-song, well known especially in Texas, is called '*T ain't Gwine Rain No Mo'*'. One couple enters on the floor with the first stanza and another with each succeeding stanza, till all those present are in the dance. The air and part of the words were given me by Mabel Cranfill, of Dallas, Texas, and various Texans contributed other stanzas.

'TAIN'T GWINE RAIN NO MO'



'Tain't gwine rain—'Tain't gwine snow—'Tain't gwine rain no mo'—



Steal up, ev - 'ry - bod - y, 'Tain't gwine rain no mo'.

Ole cow died at the mouth of the branch,

'T ain't gwine rain no mo'.

The buzzards had a public dance,

'T ain't gwine rain no mo'.

Chorus

'T ain't gwine rain,

'T ain't gwine snow,

'T ain't gwine rain no mo';

Steal up, ev'rybody,

'T ain't gwine rain no mo'.

What did the blackbird say to the crow?

'T ain't gwine rain no mo'.

'T ain't gwine hail an' 'tain't gwine snow,

'T ain't gwine rain no mo'.

Chorus

Gather corn in a beegum hat,

'T ain't gwine rain no mo';

Ole massa grumble ef you eat much of that,

'T ain't gwine rain no mo'.

Chorus

Two, two, and round up four,

'T ain't gwine rain no mo';

Two, two, and round up four,

'T ain't gwine rain no mo'.

Chorus

Six, two, and round up four,

'T ain't gwine rain no mo';

Six, two, and round up four,

'T ain't gwine rain no mo'.

Chorus

The last line of the chorus is for all to "steal up" in the dance.

W. R. Boyd, Jr., formerly of Teague, Texas, gave part of a different version, to which various Texans in New York added stanzas.

Rabbit skipped de garden gate,
 'T ain't gwine rain no mo';
 Picked a pea and pulled his freight,
 'T ain't gwine rain no mo'.

Chorus

Oh, ladies!
 'T ain't gwine rain no mo';
 'T ain't gwine to sleet, 't ain't gwine snow,
 'T ain't gwine rain no mo'.

Rabbit et a turnip top,
 'T ain't gwine rain no mo';
 He went off a-hippity-hop,
 'T ain't gwine rain no mo'.

Chorus

Rabbit hiding behind a pine,
 'T ain't gwine rain no mo';
 Had one eye shut an' t'other eye blind,
 'T ain't gwine rain no mo'.

Chorus

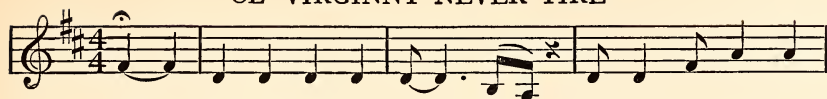
Bake them biscuits good and brown,
 'T ain't gwine rain no mo';
 Swing yo' ladies round and round,
 'T ain't gwine rain no mo'.

Chorus

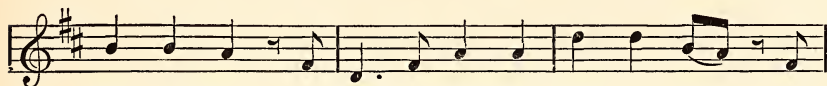
One can hear the scrape of the lively fiddle playing the tune and the fiddler's voice singing the song, as the couples go through the spirited dance. The leader starts the song and all present join in, so there is communal singing as well as dancing — perhaps a fashion too strenuous for weary city-folk, but enjoyed by rustic dancers. Other variants to this are known in Texas.

There is an old song reported from various states, under several names with differing choruses, but a lively memory with many people. This version was given by Lucy Dickinson Urquhart, of Lynchburg, Virginia, contributed through the kindness of Lois Upshaw, of Dallas, Texas, who wrote down the music.

OL' VIRGINNY NEVER TIRE



There is a gal in our town, She wears a yal - low



strip - ed gown, And when she walks the streets a - roun', The

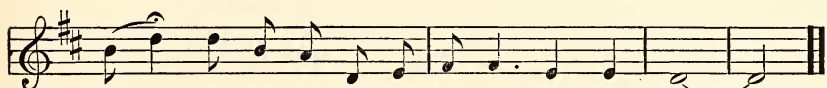


hol - low of her foot makes a hole in the groun'.

CHORUS



Ol' folks, young folks, cl'ar the kitch-en, Ol' folks, young folks,



cl'ar the kitch-en. Ol' Vir - gin - ny nev - er tire. . . .

There is a gal in our town,
She wears a yallow striped gown,
And when she walks the streets aroun',
The hollow of her foot makes a hole in the groun'.

Chorus

Ol' folks, young folks, cl'ar the kitchen,
Ol' folks, young folks, cl'ar the kitchen.
Ol' Virginny never tire.

As I was walkin' up the Three Chop Road
I met a terrapin and a toad.
Ev'ry time the toad would jump,
The terrapin dodged behind a stump.

Chorus

This was an old dance-song, which Mrs. Dickinson's grandmother sang, as she had learned it from the slaves. There were various other stanzas, she says. The Three Chop Road is in the outskirts of Richmond, a famous old road, which Mary Johnston mentions in one of her novels.

Edwin Swain, formerly of Florida, reported a different chorus as sung in his state in his boyhood.

Ol' folks, young folks, cl'ar de kitchen,
 Ol' folks, young folks, cl'ar de kitchen,
 Jinny, git yo' hoecake round.

Mr. Dowd and Miss Cohen, of Charleston, South Carolina, say that the Negroes in their state sang this chorus:

Ol' folks, young folks, cl'ar de kitchen,
 For de ol' Virginny reel.

Garnett Eskew, of West Virginia, reports the song under a different title.

DAR WAS A GAL IN OUR TOWN

Dar was a gal in our town,
 She had a yallow, striped gown,
 An' ebery time she put her foot down
 De hollow of her heel make a hole in de ground.

Chorus

Children, don't get weary,
 Children, don't get weary,
 Children, don't get weary,
 Love come a-trinklin' down.

Jay bird sittin' on a swingin' limb,
 He winked at me an' I winked at him.
 Picked up a rock an' hit him on de chin.
 "Look heah, Nigger, don't you do dat agin!"

Chorus

An old version, attributed to T. Rice, goes as follows:

In old Kentuck in de arternoon,
 We sweep de floor wid a bran new broom,
 And arter dat we form a ring
 And dis de song dat we do sing:

Chorus

Oh, clare de kitchen, old folks, young folks,
 Clare de kitchen, old folks, young folks,
 Old Virginny neber tire.

I went to de creek, I could n't get across,
 I'd nobody wid me but an old blind horse;

But old Jim Crow come riding by,
Says he, "Old feller, your horse will die."

Chorus

My horse fell down upon de spot;
Says he, "Don't you see his eyes is sot?"
So I took out my knife and off wid his skin,
And when he comes to life I'll ride him agin.

Chorus

A jay bird sot on a hickory limb,
He winked at me and I winked at him.
I picked up a stone and I hit his shin,
Says he, "You better not do dat agin."

Chorus

A bull frog dressed in sojer's clo'se,
Went in de field to shoot some crows;
De crows smell powder and fly away;
De bull frog mighty mad dat day.

Chorus

Den I went down wid Cato Moore,
To see de steamboat come ashore.
Every man for himself, so I picked up a trunk;
"Leff off," said de captain, "or burn you wid a chunk."

Chorus

I hab a sweetheart in dis town,
She wears a yellow striped gown,
And when she walks de streets around,
De hollow of her foot make a hole in de ground.

Chorus

Dis love it is a ticklish thing, you know,
It makes a body feel all over so;
I put de question to coal-black Rose,
She black as ten of spades and got a lubly flat nose.

Chorus

"Go away," said she, "wid your cowcumber shin,
If you come here agin I stick you wid a pin."
So I turn on my heel and I bid her good-bye,
And arter I was gone she began for to cry.

Chorus

So now I'se up and off, you see,
To take a julep sangaree,
I'll sit upon a 'tater hill
And eat a little whippoorwill.

Chorus

I wish I was back in old Kentuck,
 For since I left it I had no luck;
 De gals so proud dey won't eat mush,
 And when you go to court 'em dey say, O hush!

Chorus

Perhaps Rice — if he did compose this version — used an old folk-song as his basis; and certainly there are fragments of various authentic folk-songs in this salmagundi.

In various parts of the country, versions of the following song, or at least of this chorus, are heard, with different local references:

Oh, Louisiana gal, won't you come out to-night,
 Won't you come out to-night,
 Won't you come out to-night?
 Louisiana gal, won't you come out to-night,
 And dance by the light of the moon?

Oh, yaller gal, won't you come out to-night,
 Won't you come out to-night,
 Won't you come out to-night?
 Oh, yaller gal, won't you come out to-night,
 And dance by the light of the moon?

Buffalo gal, won't you come out to-night,
 Won't you come out to-night,
 Won't you come out to-night?
 Buffalo gal, won't you come out to-night,
 And dance by the light of the moon?

I'll give you a dollar if you'll come out to-night,
 If you'll come out to-night,
 If you'll come out to-night,
 I'll give you a dollar if you'll come out to-night,
 And dance by the light of the moon.

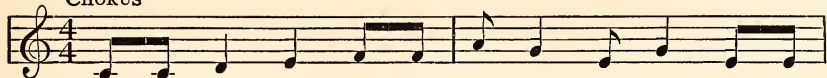
A Texas variant adds this stanza, which is from another old song — or a part of it is, at least:

I danced with a girl with a hole in her stockin',
 And her heel kep' a-rockin',
 And her heel kep' a-rockin';
 I danced with a girl with a hole in her stockin',
 We danced by the light of the moon.

These versions are variations of the chorus of an old song of whose authorship I have found no trace. Possibly it is a minstrel.

BUFFALO GALS

CHORUS



Buf - fa - lo gals, can't you come out to - night, Can't you



come out to-night, Can't you come out to-night? Buf - fa - lo gals, can't you

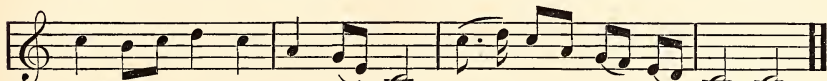


come out to - night, and dance by de light ob de moon? . .

VERSE



As I was lumb'ring down de street, Down de street, down de street,



A han'some gal I chanced to meet, Oh, she was fair to view!

As I was lumb'ring down de street,
Down de street, down de street,
A han'some gal I chanced to meet,
Oh, she was fair to view!

Chorus

Buffalo gals, can't you come out to-night,
Can't you come out to-night,
Can't you come out to-night?
Buffalo gals, can't you come out to-night,
And dance by de light ob de moon?

I axed her would she hab some talk,
Hab some talk, hab some talk.
Her feet covered up de whole sidewalk,
As she stood close by me.

Chorus

I axed her would she hab a dance,
Hab a dance, hab a dance.
I thought dat I might get a chance,
To shake a foot wid her.

Chorus

I'd like to make dat gal my wife,
 Gal my wife, gal my wife.
 I'd be happy all my life
 If I had her by me.

Chorus

Mr. W. R. Boyd, of Teague, Texas, sent me the following old song,
 sung at dances by the slaves on the plantation before the war:

I rock from Selma, ting tang,
 I'm a Georgia ruler, ting tang,
 I'se a Mobile gentleman, Susie-annah,
 Loan me de gourd to drink wa-a-ter!

Chorus

Den all back-shuffle and clap yo' hands;
 All back-shuffle and clap yo' hands;
 All back-shuffle and clap yo' hands,
 Oh, Miss Susie-annah!

Come shuffle up, ladies, ting tang,
 Oh, Miss Williams, ting tang,
 Miss Williams is a-beatin' yo', Susie-annah;
 Loan me dat gourd to drink wa-a-ter!

Chorus

This could be varied to suit the native places of the masculine
 dancers and singers and the names of the feminine.

W. R. Boyd, Jr., now of New York, contributed another old song,
 the dance to which it was sung being like a Virginia reel.

IN SOME LADY'S GARDEN



In some la - dy's fine brick house, In some la - dy's
 gar - den, You walk so high you can't get out, So
 CHORUS
 fare you well my dar - ling. Oh, swing a la-dy ump-tum,
 Swing a la - dy round, Swing a la - dy ump-tum, Prom-e - nade a-round.

In some lady's fine brick house,
 In some lady's garden,
 You walk so high you can't get out,
 So fare you well, my darling.

Chorus

Oh, swing a lady ump-tum,
 Swing a lady round,
 Swing a lady ump-tum,
 Promenade around.

The stanza is its own description of the gay movement of the old dance. One can fairly see the spirited swing to and fro.

Two dance-songs were given to Miss Gullidge in Charlotte, North Carolina, by Negro women who said that they had danced to them years ago. The words are rather nonsensical, but the women, Bertha Merion and Esther Mackey, said that they indicated the dance movements rather than anything else.

DANCE-SONG



Lead a man, di - dee - o, lead a man, di - dee - o; Lead a
 man, di - dee - o, lead a man, di - dee - o. You swing
 heads, di - dee - o, I swing feet, di - dee - o, Ain't dat
 nice, di - dee - o, walk-in' on de ice, di - dee - o!

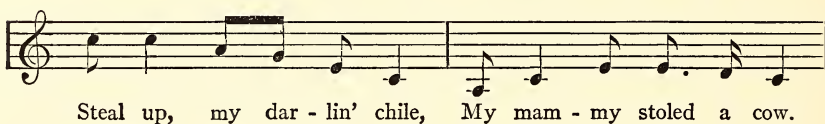
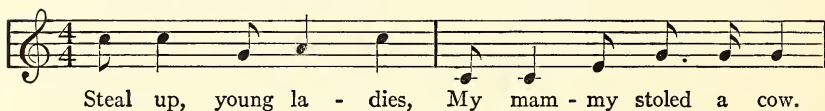
Lead a man, di-dee-o, lead a man, di-dee-o;
 Lead a man, di-dee-o, lead a man, di-dee-o.
 You swing heads, di-dee-o, I swing feet, di-dee-o,
 Ain't dat nice, di-dee-o, walkin' on de ice, di-dee-o!

Ladies change, di-dee-o, ladies change, di-dee-o;
 Ladies change, di-dee-o, ladies change, di-dee-o.
 Ain't dat nice, di-dee-o, ain't dat nice, di-dee-o,
 Ain't dat nice, di-dee-o, ain't dat nice, di-dee-o?

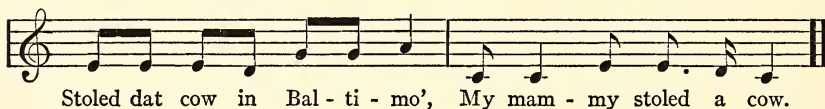
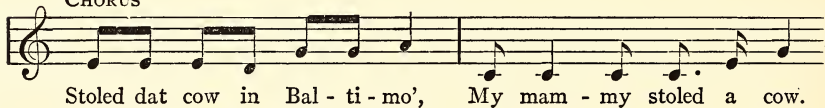
Oh, my love, di-dee-o, oh, my love, di-dee-o,
 Oh, my love, di-dee-o, oh, my love, di-dee-o!
 Ain't dat nice, di-dee-o, ain't dat nice, di-dee-o,
 Ain't dat nice, di-dee-o, ain't dat nice, di-dee-o?

The words to the next have little coherence or logic, evidently being used merely as an excuse to bring in the directions of stealing up in the dance.

MY MAMMY STOLED A COW



CHORUS



Steal up, young ladies,
 My mammy stoled a cow.
 Steal up, my darlin' chile,
 My mammy stoled a cow.

Chorus

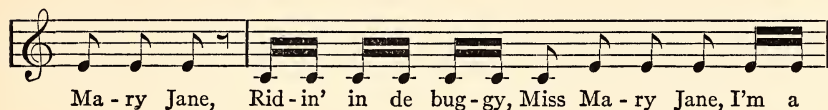
Stoled dat cow in Baltimo',
 My mammy stoled a cow.
 Stoled dat cow in Baltimo',
 My mammy stoled a cow.

Steal all round, don't slight no one,
 My mammy stoled a cow;
 Steal all round, don't slight no one,
 My mammy stoled a cow.

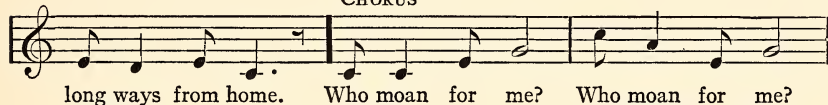
Chorus

The following song was heard sung by slaves in York County, South Carolina, by Dr. W. F. More, when he was a boy:

MISS MARY JANE



CHORUS



Ridin' in de buggy,
 Miss Mary Jane,
 Miss Mary Jane,
 Miss Mary Jane,
 Ridin' in de buggy,
 Miss Mary Jane,
 I'm a long ways from home.

Chorus

Who moan for me?
 Who moan for me?
 Who moan for me, my darlin'?
 Who moan for me?

Sally got a house
 In Baltimo',
 Baltimo',
 Baltimo',
 Sally got a house
 In Baltimo',
 An' it's full o' chicken pie.

Chorus

I got a gal
 In Baltimo',
 Baltimo',
 Baltimo',
 I got a gal
 In Baltimo',
 And she's three stories high.

The dances and the dance-songs of the Creole Negroes — that is, of the slaves belonging to Creoles, the French and Spanish people in certain sections of the South, more especially Louisiana — were different from those of the other slaves. Not only was the language different, being the Creole *patois*, — that strange tongue representing the struggles of Africans with the highly cultured French language, which contains vocal sounds not found in primitive African dialects, — but the dances also were more barbaric and unrestrained, nearer to the jungle.

In an article, "The Dance in Place Congo," in the *Century Magazine*, 1886, George W. Cable tells of the dances among the Louisiana Negroes in slavery times, of barbaric celebrations so indecent that they were finally forbidden by law. He describes the instruments used with these primitive, sinister dances, which were very different from the merry-making of Negroes in other sections:

"The booming of African drums and blast of huge wooden horns called to the gathering. . . . The drums were long, hollowed, often from a single piece of wood, open at one end and having a sheep- or goat-skin stretched across the other. One was large, the other much smaller. The tight skin heads were not held up to be struck; the drums were laid along on the turf and the drummers bestrode them, and beat them on the head madly with fingers, fists and feet — with slow vehemence on the great drum, and fiercely and rapidly on the small one. Sometimes an extra performer sat on the ground behind the larger drum at its open end and 'beat' upon the wooden sides of it with two sticks."

The smaller drum was often made from a joint or two of very large bamboo, in the West Indies where such could be got, and this is said to be the origin of its name, for it was called "bamboula."

"A queer thing that went with these when the affair was pretentious was the Marimba brett, a union of reed and string principles. A single strand of wire ran lengthwise a bit of wooden board, sometimes a shallow box of thin wood, some eight inches long by four or five wide, across which, under the wire, were several joints of reed about a quarter of an inch in diameter and of graduated lengths. The performer, sitting cross-legged, held the board in both hands and plucked the ends of the reeds with his thumb-nails. But the grand instrument was — the banjo. . . . For the true African dance, a dance not so much of legs and feet as of the upper part of the body, a sensual, devilish thing tolerated only by Latin-American masters, there was wanted the dark inspiration of the African drum and the banjo's thrump and strum."

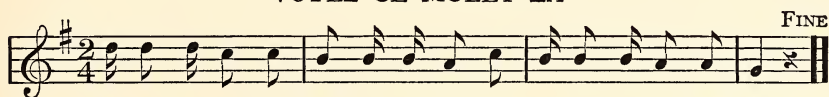
Another instrument which they used sometimes was the "reed-pipe" or "quill." Mr. Krehbiel gave a "quill tune," which a gentleman from Alabama furnished him.

The dance-songs of the Creoles are mostly nonsensical, but the music is haunting and wild, with a sensuous appeal appropriate to their dances.

One favorite dance-song was a senseless, interminable repetition of a line, "Quand papete la cuite na va mange li!" meaning "When the sweet potato is cooked, we shall eat it," according to one authority, and according to Cable, "When that 'tater 's cooked don't you eat it up!" Either way, there is little charm to the words, but the air has its wild appeal. It is repeated over and over and over. This is a song for the bamboula dance.

In "Slave Songs of the United States" is printed a Creole slave song from Louisiana, making fun of a dandy Negro, which is also a bamboula.

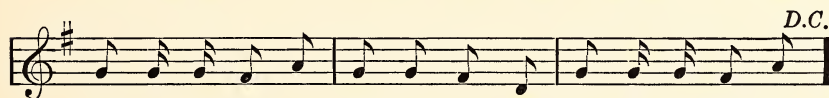
VOYEZ CE MULET LA



Vo-yez ce mu - let là, Mi - ché Bain - jo, Comme il est in - so - lent!



Cha - peau sur co - té, Mi - ché Bain - jo, La canne à la



main, Mi - ché Bain - jo, Bottes qui fé *crin, crin*, Mi - ché Bain - jo.

Voyez ce mulet là, Miché Bainjo,
Comme il est insolent!
Chapeau sur coté, Miché Bainjo,
La canne à la main, Miché Bainjo,
Bottes qui fé *crin, crin*, Miché Bainjo.
Voyez ce mulet là, Miché Bainjo,
Comme il est insolent!

This, roughly translated, means:

Look at that darky there, Mr. Banjo,
Does n't he strut about!
Hat cocked on one side, Mr. Banjo,

His cane in his hand, Mr. Banjo,
Boots that go creak, creak, Mr. Banjo.
Does n't he strut about?

Another famous dance of the Creole Negroes was the counjaille. Cable gives part of one song which he says was one of the best-known of these counjaille songs, and was much over a hundred years old.

A Creole lady in New Orleans gave me a variant of this old counjaille.

UN DEUX TROIS



Un deux trois. Car - o - line qui fais com - me sa ma chere?



Un deux trois. Car - o - line qui fais com - me sa ma chere?



Maman dit oui, pa - pa dit non, Ce - lui mo lais, ce - lui mo prends.



Ma-man dit oui, pa - pa dit non, Ce - lui mo lais, ce - lui mo prends.

Un, deux, trois.
Caroline qui fais comme sa ma chere?
Un, deux, trois.
Caroline qui fais comme sa ma chere?
Maman dit oui, papa dit non,
Celui mo lais, celui mo prends.
Maman dit oui, papa dit non,
Celui mo lais, celui mo prends.

Translated, this reads:

One, two, three.
Caroline, what is the matter with you, my dear?
One, two, three.
Caroline, what is the matter with you, my dear?
Mama says yes, papa says no.
It is he I wish, it is he I'll have.
Mama says yes, papa says no.
It is he I wish, it is he I'll have.

Aurore Pradère is also a well-known counjaille song, Cable says.

AURORE PRADÈRE



Au - rore Pra-dère, belle 'ti' fille, Au - rore Pra-dère, belle 'ti' fille, Au-
 rore Pra-dère, belle 'ti' fille, C'est li mo ou - lé, C'est li ma prend. FINE
 Ya moun qui dit li trop zo - lie; Ya moun qui dit li pas po - lie; Tout
 ça ye dit—Sia! Mo bin fou bin! C'est li mo ou - lé, C'est li ma prend. D.C.

The English version goes:

Aurore Pradère, pretty maid,
 Aurore Pradère, pretty maid,
 Aurore Pradère, pretty maid,
 She's just what I want, and her I'll have.

Solo. Some folks says she's too pretty quite;
 Some folks says she's not polite;
 All this they say — Psha-a-ah!
 More fool am I!
 For she's what I want and her I'll have.

Chorus

Aurore Pradère, pretty maid,
 Aurore Pradère, pretty maid,
 Aurore Pradère, pretty maid,
 She's just what I want and her I'll have.

Solo. Some say she's going to the bad,
 Some say her mamma went mad;
 All this they say — Psha-a-ah!
 More fool am I!
 For she's what I want and her I'll have.

There was also the calinda, an indecent dance, which was forbidden in Louisiana after 1843, tradition says.

"The calinda was a dance of multitudes, a sort of vehement cotillion. The contortions of the encircling crowd were strange and terrible, the din was hideous. One calinda is still familiar to all Creole ears. It has long been a vehicle for the white Creole's satire. For generations the man in municipal politics was fortunate who escaped entirely a lampooning set to this air."

Clara Gottschalk Peterson gives a song, *Calinda*, also, in her collection, "Creole Songs from New Orleans in the Negro Dialect." The translation of her song deals with a Mister Mazireau who seemed like a bullfrog. The refrain was

Dance, dance, Calinda dim sin! boum! boum!

Cable's version is of a Judge Prebal who gave a ball and charged three dollars for the tickets. It ends,

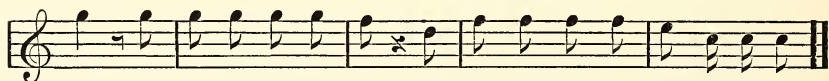
Dance Calinda, Bon-djoum!
Dance Calinda, Bon Bon-djoum!

In an article, "Creole Slave Songs," in the *Century Magazine*, 1886, George W. Cable gives various other dance-songs of the Creole slaves. One shows the satiric nature appearing in many of the Creole songs, as distinct from those of the slaves of other sections. It mocks the free colored folk, those who were bound by certain fixed conventions of their class. The quadroon woman, called here *milatraise*, could go to the ball, which was frequented by certain types of white men, and the black man, called here by a name signifying crocodile, attended her to the ball to light her way by a lantern — there being no street lights then, and the free quadroon man could go to the ball only as a musician — a menial position in those days.

MILATRAISSE COURRI DANS BAL



Mi-la-traisse cour-ri dans bal, Co-co-drie po' - té fa - nal, Trou-lou-



lou! C'est pas zaf-faire à tou, C'est pas zaf-faire à tou, Trouloulou!

Milatraise courri dans bal,
Cocodrie po'té fanal,
Trouloulou!
C'est pas zaffaire à tou,
C'est pas zaffaire à tou,
Trouloulou!

This says:

Yellow girl goes to the ball,
Nigger lights her to the hall,
Fiddler man!
Now, what is that to you?
Say, what is that to you?
Fiddler man?

Other Creole songs were given me by Mrs. La Rose and Mrs. Deywoodt, of New Orleans.

LE CHIEN

Il y a un petit chien chez nous,
Qui remue les pattes,
Qui remue les pattes,
Il y a un petit chien chez nous,
Qui remue les pattes tout comme vous.

Translated into English, this means:

There's a little dog at our house,
Who shakes his feet,
Who shakes his feet,
There's a little dog at our house,
Who shakes his feet just like you.

Another has to do with a young girl who married a very small man.

MAMMAN DONNE MOI UN PITIT MARI

Mamman donne moi un pitit mari.
Bon Dieu, quel le pitit!
Mo mette le chouche dans mo lite,
Bon Dieu, comme li si' t'on pitit!
Chatte rentre et prende li pour un sourit.
Bon Dieu, quel ti un homme qui li pitit!

Roughly translated, this means:

MAMA GAVE ME A LITTLE HUSBAND

Mama gave me a little husband.
My goodness, what a little man!
I put him to sleep in my bed, —
My goodness, what a little man!
The cat enters and takes him for a mouse.
My goodness, what a little man!

Another whimsical song, with not much meaning, is about a man walking on Common Street.

MO-TE-A-PE PROMENE SUR LA RUE COMMUNE

Mo - te a - pe prom-ene sur la Rue Com - mun - e,
 Quand Mo-te a - pe boire un bon verre la bierre Voi-
 là m'o cu - lot - te cra - quet et fais moin as - si par - ter - re.

Mo-te a-pe promene sur la Rue Commune,
 Quand Mo-te a-pe boire un bon berre la bierre.
 Voilà m'o culotte craquet et fais moin assi par terre.

What happened here was that a man was promenading on Common Street, in New Orleans, after he had had a drink of a good glass of beer. He met the narrator there and spanked him and made him sit down on the ground. The song gives no clue to any previous feud, but leaves the inference that perhaps the beer was to blame.

There are many other old dance-songs of the slavery days which have survived. Miss Virginia Fitzgerald sends me this one from Virginia:

BILE DEM CABBAGE DOWN

Marster had a old gray rooster
 Uster crow for day.
 There came along a harricane,
 And blowed dat chicken away.

Chorus

Bile dem cabbage down,
 Bile dem cabbage down;
 Stop dat foolishness, I say,
 And bile dem cabbage down!

Wish I had a tin box
 To keep my sweetheart in.
 I'd take her out and kiss her
 And put her back agin.

Chorus

Wish I had a needle and thread
 As fine as I could sew.
 I'd sew my sweetheart to my side
 And down de road I'd go.

Chorus

Sebenteen hundred and sebenty-six,
 De year I got my jawbone fixed,
 I put my jawbone on de fence,
 And I ain't seen dat jawbone sence.

Chorus

Some folks say de Debbil's dead
 And buried in a shoe.
 But I seed de Debbil t'other day
 And he looks jus' as good as you.

Chorus

If I had a scolding wife
 I'd whoop 'er sho's you born.
 Hitch her to a double plow
 And make her plow my corn.

She says, "I live in a typical inland county where my people have lived since before the Revolution and where many of the old customs and traditions still survive. . . . The old lady who has given me most of my songs is now bedridden and she amuses herself by writing out what she can remember. . . . There is an old-time fiddler and banjo-player here and I will get him to help me with the music, though he is very shy about playing now.

"This song was sung to me by an old lady of Nottaway County, Virginia, who had heard it before the war. The number of verses varies, but some at least are generally known. I have never heard a Negro sing it, but it is very hard to get a Nottaway Negro to sing anything but hymns. The music is suggestive of that of *Polly-Wolly-Doodle*, *O Susanna*, etc., and has a Negro swing to it. The fiddlers used it as a dance tune."

Thomas D. Rice, or Jim Crow Rice, as he was called, utilized an old Negro folk-song which he heard a slave sing in Louisville, Kentucky. William Winter relates the incident in his "Wallet of Time."

Jim Crow was old and had a deformity that caused him to limp peculiarly as he walked, and he would croon a queer old song, and "set his heel a-rocking" with the refrain,

Wheel about, turn about, do jes' so,
 And ebery time I wheel about, I jump Jim Crow!

Rice wrote other words for the song and elaborated a make-up after that of the old ducky, and created a sensation with it in a minstrel show.

The song attributed to Rice is as follows—though I do not know how much of it could be called a folk-song, or how much is Rice's composition. From various sections of the country I have received fragments of the song and the refrain, showing that it is a folk-song from usage, as well as in origin.

JIM CROW

Come, listen, all you gals and boys,
I'se just from Tuckyhoe.
I'm goin' to sing a little song,
My name 's Jim Crow.

I went down to de river,
I did n't mean to stay;
But dere I see so many gals
I could n't get away.

And arter I been dere awhile
I t'ought I push my boat;
But I tumbled in de river
An' I find myself afloat.

I git upon a flat boat
I cotch de Uncle Sam;
Den I went to see de place where
Dey killed de Packenham.

An' den I go to New Orleans
An' feel so full of fight,
Dey put me in de Calaboose
An' keep me dere all night.

When I got out I hit a man,
His name I now forgot;
But dere was nothin' left of him
'Cept a little grease spot.

Anoder day I hit a man,
De man was mighty fat;
I hit so hard I knocked him
To an old cockt hat.

I whipt my weight in wildcats,
I eat an alligator,
I drunk de Mississippi up!
O, I'm de very creature!

I sit upon a hornet's nest,
 I dance upon my head;
 I tie a wiper round my neck
 An' den I go to bed.

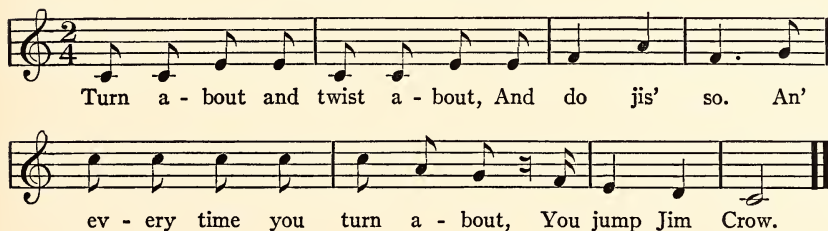
I kneel to de buzzard,
 An' I bow to de crow,
 An' ebery time I weel about,
 I jump jis' so.¹

Lydia Gumbel, of Straight College, New Orleans, sends a fragment which is said to be translated from the Creole, though I think that is probably a mistake, since it appears to be a part of this familiar old song.

"Whar you gwine, Buzzard?
 Whar you gwine, Crow?"
 "I'se gwine down to New Ground
 To jump Jim Crow.
 Every time I turn around
 I jump Jim Crow."

W. R. Boyd, Jr., gives this variant:

JUMP JIM CROW



Turn about and twist about,
 And do jis' so.
 An' every time you turn about,
 You jump Jim Crow.

Miss Fitzgerald sent another song, given her by an old lady who heard the Negro boys sing these as banjo tunes before the war.

MISS DINAH

I wish I was an apple
 Miss Dinah was another.
 An' O! what a happy pair we'd make
 On the tree together.

¹ This seems an authentic folk-song stanza.

An' oh! how jealous those darkies'd be
 When by my side they spied her.
 An' oh! what a happy pair we'd be,
 All squished up into cider.

Chorus

Oh! I love Miss Dinah so,
 Oh! I love Miss Dinah so.
 She was so gay as Christmas day;
 Yar, har! I love her so!

One day, one day by de margin of de ribber
 De wind blewed kinder fresh;
 An' it made Miss Dinah shibber;
 She shibbered so hard I thought she'd fall
 So in my arms I caught her;
 But when de wind blewed up again,
 It blewed us in de water.

Chorus

.

De people dey said dey thought us both was drowneded,
 Miss Dinah she was raked ashore,
 But I was never founded.

Chorus

These old dance-songs have a lively invitation which is still strong after all these years; for when one hears them, the feet instinctively pat in time and the body sways in rhythm with the lines. There is a gay abandon, an elemental joy about them. They are crude, yes, but who will say they are as cheap and vulgar as many of the songs people dance to to-day? They have their rough, primitive charm in music and in words, and they are in themselves worthy of our interest, apart from their historic association. They show us the lighter, happier side of slavery, and re-create for us the rustic merry-making of the slaves on many old plantations of the South. They deserve a volume to themselves.

V

CHILDREN'S GAME-SONGS

A NEGRO musician of Nashville, Tennessee (H. B. P. Johnson), said to me not long ago, "There are two aspects of Negro folk-music which I have never seen touched on, and which deserve to be discussed. . . . One is the children's game-songs. I wish you would write about them in your book." But the difficulty of getting hold of such material is greater than in the case of various other types of song, and but little effort has been made to collect it. Matthew Work, professor in Fisk University, who has done much to preserve the old spirituals and to restore them to the place of dignity they deserve, said to me recently: "I am planning a pageant which shall represent something of the history of our race. I need some children's game-songs, but I am having trouble finding them."

Perhaps the reason for this difficulty lies in the shyness of children, their reticence about what concerns them as a class. Children, I find, will more readily give you their confidence as to their own personal affairs, than with regard to the close fraternity of childhood. They will speak as *themselves* more easily than as *children*. There is a secret fellowship among children from which adults are shut out — save in rare instances where grown-ups still have the childlike heart, the warm, spontaneous sympathy. The "little folk" among mortals are as jealous of their secrets as the fairy tribe themselves, and you must either win them or else surprise them, if you are to learn anything of their hidden ways. No doubt many parents and teachers would be astonished to discover with what tolerance and humorous patronage the youngsters regard them; with what care they conceal their real thoughts and customs, as they hide their faces under puckish masks at Halloween.

By the time you are grown up and can consider the folk-ways of your childhood with detached impersonality, you have forgotten what was of most value. Rarely will a child tell frankly of his lore, and rarely can an adult remember. The years are flaming swords to bar us from the lost paradise of childhood. There is no magic carpet that can transport us at will to enchanted scenes we remember dimly, no time machine to whisk us back to any date we choose.

Once having left that age of gold, — with what shortsighted joy in growing-up! — we can look on childhood only from the leaden years of maturity, can know only vicariously its mystical delights through the experience of other children.

Perhaps another reason for the difficulty in capturing these same songs now — apart from the self-conscious secrecy of childhood in general, and the racial reticence of Negroes — is the fact that game-songs are not sung as much by any children now as formerly; for children, like their elders, at present incline to take their music from phonograph records and the radio, and are slipping away from the great body of unwritten folk-song. They crave the novel, and they are losing their birth-right of racial song. Nothing in juvenile entertainment can quite take the place of the old ring-games, with their nonsensical tunes. A child who has never sung hilariously while he danced or skipped through some old, fantastic game has been cheated of some inalienable right, and should seek redress from society.

One day, a year or so ago, while I was enjoying a solitary horse-back ride in a country district near Richmond, Virginia, I came into what is called Zion Town, a Negro settlement. A little group of children were circling about in a ring, holding hands. Inside the ring a plump pickaninny was squatting on the ground, while a slightly larger girl poked him vigorously with a stick. The ring skipped about, chanting merrily, and I reined my horse in and sat there to watch and listen.

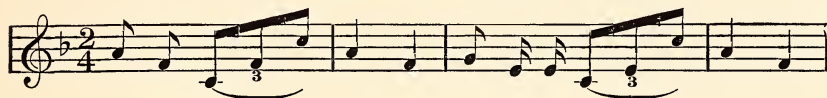
Frog in the middle
And can't get out.
Take a stick
And punch him out.

As the stanza ended, "Froggy," impelled by a prodigious prod, hopped lurchily out of the ring and someone else took his place. Memory flashed back scenes of my own early years when I had played that game myself. If I had not been afraid of breaking in on the fun, I should have got down off my horse and begged for the chance to be "Frog" once more. But I knew I should be regarded as an alien, and so I chirruped to Rob Roy and rode on.

Negro children on the plantations before the war had many of their own ring-games and songs, some of which have come down to us. Those youngsters, untroubled by school and too small to work, had command of their own time and enjoyed a free childhood that juveniles now might well envy.

Mrs. Harvey Carroll, of Austin, Texas, told me of game-songs that her mother, Mrs. Crawford, heard the children on plantations in Louisiana sing in the early days. One that she recalled was *Ransum Scansum*.

RANSUM SCANSUM



Ran-sum scansum, through yonder. Bring me a gourd to drink wa - ter.



Dis way out and t'other way in, In my la - dy's cham - ber.



Dis way out and t'other way in, In my la - dy's cham - ber.

Ransum scansum, through yonder.
 Bring me a gourd to drink water.
 Dis way out and t'other way in,
 In my lady's chamber.
 Dis way out and t'other way in,
 In my lady's chamber.

The children formed a ring, hands linked and arms held high. One child stood in the middle of the ring, which was "my lady's chamber," and as the song went on, would dodge in and out of the ring, under the uplifted arms. The tempo of the tune is spirited, and it is hard to put the syncopation accurately on paper.

Another version of this, which Mrs. Carroll gave as her mother recalled it, is a little different.

Aransom Shansom through yander,
 Bring me a go'd to drink water.
 Dis door's locked and t'other one's propped,
 In dat Lady's garden.
 Dis door's locked wid a double lock,
 In dat Lady's garden.
 Oh, Lawdy mercy, let me get out of here,
 In dat Lady's garden!

A Negro girl was in the centre of the ring, and at the conclusion of the song the players sang to a different tune:

That's a mighty purty motion,
 Susie gal!
 That's a mighty purty motion,
 Susie gal!
 In dat Lady's garden!

A writer under the pen name of Virginia Stait sends me a couple of game-songs from Virginia, which friends had given her with the assurance that they dated back to *ante-bellum* days.

LIPTO

Lipto, lipto, jine de ring,
 Lipto, lipto, dance an' sing;
 Dance an' sing, an' laugh an' play,
 Fur dis is now a holiday.
 Turn aroun' an' roun' an' roun',
 Clap yo' han's, an' make 'em soun';
 Bow yo' heads, an' bow 'em low,
 All jine han's, an' heah we go.

Lipto, lipto — fi-yi-yi,
 Lipto, lipto, heah am I,
 Er holdin' uv dis golden crown,
 An' I choose my gal fur ter dance me down.

Lipto, lipto, jine de ring,
 Lipto, lipto, dance an' sing;
 Dance an' sing, an' laugh an' play,
 Fur dis is now a holiday.
 Turn aroun' an' roun' an' roun',
 Clap yo' han's, an' make 'em soun';
 Bow yo' heads, an' bow 'em low;
 All jine han's, an' heah we go.

Lipto, lipto — fi-yi-yi,
 Lipto, lipto, heah am I,
 Er holdin' uv dis golden crown,
 An' I choose my man fur ter dance me down.

Louise Clarke Pyrnelle, in her book, "Diddy, Dumps and Tot," which describes child life on a plantation before the war, gives this as an authentic *ante-bellum* song. The game which it accompanied dramatized the various actions spoken of in the lines. The "gal" chosen must dance with the youth till one or the other "broke down," after which the girl chose a man by the same music.

Another song sent by the same contributor is typically negro. It also appears in much the same form in "Diddy, Dumps and Tot."

MONKEY MOTIONS

I ac' monkey motions, too-re-loo,
 I ac' monkey motions, so I do;
 I ac' 'em well an' dat's a fac' —
 I ac' jes' like de monkeys ac'.

I ac' gen'man motions, too-re-loo,
 I ac' gen'man motions, so I do;
 I ac' 'em well an' dat's a fac' —
 I ac' jes' like de gen'mans ac'.

I ac' lady motions, too-re-loo,
 I ac' lady motions, so I do;
 I ac' 'em well an' dat's a fac' —
 I ac' jes' like de ladies ac'.

I ac' chillun motions too-re-loo,
 I ac' chillun motions, so I do;
 I ac' 'em well an' dat's a fac' —
 I ac' jes' like de chillun ac'.

I ac' preacher motions, too-re-loo,
 I ac' preacher motions, so I do;
 I ac' 'em well an' dat's a fac' —
 I ac' jes' like de preachers ac'.

I ac' nigger motions, too-re-loo,
 I ac' nigger motions, so I do;
 I ac' 'em well an' dat's a fac' —
 I ac' jes' like de niggers ac'.

Mrs. Clarke Pynelle says that the leader would give dramatic illustration of the "motions" sung of, improvising according to his own whim, and seeking to entertain the crowd.

John Trotwood Moore, Librarian of the State Library of Tennessee, and author of many stories, poems, and novels depicting the Negro of former days as well as the present, gave a song which he said was used by the young Negroes in Alabama years ago. Mr. Moore said that it was his observation that the black Negroes, of pure African blood, were the ones who sang the folk-songs. The yellow ones, mulattoes or quadroons, cared less for folk-lore or song.

Dog'in the wood,
 Barking at the squirrel;
 My true love
 Is as good as the worl'.

Chorus

Mr. Banks, he loves sugar and tea,
 Mr. Banks, he loves candy.
 Mr. Banks he can whirl around
 And kiss the girls so handy.

Dog in the wood,
 Barking at the squirrel;
 Roses are red and violet blue,
 Sugar is sweet and so are you.

Chorus

We're walking,
 We're walking down our true love's lane;
 Oh, chillum, let us be happy,
 For we may not hunt again.

Chorus

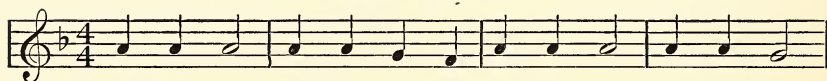
This was sung with a kissing-game. The name would be changed for each boy, who would pick another girl. A line was formed on each side, making an aisle, in which the singer acted the motions of the dog and the squirrel in the wood.

Mr. John Stone, of Mountfair, Virginia, president of the Virginia Folk-lore Society, sends me a couple of game-songs. "Several years ago while hunting ballads I found two singing-games of darky origin that may be of use to you.

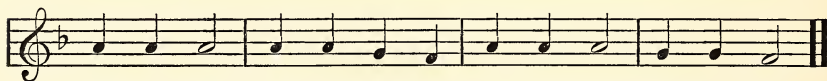
"In one game two people skip around a tree and sing:

"Hop, old squirrel, eidle-dum, eidle-dum,
 Hop, old squirrel, eidle-dum-dum,
 Hop, old squirrel, eidle-dum, eidle-dum,
 Hop, old squirrel, eidle-dum-dee!"

HOP, OLD SQUIRREL



Hop, old squirrel, eidle-dum, eidle-dum, Hop, old squirrel, eidle-dum-dum,



Hop, old squirrel, eidle-dum, eidle-dum, Hop, old squirrel, eidle-dum-dee!

"The second tries to catch the first. The song was given to me by a white lady, a descendant of William Byrd II. She had seen the darky play it. Afterwards I persuaded an old colored woman to show me how it was played. Words are improvised for it. She sang various things, such as:

"Catch the old squirrel, eidle-dum — eidle-dum,
 Catch the old squirrel, eidle-dum-dum-dum,
 Catch the old squirrel, eidle-dum — eidle-dum,
 Catch the old squirrel, eidle-dum-dee!"

"I'll give you fifty cents, eidle-dum — eidle-dum,
 I'll give you fifty cents, eidle-dum-dum-dum,
 I'll give you fifty cents, eidle-dum — eidle-dum,
 I'll give you fifty cents, eidle-dum-dee!"

Another squirrel game-song in use among the Negroes, and considered by its collector to be of undoubted African origin, perhaps brought over from the Congo, is given in an article, "Carols and Child-lore at the Capitol," by W. H. Babcock in *Lippincott's Magazine*, September, 1886. Whether of jungle or plantation origin, it is such as would appeal to the Negro, who so loves the out-of-doors and gives to animals his own intense feelings. Mr. Babcock says that two players stand face to face, to represent trees, while a third, taking the part of a squirrel, peeps round the trunk of one tree, at another squirrel not visible, but apparently off-stage. The chorus goes "pat and sing":

Peep, Squirrel, peep,
 Peep at your brother.
 Why should n't one fool
 Peep at another?

The fox, in the person of another player, comes up, at which the song changes to a warning:

Jump, Squirrel, jump!
 Jump, Squirrel, jump!
 Jump, or the fox will catch you;
 Jump, jump, jump!

When the squirrel sees the fox, he leaps round the tree and trots toward the other squirrel off-stage. As the fox follows him, the song becomes:

Trot, Squirrel, trot!
 Trot, Squirrel, trot!
 Trot, or the fox will catch you;
 Trot, trot, trot!

The squirrel trots faster, the excitement of beating time and singing increases, and the chorus becomes more animated:

Run, Squirrel, run!
 Run, Squirrel, run!
 Run, or the fox will catch you;
 Run, run, run!

The game finally turns into a whirl of dodging and leaping and furious pursuit. The squirrel cannot go far, as he must not leave his tree for any distance, and so he is inevitably caught.

In another article, "Games of Washington Children," in the *American Anthropologist* for July, 1888, the same author describes a game, and gives a song which is evidently a version of one sent me by Ella Oatman, of Houston, Texas. Mr. Babcock's song is called *Old Humpsy* and Miss Oatman's is *Old Ponto*.¹

This also is a ring-game. Three players are discovered inside the ring, one standing up straight to represent a tree, one — Old Humpsy, or Old Ponto — crouched beside the tree, and the third representing an old woman. As the song proceeds, the players dramatize the actions sung of, and when the end comes, each of the three selects in succession and the game and song begin all over again.

OLD PONTO IS DEAD

Old Pon - to is dead and laid in his grave,
 Laid in his grave, laid in his grave. Old Pon - to is
 dead and laid in his grave. Whoo! Whoo! Whoo! ..

Old Ponto is dead and laid in his grave,
 Laid in his grave, laid in his grave.
 Old Ponto is dead and laid in his grave.
 Whoo! whoo! whoo!

¹ Professor Kittredge writes me: "Your *Old Ponto is Dead* is an English song — still popular as a game-song. The person who is dead (in English and American versions) is Oliver Cromwell, Old Crompy, Old Crony, Old Pompey, Old Grundy, Old Grumley, Father Adam, Granddaddy, Sir Roger, Little Johnny Wattles, etc. See my note in the *Journal of American Folk-lore*, xxxv, 407."

There grew a large apple tree over his grave,
Over his grave, over his grave.
There grew a large apple tree over his grave.
Whoo! whoo! whoo!

The apples got ripe, beginning to fall,
Beginning to fall, beginning to fall.
The apples got ripe, beginning to fall.
Whoo! whoo! whoo!

There came an old woman a-picking them up,
A-picking them up, a-picking them up.
There came an old woman a-picking them up.
Whoo! whoo! whoo!

Old Ponto jumped up and gave her a thump,
And gave her a thump, and gave her a thump.
Old Ponto jumped up and gave her a thump.
Whoo! whoo! whoo!

It made the old woman go hippity-hop,
Hippity-hop, hippity-hop.
It made the old woman go hippity-hop.
Whoo! whoo! whoo!

Miss Oatman says, "As children we added the bridle-and-saddle
verse. I do not know whether it belongs or not."

The bridle and saddle are on the shelf,
On the shelf, on the shelf.
The bridle and saddle are on the shelf.
Whoo! whoo! whoo!

If you want any more you can sing it yourself,
Sing it yourself, sing it yourself.
If you want any more you can sing it yourself.
Whoo! whoo! whoo!

I have seen Negro children in Texas sing with glee some of the
games which the white children also sang, as *Farmer in the Dell*,
and so forth. I have seen them act out the following simple play.
One child would stand alone before his fellows and chant:

Here I stand
All ragged and dirty.
If you don't come kiss me
I'll run like a turkey.

I never saw the actual kiss given, as children in my region in my day did not play kissing-games. But some child of the opposite sex would come forward and tap the singer on the shoulder, after which he would take his place and sing.

Newell, in his "Games and Songs," gives an old kissing-game reported to be played by Negro children at Galveston, Texas, years ago, which is apparently a remote version of the Sleeping Beauty tale.

A girl pretends to be asleep, while a ring of children circle round her, singing:

Here we go round the strawberry bush,
This cold and frosty morning.

Here's a young lady sat down to sleep,
This cold and frosty morning.

She wants a young gentleman to wake her up,
This cold and frosty morning.

Mr. — his name is called,
This cold and frosty morning.

Arise, arise, upon your feet,
This cold and frosty morning.

After the kiss has been given, the sleeper wakes, and the game continues with some one else as central figure. This is a survival of an old English round.

I have seen Negro children in Texas play the old game, which we white youngsters also played, called "Chickamy, Chickamy, Crany Crow." This is a thrilling game, with a witch in it, and wild chasings and captures. A witch sits at one side, while a leader representing a mother hen enters, with a string of chickens behind her, each clinging to the garments of the chicken in front of him. The line circles fearfully about the witch, chanting:

Chickamy, chickamy, crany crow,
I went to the well to wash my toe.
When I came back one of my black-eyed chickens was gone.

The leader pauses near the witch and asks, "What time is it, old witch?" If the witch answers with any numeral less than twelve, the mother and chickens are safe for the moment, and circle around again, chanting, and again ask the hour. But if the old witch replies, "Twelve o'clock!" then she springs at them and they flee shrieking in terror. If the witch captures a chick, — as she surely does, — the

prisoner is put into a pen and the game begins with those that are left free.

Many — if not most — of these songs and games are of old English origin and have courtly traditions behind them, as their phrasing suggests. "My lady" of the old songs is changed in the Negro child's version to "some lady" or "dem ladies."

John Stone, of Virginia, sends this game-song, which was given him as used by Negroes. "The darkies would form a ring, as in 'dropping handkerchief,' but with hands behind them. One with a key would walk around the ring and place the key in some one's hands. Led by the walker, all would sing:

THE CLOSET KEY



I done lost de closet key
In dem ladies' garden;
I done lost de closet key
In dem ladies' garden.

The walker, leading all, would then sing:

Help me to find de closet key
In dem ladies' garden;
Help me to find de closet key
In dem ladies' garden.

All would then sing, led by the one having the key:

I done found de closet key
In dem ladies' garden;
I done found de closet key
In dem ladies' garden.

The one having the key would then hide it again and sing as before."

This is something like an old song given me years ago by Dorothy Renick, of Waco, Texas, who had learned it from Negroes.

IN SOME LADY'S GARDEN

Oh, somebody come and let me out of here.

I'se in some lady's garden.

I'll roll like a log if you let me out of here.

I'se in some lady's garden.

Oh, somebody come and let me out of here,

I'se in some lady's garden.

I'll pant like a lizard if you let me out of here.

I'se in some lady's garden.

Oh, somebody come and let me out of here.

I'se in some lady's garden.

I'll run like a rabbit if you let me out of here.

I'se in some lady's garden.

Oh, somebody come and let me out of here.

I'se in some lady's garden.

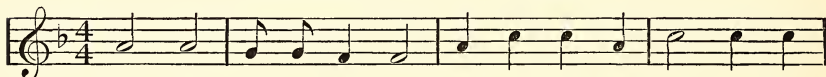
I'll kick like a donkey if you let me out of here.

I'se in some lady's garden.

There are endless variants for this, the actions of all imaginable natural-history specimens being offered as reward for release from the garden.

A song given by William Wells Newell in his "Games and Songs of American Children" (published by Harper and Brothers in 1884), as sung by Negro children, is evidently akin to these.

DO, DO, PITY MY CASE



Do, do, pit - y my case, In some la - dy's gar - den. My



clothes to wash when I get home, In some la - dy's gar - den.

Do, do, pity my case,

In some lady's garden.

My clothes to wash when I get home,

In some lady's garden.

Do, do, pity my case,

In some lady's garden.

My clothes to iron when I get home,

In some lady's garden.

Do, do, pity my case,
In some lady's garden.
My floors to scrub when I get home,
In some lady's garden.

And so on — the singers and players bewailing the tasks they must perform, of baking bread, and so forth.

Mr. Newell says: "Our informant remembers the game as danced by Negro children, their scanty garments flying as the ring spun about the trunk of some large tree — but this is evidently no Negro song."

A game-song used by Negro children in Louisiana was sent me by Mrs. Cammilla Breazeale, of Natchitoches. The actions sung of are represented by gesture as far as possible.

LITTLE GIRL

"Little girl, little girl," —
"Yes, ma'am."
"Did you go over the river?"
"Yes, ma'am."
"Did you see my hen?"
"Yes, ma'am."
"Did she lay an egg?"
"Yes, ma'am."
"Did you take it to yer mamma?"
"Yes, ma'am."
"Did she make it inter corn pone?"
"Yes, ma'am."
"Wid jest dat egg?"
"Yes, ma'am."
"Did she give you some?"
"Yes, ma'am."
"Oh, how 'd you like it?"
"Oh, very well."
"Little girl, little girl," —
"Yes, ma'am."
"Did you go over the river?"
"Yes, ma'am."
"Did you see my cow?"
"Yes, ma'am."
"Did you milk her down?"
"Yes, ma'am."
"Did you put it in a bucket?"
"Yes, ma'am."

"Did you take it to yer mamma?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Did she give you some?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Oh, how'd you like it?"

"Oh, very well."

This is sung antiphonally, the leader shouting one line and the crowd another. It is said that the rhythm of this is strong, and the children stamp their feet with vigor as they sing the nonsensical lines.

Dr. Charles Carroll, of New Orleans, told me of a queer song-game played by Negroes in which the players tied themselves in a knot. Unfortunately, he could remember but vaguely either the progress of the game or the song that accompanied it.

In an article, "Ring-Games from Georgia," in the *Journal of American Folk-lore*, volume xxx, Lorraine Darby gives various songs which she says are peculiar to the colored children of that region, southern Georgia.

"One of the prettiest is *The May Pole Song*. One girl skips about the inside of the ring, and at the singing of the fourth line bows to the one she chooses. Then both 'jump for joy,' a peculiar step rather like a clog, which outsiders find difficult to learn. Then the song is repeated, the second girl choosing, and so on."

All around the May pole,
The May pole, the May pole;
All around the May pole,
Now, Miss Sallie, won't you bow?
Now, Miss Sallie, won't you jump for joy,
Jump for joy, jump for joy?
Now, Miss Sallie, won't you jump for joy,
Now, Miss Sallie, won't you bow?

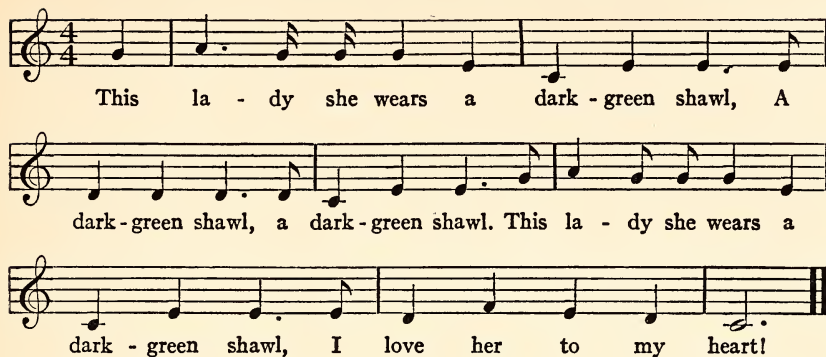
Miss Darby says, "Perhaps the most charming of all is:

THIS LADY SHE WEARS A DARK-GREEN SHAWL

This lady she wears a dark-green shawl,
A dark-green shawl, a dark-green shawl.
This lady she wears a dark-green shawl,
I love her to my heart!

Now choose for your lover, honey, my love,
Honey, my love! Honey, my love!
Now choose for your lover, honey, my love,
I love her to my heart!

THIS LADY SHE WEARS A DARK-GREEN SHAWL



Now dance with your lover, honey, my love,
 Honey, my love! Honey, my love!
 Throw your arms round your lover, honey, my love,
 I love her to my heart!

Farewell to your lover, honey, my love,
 Honey, my love! Honey, my love!
 Farewell to your lover, honey, my love,
 I love her to my heart!"

There are many more of these games and songs which have never been set down in print and which are like to perish if they are not captured soon. Children to-day are singing them but little in comparison with those of the past, and since these old songs depend on oral transmission for their passing from one generation to another, it is easy to see how slight their hold is becoming. Children grow up so quickly now — and how can they remember what they do not know? Yet what a tragedy it is to let these precious folk-memories fade away, and to lose traditions and songs that have given pleasure for centuries! Parents and teachers and social workers could do a service of real value here, if they would set down these quaint and lively old game-songs as they learn them from children or find them in the recollections of older people. When they are once lost, how shall they be recaptured?

VI

LULLABIES

NO figure of the old South was more vivid or more beloved than the "black mammy," with her white apron and her gay bandana, or *tignon*, on her head, tending her small charges. She has come down to us of a later generation in story and song, as well as in the fond recollections of those who knew her care. "Mammy" held an honored place in the home, for the white children were taught to respect and obey her; and when they grew up, they loved her as a second mother. An amusing instance of this is related by Mrs. Anna Hordeman Meade, in her volume of plantation recollections, "When I Was a Little Girl." Mammy was an autocrat whose boast was, "I got Injun blood in dese yer veins!" and who scorned the overseer as "po' white folks." Once, when the master and mistress were away from home and a grown son came home to take charge of affairs, the overseer complained to him:

"Doctor, this old woman's insolence is becoming unbearable and I want to ask your advice about punishing her."

"What old woman?" asked our uncle.

"The one they call Mammy, Sir. She ought to be sent to the fields, Sir."

"What — what!" said Uncle Stewart in amazed and amused consternation. "Why, I would as soon think of punishing my own mother! Why, man, you'd have four of the biggest men in Mississippi down on you if you even dare suggest such a thing, and she knows it! All you can do is to knuckle down to Mammy."

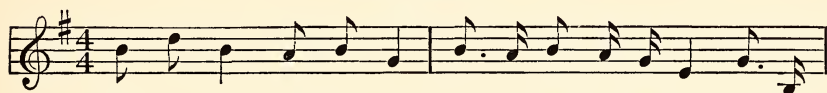
The peculiar conditions of slavery made the Negro nurse lavish more affection — or at least more demonstration of affection — on her white charges than on her own children. Negro children on many plantations received a sort of communal care. I saw on a plantation in Louisiana a house that in slavery times was used as a day nursery, where the mothers left their children in care of one or two old women, while they worked in the fields. They would come in at intervals to nurse the babies and then go back to the cotton-row or the rice- or cane-fields. In many cases mother love was thwarted and driven back upon itself under an institution which separated parent and

child, when one or the other might be sold; so the black mother often spent her tenderest love on the white child she nursed, and some of the most characteristic of the Negro folk-songs are the lullabies by which she crooned her baby — white or black — to sleep.

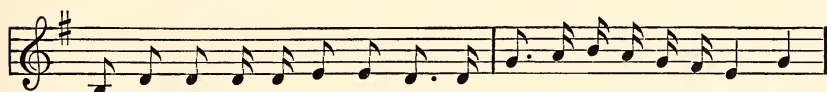
There is one lullaby which is widely known through the South and which is reported in many varying forms, but with the spirit and the tune practically the same.

One version is given by my sister, Mrs. George Scarborough, who learned it from Negroes in Grimes County, Texas, in her childhood, and later sang her babies to sleep by it.

LULLABY



Hush - a - by, Don't you cry, Go to sleep, lit - tle ba - by. And



when you wake, You shall have a cake, And all the pretty lit - tle pon - ies.



Paint and bay, Sor-rel and gray, All the pret-ty lit-tle pon - ies. So



hush - a - by, Don't you cry, Go to sleep, lit - tle ba - by.

Hushaby,
 Don't you cry,
 Go to sleep, little baby.
 And when you wake,
 You shall have a cake,
 And all the pretty little ponies.
 Paint and bay,
 Sorrel and gray,
 All the pretty little ponies.
 So hushaby,
 Don't you cry,
 Go to sleep, little baby.

Dorothy Renick, of Waco, Texas, gave me a variant several years ago, as learned from Negro mammies.

NEGRO FOLK-SONGS

Hushaby,
And don't you cry,
My sweet, pretty little baby.
When you wake, you shall have cake,
And oh, the pretty little horses.

Four little ponies you shall have,
All the pretty little ponies,
White and gray, black and bay,
Oh, the pretty little horses.

I had another version from Louree Peoples, of Texas, through the courtesy of Professor A. J. Armstrong, of Baylor University.

GO TO SLEEPY, LITTLE BABY

Go to sleepy, little baby,
Go to sleepy, little baby.
Mammy and daddy have both gone away
And left nobody for to mind you.
So rockaby,
And don't you cry.
And go to sleepy, little baby.
And when you wake
You can ride
All the pretty little ponies.

Paint and bay,
Sorrel and a gray,
And all the pretty little ponies.
So go to sleepy, little baby.
Rockaby
And don't you cry
And go to sleep, my baby.

A version was given by Mrs. Tom Bartlett, of Marlin, who writes:
"I wonder if you have thought of that old lullaby which every Negro mammy sings? Here it is as I remember it."

GO TO SLEEP, LITTLE BABY

Go to sleep, little baby,
Go to sleep, little baby!
When you wake,
You shall have
All the pretty little ponies.

All the ponies in the lot
Belong to Mammy's little baby!
Black and bay,
White and gray,
All belong to Mammy's baby.

Go to sleep, little baby,
Go to sleep, little baby!
When you wake,
You shall have a little cake,
And all the pretty little ponies!
Hushaby, and don't you cry,
Go to sleep, little baby!
Black and bay,
White and gray,
All belong to Mammy's baby!

Mrs. Miller, of Louisiana, gave me a version which she had heard sung in her childhood by the Negroes on a Mississippi plantation.

Go to sleep, little baby.
Daddy run away,
An' lef' nobody with the baby!

Daddy an' Mammy went down town
To see their pretty little horses.
All the horses in that stable
Belong to this little baby!

Mrs. Cammilla Breazeale sends a version given her by a Negro woman, who said that it was a "baby" song. This is an interesting combination of the lullaby given above and another more gruesome one, which is yet sung in various places.

Go to sleep, little baby,
When you wake
You shall have
All the mulies in the stable.
Buzzards and flies
Picking out its eyes,
Pore little baby crying,
Mamma, mamma!

Mrs. D. M. Diggs, formerly of Lynchburg, Virginia, gave the following song, which is an old lullaby, one that Negro mammies sang to the children, and which has come down for generations in Virginia.

OLE COW

Slowly and with marked rhythm

"Ole cow, ole cow, where is your calf?" "'Way down
yon - der in de mead - ow. De buz-zards an' de flies a -
pick-in' out its eyes. De po' li'l thing cried, *Mam - my!*"

"Ole cow, ole cow,
Where is your calf?"
"'Way down yonder in de meadow.
De buzzards an' de flies
A-pickin' out its eyes.
De po' li'l thing cried, *Mammy!*"

Mrs. Charles Carroll, of New Orleans, gave me a variant of this, which from the rhyme would appear to be the original version.

'Way down yonder
In de meadow
There's a po' little lambie.
The bees and the butterflies
Peckin' out its eyes.
Po' li'l thing cried, *Mammy!*

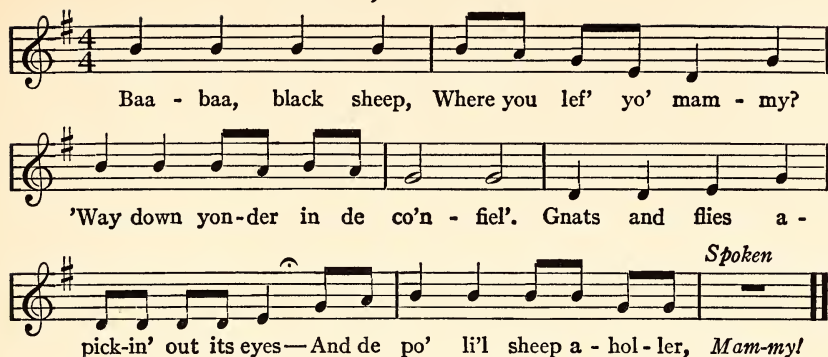
This she heard her grandmother sing, as she learned it from the Negroes on her Louisiana plantation.

A variant of this was sung by Tom, the colored butler at Curls Neck Farm, Virginia. Jeannette Freeman, who later gave me the words and air, says that this is also sung in South Carolina in the same form, as reported to her by various college girls from that state.

BAA-BAA, BLACK SHEEP

"Baa-baa, black sheep,
Where you lef' yo' mammy?"
"'Way down yonder in de co'nfiel'.
Gnats and flies
A-pickin' out its eyes —
And de po' li'l sheep a-holler, *Mammy!*"

BAA-BAA, BLACK SHEEP



Another painful lullaby of a somewhat similar nature was given me by Mrs. Charles Carroll, who had learned it on her father's plantation in North Louisiana.

Three old black crows sat on a tree,
And all were black as black can be,
Pappa's old horse took sick and died,
And the old black crows picked out its eyes.

These latter lullabies present rather melancholy and depressing pictures, and, it might be thought, would produce bad dreams on the part of infantile sleepers. Surely they are not of a type that modern white mothers would choose to croon babies to sleep by, but Negro mammies knew not of dream-complexes and would have called Freud's ideas "tom-foolishness."

Another favorite hushaby song, which many Negro mammies confess to knowing, and which numerous white acquaintances remember dropping off to sleep by, is *Short'nin' Bread*. This has a lively tune which might easily have entertained an infant enough to keep him wide awake. Of the following version the first stanza and the chorus, as well as the air, were given by Jean Feild, of Richmond, Virginia, and the other stanzas by Professor Wirt Williams, of Mississippi.

SHORT'NIN' BREAD

Put on de skillet,
Put on de led;
Mammy's gwine to make
A li'l short'nin' bread.
Dat ain't all

Dat she's gwine to do —
 She's gwine to make
 A li'l coffee, too.

Chorus

Mammy's li'l baby loves short'nin', short'nin',
 Mammy's li'l baby loves short'nin' bread.
 Mammy's li'l baby loves short'nin', short'nin',
 Mammy's li'l baby loves short'nin' bread.

SHORT'NIN' BREAD

Put on de skil - let, . . Put on de led; Mammy's gwine to
 make a li'l short' - nin' bread. Dat ain't all dat she's gwine to do—
 CHORUS
 She's gwine to make a li'l cof - fee too. Mammy's li'l ba - by loves
 short' - nin', short'-nin',—Mammy's li'l ba - by loves short' - nin' bread.

Three li'l Niggers
 Lyin' in bed.
 Two wuz sick
 An' t'ther 'most dead.
 Sont fo' de doctor,
 An' de doctor said,
 "Give dem Niggers
 Some short'nin' bread!"

Chorus

I slipped in de kitchen,
 An' slipped up de led,
 An' I slipped my pockets
 Full ob short'nin' bread.
 I stole de skillet,
 I stole de led,
 I stole de gal
 To make short'nin' bread.

Chorus

Dey caught me wid de skillet,
 Dey caught me wid de led,
 An' dey caught me wid de gal
 Cookin' short'nin' bread.
 Paid six dollars for de skillet,
 Six dollars for de led,
 Stayed six months in jail,
 Eatin' short'nin' bread.

Chorus

Mrs. D. M. Diggs sends another slightly different stanza from Lynchburg, Virginia. She says it is a very old song that she learned from black mammies, who had sung many little ones to sleep by it.

SHORT'NIN' BREAD

Brightly and with emphasis

Run here, Mammy, run here quick!
 Short'nin' bread done made me sick!
 Mammy get-a short'nin', short'nin', short'nin',
 Mammy get-a short'nin', short'nin' bread.

It might be explained for the benefit of those who have never lived in the South that "short'nin' bread," or "cracklin' bread," as it is as often called, is considered a great delicacy among colored people. It is a kind of bread made very rich by having bacon gravy and bits of crisp bacon mixed in it. "Cracklin' bread" was made on the plantation at "hog-killing time," we are told. It is still heard of, though not so popular now as in earlier times. Professor and Mrs. W. H. Thomas — of the Agricultural and Mechanical College, of Texas — have heard little plantation darkies of the present day sing:

Ain't I glad
 The old sow's dead:
 Mammy's gwine to make
 A little short'nin' bread.

"Cracklin' bread" is delicious even to a more aristocratic palate, though it is so rich that one cannot eat much of it at a time.

Dorothy and Virginia Carroll, of New Orleans, contribute an additional stanza concerning the small darkies and this favored delicacy.

Two little Niggers lyin' in bed,
 One turned over and the other one said:
 "Mah baby loves short'nin' bread,
 Mah baby loves candy."

The following lines given by the Carroll children are obviously akin to the other, though perhaps not a part of *Short'nin' Bread*.

I know somep'n I ain't going to tell;
 Three little Niggers in a peanut shell,
 One can read and one can write
 And one can smoke his father's pipe.

Mr. More, of Charlotte, North Carolina, gave Miss Gullidge a slightly different version of the "short'nin' bread" song.

PUT ON THE SKILLET



Put 'on de skil-let, Nev-er mind de led, Granny gwine to cook a lit-tle



short'-ing bread. My ba-by loves short'ing, My ba-by loves short'ing bread.

Put on de skillet,
 Never mind de led,
 Granny gwine to cook a little short'ing bread.

Chorus

My baby loves short'ing,
 My baby loves short'ing bread.

Two little Niggers
 Lyin' in bed,
 Heels cracked open lack short'ing bread.

Chorus

Who's been a-courtin',
 Who's been a-tryin',
 Who's been a-courtin' dat gal o' mine?

Chorus

There are certain lullabies that are distinctly expressive of the colored mother's love for her own child, and made to be sung to pickaninnies, not white babies. One such was sent me by Howard Snyder from his Mississippi plantation, the place which has appeared distinctively in his "Plantation Pictures" in various magazines. This is a combination of the old counting nonsense jingle, "Eenie, Meenie, Miny, Mo," and an overflowing of mother love.

Leddle bit-a Niggeh an' a great big toe,
 Meenie miny mo.
 Leddle bit-a Niggeh wid a great big fis',
 Jes' de size fo' his mammy to kiss.
 Leddle bit-a Niggeh wid big black eyes,
 Bright as de sun up in de skies.
 Leddle bit-a Niggeh wid big black eyes,
 Meenie minie mo.

Two fragments marked "Baby Songs" were given by a colored woman in Natchitoches, Louisiana, to Mrs. Cammilla Breazeale, who sent them to me. One can see the nodding, kinky head falling over on the mother's breast as "Mammy" croons these words:

Toolie low, toolie low, loolie low,
 I am Mammy's little black baby child.
 Toodie noodie, mammy's baby,
 Toodie noodie, mammy's child,
 Toodie, noodie, toodie.

One cradle-song of this character was contributed by Mrs. Richard Clough Thompson, of Arkansas. Mrs. Thompson has made considerable study of the Indian and Negro folk-lore of her state and has collected a number of songs, some of which she loaned for this volume.

CRADLE SONG

O Lulie, O Lulie, if you please,
 Let me fall upon my knees;
 Rock de cradle,
 Rock de cradle,
 Rock de cradle, Joe.

Joe cut off his big toe
 And hung it up to dry.
 All de gals began to laugh
 An' Joe began to cry.
 Rock de cradle,
 Rock de cradle,
 Rock de cradle, Joe.

The first four lines of the second stanza were sung in Texas also, for I have heard them from my mother in my childhood. She had learned them from the colored children on her father's plantation.

Betsy Camp, of Franklin, Virginia, sang the following nonsense stanza, as remembered from the singing of old Negroes on her father's place. One can imagine a sleepy child rousing up to hear a noise, and soothed to slumber by this droning chant:

WHO DAT?

Who dat tap-pin' at de win-dow? Who dat knock-in' at de do'?

Mam-my tap-pin' at de win-dow, Pap-py knock-in' at de do'.

Who dat tappin' at de window?
 Who dat knockin' at de do'?
 Mammy tappin' at de window,
 Pappy knockin' at de do'.

Two Creole slumber-songs, as sung by the Negroes in the Creole patois, that quaint speech of the Louisiana Negroes under French influence, were given me by Creole ladies in New Orleans, Mrs. J. O. La Rose and Mrs. Deynoodt.

FAIS DO DO, MINETTE

Fais do do, Minette,
 Chere pitit cochon du laite.
 Fais do do, mo chere pitit,
 Jusqu'à trappe l'âge quinze ans.
 Quand quinze ans a pale couri,
 M'o pale marie vous avec monsieur le martine.

FAIS DO DO, MINETTE

Fais do do, Min - et - te, Chere pi - tit co-chon du lai - te.

Fais do do, mo chere pi - tit, Jus-qu'à trap-pe l'âge quin - ze ans.

Quand quin - ze ans a pa - le cou - ri,

M'o pa - le ma - ri - e vous a - vec mon - sieur le .. mar - ti - ne.

I neglected to get the translations of these songs from the ladies who gave them, but Julian E. Harris, of the French Department of Columbia, assisted me in putting them into English. *Fais Do Do*, *Minette* means:

Go to sleep, Minette,
 Dear little baby,
 Go to sleep, my dear little baby,
 Till you are fifteen years old.
 When you have got to be fifteen years old,
 You shall have the martine for a husband.

Minette was obviously a girl baby, but the infant addressed in the other Creole lullaby given by the same ladies is as unmistakably a boy.

FAIS DO DO, COLAS

Fais do do, Colas, mon petit frere,
 Fais do do, t'auras du gateau.
 Papa e aura,
 Et moi j'un aurai,
 Tout un plein panier.

Here some "little mother" is singing to her small brother, promising him reward if he will go to sleep. Perhaps she would like to dispose of him promptly, so that she could escape to her play, unhampered by vicarious maternal duties.

In English this would be somewhat as follows. The Creole patois with its cryptic peculiarities of speech is difficult to translate — as it

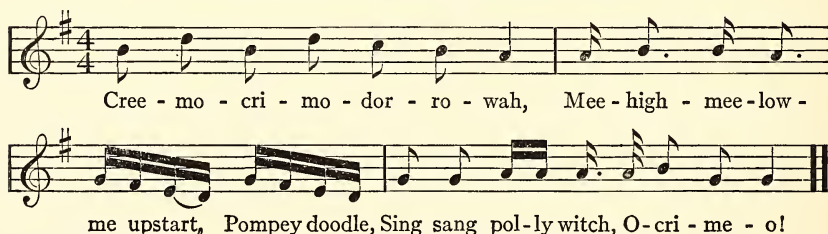
would be hard to put ordinary Negro dialect of a pronounced type into French, for example:

Go to sleep, my little brother.
Go to sleep. You shall have some cake.
Papa will have some,
And I will have some,
A whole basket full.

The promise of cake as payment for dropping off to sleep soon, in this lullaby, is reminiscent of that in the variants of the first given in this discussion. Cake evidently formed a more customary part of the baby's diet in older times than now — though perhaps the promise was only a sort of poetic license, not to be taken seriously when the sleeper awoke. A night's slumber might be supposed to wipe out remembrance of what had been necessary to produce it.

An old nursery song remembered from the singing of various black mammies of the South has the appearance of being an antique English nonsense jingle. I heard my mother sing it in my childhood, as she knew it from the Negroes on her father's plantation in East Texas. A version was given me by Kate Langley Bosher, of Richmond, Virginia, who said that she had been sung to sleep by it in her babyhood, her black nurse rattling it off.

CREE-MO-CRI-MO-DORRO-WAH



Cree-mo-cri-mo-dorro-wah,
Mee-high-mee-low-me upstart,
Pompey doodle,
Sing sang polly witch,
O-cri-meo!

A slightly different version was contributed by Dorothy Renick, of Waco, Texas, as she had heard colored nurses sing it.

Way down south on a cedar creek;
Sing-song-Polly, won't you ki' me oh?
There the Niggers grow ten feet;
Sing-song-Polly, won't you ki' me oh?

Chorus

Kee mo, ki mo, darro war,
Hima-homa patta patta winka,
Singa-song nipper cat,
Sing-song-Polly, won't you ki' me oh?

Dey go to bed but 't ain't no use;
Sing-song-Polly, won't you ki' me oh?
Feet stick out for de chicken's roost,
Sing-song-Polly, won't you ki' me oh?

Chorus

A charming little lullaby was sent me by Professor J. C. Metcalfe, of the University of Virginia. One of his students, Betty Jones, had given it to him. It has a simplicity and rustic charm that are delightful.

Oh, the wind is in the west,
And the guinea's on her nest,
And I can't get any rest
For my baby!
I'll tell papa when he comes home
Somebody beat my little baby!

A variant of this, written down for me by a Negro woman in Louisiana and given to Mrs. Breazeale for me, has a homely quaintness particularly characteristic of the rustic Negro mother. I have left the spelling just as the woman wrote it out for me. Though "bookerman" is n't in the dictionary, any child in the South knows what it means.

Go to sleep, little baby,
Before the bookerman catch you.
Turkey in the nest
Can't get a rest,
Can't get a rest for the baby.

Vivid imagery and dramatic dialogue are to be found in a lullaby sent by Mrs. Diggs from Lynchburg, Virginia.

GREAT BIG DOG

Great big dog come a-runnin' down de river,
Shook his tail an' jarred de meadow.
Go 'way, ole dog, go 'way, ole dog,
You shan't have my baby.
Mother loves you, Father loves you,
Ev'ybody loves Baby.
Mother loves you, Father loves you,
Ev'ybody loves Baby.

GREAT BIG DOG

Great big dog come a - run-nin' down de riv - er, Shook his tail an'
 jarred de meadow. Go 'way, ole dog, go 'way, ole dog, You shan't have my
 ba - by. Mother loves you, Father loves you, Ev - 'y-bod-y loves
 Ba - by. Mother loves you, Father loves you, Ev - 'y-bod-y loves Ba - by.

One would suppose the picture enough to frighten a child out of, instead of soothing him into, sleep. But black mammies, while they did not know psychology as a technical study, yet were wise in the knowledge of child fancies, and if they conjured up the fearsome image of a great black dog, they were as able to banish it at will.

A more formal lullaby was given me by Mrs. C. E. Railing, formerly of Virginia, who had the words from Miss Caroline Newcomb, of Shreveport, Louisiana. Mrs. Railing has set the words to music of her own — which, not being folk-music, is not given here. But she thinks the words belong to a genuine folk-song of the Negroes.

MAMMY'S LITTLE BOY

Who all de time a-hidin'
 In de cotton an' de corn?
 Mammy's little boy,
 Mammy's little boy.
 Who all de time a-blowin'
 Ol' Massa's dinner horn?
 Mammy's little baby boy.

Chorus

An' he come to his mammy,
 An' she ketch him on her arm,
 Mammy's little boy,
 Mammy's little boy.
 An' a bye-bye,
 Mammy's little baby boy!

Who all de time a-stealin'
Of de shovel an' de rake?
Mammy's little boy,
Mammy's little boy.

Who all de time a-ridin'
Of dat great big lazy drake?
Mammy's little baby boy! *Chorus*

Who all de time a-runnin'
To de kitchen for a bite?
Mammy's little boy,
Mammy's little boy.

Who mess hisself wid 'taters
Till his clo'se is jes' a sight?
Mammy's little baby boy. *Chorus*

Who all de time a-fussin'
When you go to wash his skin?
Mammy's little boy,
Mammy's little boy.

Who fuss an' cry an' holler
When you take him out de tub,
Cause he want to get back in?
Mammy's little baby boy. *Chorus*

Who all de time a-fussin'
Fo' 'lasses on his bread?
Mammy's little boy,
Mammy's little boy.

Who all de time a-fallin'
An' bump his little head?
Mammy's little baby boy. *Chorus*

An examination of these Negro lullabies as a whole shows that the music is simple, with the elemental simplicity that belongs to childhood. There is a crooning sweetness about them, a tenderness as manifest in the tones as in the words, which one finds infinitely appealing. One discerns in them something more than ordinary mother-love, — as marvellous as that is, — a racial mother-heart which can take in not only its own babies, but those of another, dominant, race as well. What other nation of mothers has ever patiently and with a beautiful sacrifice put alien children ahead of its own — in outward devotion if not in actual fact? Remembrance of the spirit back of these lullabies gives them a more poignant beauty. Yet even without that, even in themselves, they are lovely enough to deserve the study of musicians and poets. The words are sometimes compounded of that jovial nonsense which charms chil-

dren, but sometimes of a lyric beauty that is surprising. Can Tennyson's much-advertised "wind of the western sea" compare in simple naturalness and charm with that in the dateless, authorless lullaby which sings:

Oh, the wind is in the west,
And the guinea's on her nest,
And I can't find any rest
For my baby.

The imagery here is more spontaneous, more sincere in its appeal to childish fancy; for one sees the guinea — shy, wild creature that nests stealthily so that one rarely sees her at her hiding-place — settling down in peace in some secret place secure from surprise.

We see in these songs the kindly soul of the black nurse, promising the child, who is fighting off sleep with that instinctive resistance symbolic of our older dread of the long sleep, anything he wishes if he will but yield to slumber. He may have all conceivable indigestibles, from cake to short'nin' bread, or he may possess and ride the ponies or wild horses or mules he is forbidden to approach in his waking hours. How like our human hope that another sleep will yield us joys not realized here!

These Negro lullabies have their quaint terrors, too, their repellent suggestions, which might upset a child unused to them. But baby calves and lambies dead under sorrowful conditions, great big dogs that shake the meadow, and the like, may have but brightened the sense of peace and security which a "baby child" felt in its mammy's safe embrace. *Ole Bangum and the Boar*, with its cave where lay the bones of a thousand men, lulled to sleep many prominent Southerners, including General Taylor and President Madison, as has been mentioned before. And the song of the murderous Jew's daughter, slaying the errant little boy, was used as a lullaby by Negro mammies.

The antiseptic, hygienically brought-up child to-day might suffer if he heard such suggestions just before he went to sleep. But then he misses more than he escapes, for the ample bosom and enveloping arm of a black nurse might be more germly than a hospital ward, yet they are vastly comforting; and the youngster who is put to bed and made to seek slumber by himself in a dark room may experience more alarms than any that terrifying good-night songs might give him.

These simple, homely songs have a touching charm that professionally composed lullabies usually lack, for, as Mr. H. E. Krehbiel recently said, folk-songs are "the most truthful and the most moving music in the world."

VII

SONGS ABOUT ANIMALS

THE Negro is perhaps in his happiest mood when he is making songs about animals. The living creatures around him are very real to him, and eternally interesting. He makes them the objects of his amused observation, his philosophic study, and he delights to rhyme their characteristics. He elevates them to his own range of thought and emotion — anthropomorphizes them, as a theologian would say, endowing them with whatever power of reason or cunning he himself possesses. The Negro moralizes little about the much-mentioned but little followed “brotherhood of man,” but he makes a good deal in his folk-lore of the confraternity of the animal world. He gives his cordial recognition to whatever draws breath. As he greets his fellow church-member or lodge comrade as “Brother,” — or “Sister,” — so he speaks of “Bre’r Rabbit,” “Bre’r B’ar,” “Mr. Tarrepin and Mr. Toad,” “Ol’ King Buzzard,” and so on. He admires whatever excellent traits they possess, and deprecates their shortcomings with a tolerance that condones lapses from ethical standards, as if mutely requesting similar sympathy with his own failings. His charity, like his humor, is wide and deep.

The Negro does not sermonize about a bird or beast, as a sophisticated poet might, or seek to tag a Wordsworthian moral to every incident. He simply finds all live things entertaining, and likes to talk or sing about them. He is closer to nature than even the ancient Greeks or Romans were; for his nature imagery is more spontaneous and less studied, simpler and not so far-fetched. He stays nearer to the earth. He can be more chummy with his “horny ox” or “mulie” than an ancient could with a centaur or Pegasus, and yet he finds him quite as diverting and as full of surprising traits. A mule never lacks kick for the darky, and a mild-seeming goat has plenty of punch. A small Negro boy drives a cow to pasture with the air of a courtier escorting a queen; while an old woman converses with her cat or her hen on affairs nearest her heart. The confidential manner of an old colored man toward a slat-ribbed hound is impressive — the attitude of one philosopher in the presence of another. We overhear only one side of discussions between such friends, but may feel sure that messages too subtle for our comprehension pass wordlessly.

The Negro has a special tact in dealing with animals, and can get more sympathetic response from them than can a white person, as a rule. The voice of an old fellow urging on the race horse he has tended can speed him to victory better than another. This immemorial fellowship with what we call the lower creatures is a part of the Negro's being and sings itself in his folk-songs. Folk-songs are dateless and can be placed with respect to time only as they celebrate certain events or changing conditions of society, but many of the songs known to belong to slavery times are about animals. For example, in "Slave Songs of the United States," published in 1867, we find the following, which was even then so old that it had no tradition of authorship. It seems really a combination of fragments from various Negro folk-songs of early origin.

CHARLESTON GALS

As I walked down the new - cut road, I met the tap and
 then the toad. The toad commenced to whis - tle and sing, And the
 pos - sum cut the pig - eon's wing. A - long come an old man
 rid - ing by; "Old man, if you don't mind, your horse will die."
 "If he dies, I'll tan his skin, And if he lives, I'll ride him a - gin."
 Hi - ho, for Charleston gals, Charleston gals are the gals for me.

As I walked down the new-cut road,
 I met the tap and then the toad.
 The toad commenced to whistle and sing,
 And the possum cut the pigeon's wing.

Along come an old man riding by;
 "Old man, if you don't mind, your horse will die."
 "If he dies, I'll tan his skin,
 And if he lives, I'll ride him agin."
 Hiho, for Charleston gals,
 Charleston gals are the gals for me.

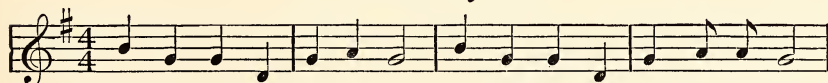
As I went walking down the street,
 Up steps Charleston gals to take a walk with me.
 I kep' a-walking and they kep' a-talking,
 I danced with a gal with a hole in her stocking.

An amusing instance of the inaccuracy of oral transmission of song is seen in this rendering of the second line of the first stanza, which should read, of course, according to many authentic reports from the field, "I met the tarrepin and the toad." This collector — a Northerner, I fancy, unaccustomed to Negro dialect and terminology — put down what he *thought* he heard, which does not make sense. The Negro puts together nonsensical lines, but they usually have their own queer logic. Another variation from what the darky said is in the last line of the same stanza. It should read "cut the pigeon-wing" and not "cut the pigeon's wing." No actual bird is referred to here, but a characteristic Negro dance movement.

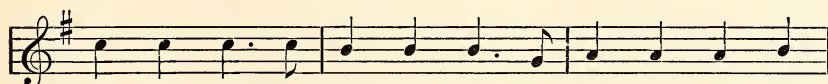
Dorothy Renick, of Waco, Texas, sent a version of the stanza, with a chorus which has obviously been lifted from another old-time song, *Pretty Betty Martin*. She says this was an old banjo song.

Will Harris, of Richmond, contributes a different version of the second theme of the old song:

OLE MARSE JOHN

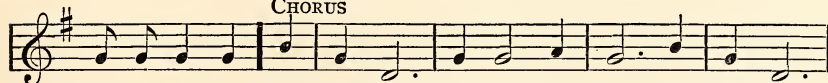


Ole Marse John come rid-in' by. Say, Marse John, dat mule's gwine to die.

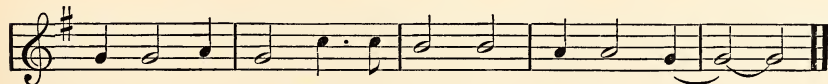


Ef he die, I'll tan his skin, An' ef he don't, I'll

CHORUS



ride him a - gin. Oh, mourn-er, you will be free, Yes, mourn-er,



you will be free, When de good Lawd sets you free. . . .

Ole Marse John come ridin' by.
 Say, Marse John, dat mule's gwine to die.
 Ef he die, I'll tan his skin,
 An' ef he don't, I'll ride him agin.

Chorus

Oh, mourner, you will be free,
 Yes, mourner, you will be free,
 When de good Lawd sets you free.

Standin' on de corner, wa'n't doin' no harm;
 Up come a 'liceman, grabbed me by de arm.
 Rang a little whistle, blew a little bell;
 Here come de p'trol wagon, runnin' like —.

Chorus

Standin' in de chicken-house on my knees,
 Thought I heard a chicken sneeze.
 Sneezed so hard wid de whoopin' cough,
 Sneezed his head an' his tail right off.

Chorus

Katherine Love, of Richmond, sent me some years ago a letter from her grandmother, now dead, with comment that establishes the authenticity of the old songs she enclosed.

"I send the following plantation melodies; they are genuine, and, so far as I know, have never been put to music. Divorced, however, from the original syncopated darky melody, they lose five fifths of their interest. Elizabeth, you know, has all her life been trying to get the swing and go of *Picayune Butler, Picayune Butler, Is She Coming to Town?* I told — of her effort, while I was in Richmond, and their individual and combined efforts to get it gave us a half-hour of the most spontaneous mirth you can imagine. I play the music to the following songs. I know they are genuine, for I learned them by hearing them sung on the old plantation, and the music to them our old *ante-bellum* carriage driver played on the banjo."

As I was walkin' 'long the new-cut road,
 I met a tarapin an' a toad.
 Ebbery time the toad would spring,
 The tarapin cut the pigeon-wing.

Refrain

Picayune Butler,
 Picayune Butler,
 Is she comin' in town?

My old mistis promised me
 When she died she'd set me free.
 She lived so long, she died so po',
 She lef' Ol' Sambo pullin' at de hoe.

Refrain

The refrain is that of an old song which Professor Kittredge informs me was sung on the minstrel stage and occurs in various old song-books, for example, "The Negro Forget-Me-Not Songster," pp. 185, 186.

A theme that recurs in varying stanzas of these old songs is the comparison of the physical make-up of different animals, as well as of their distinctive traits. Sometimes, as in the one following, the Negro makes satiric comparison of his economic status with that of the white man. Mrs. E. H. Ratcliffe, of Natchez, Mississippi, sent me this:

OLD BEE MAKE DE HONEYCOMB

Raccoon totes de bushy hair;
 Possum he go bare;
 Rabbit comes a-skipin' by,
 'Cause he ain't got none to spare.

Raccoon hunts in broad daylight;
 Possum hunts in dark,
 An' nothin' never disturbs his min',
 Till he hears old Bingo bark.

I met Bro. Possum in de road;
 "Bre'r Possum, whar you gwine?"
 "Thank you, kin' sir," said he,
 "I'm a-huntin' muscadine."

Old Bee make de honeycomb,
 Young Bee makes all de honey.
 Nigger makes de cotton and corn,
 White man gits all de money.

Monday mornin' break o' day
 White folks got me gwine.
 Saturday night when de sun go down,
 Dat yaller girl am mine.

Another song including this idea is *I Went to My Sweetheart's House*, sent by Virginia Fitzgerald, of Virginia, who had heard it from people familiar with it before the war. It was used as a banjo tune.

I WENT TO MY SWEETHEART'S HOUSE

I went to my sweetheart's house,
I never was thar befor'.
They sot me in the corner as still as a mouse,
An' I ain't gwine thar no mo', mo', mo'.
An' I ain't gwine thar no mo', my love,
An' I ain't gwine thar no mo'.

I had a little rooster,
He crowed 'bout break o' day;
An' the weasel come to my house
An' stole my rooster 'way.
An' he stole my rooster 'way, my love,
An' he stole my rooster 'way.

Jackers come to my house,
I thought he come to see me.
But when I come to find out,
He 'swade my wife to leave me.
He 'swade my wife to leave, my love,
He 'swade my wife to leave me.

When I was a little boy
'Bout sixteen inches high,
I think I hear the Jaybird say,
"I'll marry you bimeby,
I'll marry you bimeby, my love,
I'll marry you bimeby."

De Squirrel is a cunning thing,
He carries a bushy tail;
He steal old masser's corn at night
An' shucks it on a rail,
An' shucks it on a rail, my love,
An' shucks it on a rail.

Possum is a cunning thing,
He rambles in the dark;
Much as I kin do to save my life
Is make my little dog bark,
Is make my little dog bark, my love,
Is make my little dog bark.

The Squirrel car's a bushy tail,
De Possum's tail am bar'.
De Raccoon's tail am ringed all round,

An' stumped tail am the har',
 An' stumped tail am the har', my love,
 An' stumped tail am the har'.

A similar song, which is also very old, was sent me by Josephine Pankey, of Little Rock, Arkansas, who says that it was taken down from the singing of elderly Negroes, who had heard it sung by slaves on plantations before the war.

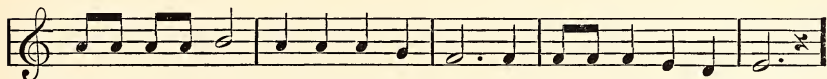
PAINS IN MY FINGERS



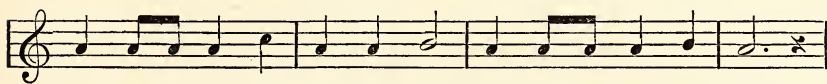
Pains in my fin - gers, Pains in my toes; I sent for Doc - tor



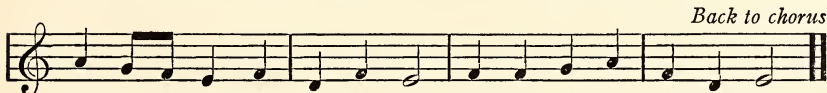
Bro - dy To know what to do. Sick him, Bob - by, hoo - hoo!



Sick him, Bobby, hoo! Oh, pore Ma-ry Jane, He'll nev-er come here no more.



A rab-bit is a cun-nin' thing, He ram-bles aft - er dark;



He nev-er thinks to curl his tail Till he hears my bull-dog bark.

Pains in my fingers,
 Pains in my toes;
 I sent for Dr. Brody
 To know what to do.

Chorus

Sick him, Bobby, hoo-hoo!
 Sick him, Bobby, hoo!
 Oh, pore Mary Jane,
 He'll never come here no more.

A rabbit is a cunnin' thing,
 He rambles after dark;
 He never thinks to curl his tail
 Till he hears my bull-dog bark.

Chorus

A squirrel is a pretty thing,
 He carries a pretty tail;
 He eats all the farmer's corn
 And husks it on the rail.

Chorus

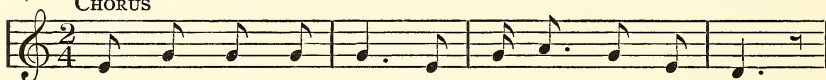
Ole Master give me holiday,
 Ole Mistis give me more;
 To stick my head in a hollow log
 An' hit me sixty-four.

Chorus

Miss Cohen, formerly of Charleston, South Carolina, gives an old version in the *gullah* dialect, as sung by Negroes in her section.

BOIL DEM CABBAGE DOWN

CHORUS

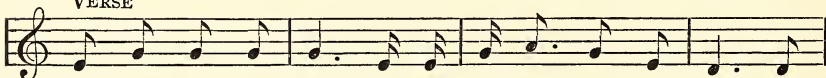


Boil dem cab - bage down, An' tu'n 'em roun' an' roun'.



Stop dat fool - in', lit - tle nig - ger gal, An' boil dem cab - bage down!

VERSE



W'ite folks go to chu'ch, An' he nev - er crack a smile; An'



nig - ger go to chu'ch, An' you hear 'im laugh a mile.

W'ite folks go to chu'ch,
 An' he never crack a smile;
 An' nigger go to chu'ch,
 An' you hear 'im laugh a mile.

Chorus

Boil dem cabbage down,
 An' tu'n 'em roun' an' roun'.
 Stop dat foolin', little nigger gal,
 An' boil dem cabbage down!

Raccoon 'e am bushy-tail',
 An' possum 'e am bare.
 Raccoon 'e am bushy-tail',
 But 'e ain't got none to spare.

Sally Nelson Robins, of Richmond, who has died since this book went to press, sent a Virginia variant of the same song.

Fox, he got a bushy tail,
 Raccoon tail am bare.
 Rabbit got no tail at all
 Jes' a leetle bit a bunch er hair.

Chorus

Git erlong, Liza Jane,
 Git erlong, Liza Jane,
 Git erlong, Liza, po' gal,
 I'm gwineter leave you now.

Rat he got a leetle tail,
 Mouse it ain't much bigger.
 White folks got no tail at all,
 Neither have the nigger.

Chorus

The rabbit may have started the fashion of bobbed hair, for all we know, and perhaps is the original Greenwich Villager.

Edwin Swain gives a stanza as it used to be sung in Florida in his boyhood, by Negroes that he knew.

Raccoon got a ring round his tail,
 Possum's tail am bar'.
 Rabbit got no tail at all,
 Nothing but a bunch o' ha'r.

James E. Morrow reports the following form as he has heard it sung in Texas:

De raccoon carries de bushy tail,
 Possum doan' care 'bout no hair.
 Mister Rabbit, he come skippin' by,
 An' he ain't got none to spare.

Mrs. C. E. Railing sings this stanza as she learned it from old Negroes in Virginia:

De raccoon hab de bushy tail,
 De possum's tail is bare.
 De rabbit hab no tail at all
 'Cep' a little bitty bunch o' hair.

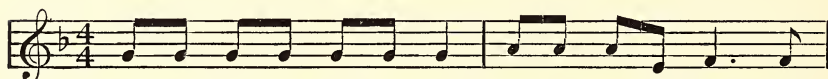
Another fragment, given anonymously, varies from this, though slightly.

De raccoon's tail am very long,
 De possum's tail am bare.
 De rabbit got no tail at all
 'Cept a little bitty bunch of hair.

The raccoon, he of the long or bushy or ringed tail, according to the "songster," and the possum of the wily ways, are celebrated together in many versions of another old song. One specimen was given by Mary Stevenson Callcott, who took down the music from the singing of Lucy Hicks, who wrote down the words. I have preserved the quaint spelling as she put it down.

The title is *Karo Song*. Cuero (pronounced *cwaro*) is a town in Texas, and this represents a type of local song, though the setting has nothing especial to do with the song, appearing only in the title.

KARO SONG



Pos - sum up a sim - en tree, Racacoon on de ground; The



Rack-coon say, you cun - ing thing Oh, shake them sim - ens down. Oh,

CHORUS



here my true love weep - ing, Oh, here my true love sigh; I



was gwin - ing down to Ka - ro town, Down there to live and die.

Possum up a simen tree,
 Racacoon on de ground;
 The Rackcoon say, you cuning thing
 Oh, shake them simens down.

Chorus

Oh, here my true love weeping,
 Oh, here my true love sigh;
 I was gwining down to Karo town,
 Down there to live and die.

Oh, Marster had a little mule,
 He was colored like a mouse;
 I went to bridel that mule one day
 And he kicked me in the mouth.
Chorus

Old Marster had a little dog,
 He was three quarters hound,
 And every time he struck the trail
 He almost quiter the ground.
Chorus

Old Marster had a fine house
 Sixteen stories high
 And every story in that house
 Was filled with chicken pie.
Chorus

I went to see Miss Sallie,
 And Miss Sallie she was gone;
 I seat myself in the old arm-chair
 And picked on the old banjo.
Chorus

Miss Sallie cooked a ginger cake
 And set it on the shelf;
 'Long come that other Nigero
 And eat it all himself.
Chorus

.

 Miss Sallie give me one sweet kiss,
 Which almost killed me dead.
Chorus

The Negroes in their folk-songs have a custom of mixing stanzas of various songs together in a fashion calculated greatly to perplex conscientious collectors. They do that notably in their religious songs, where, at one of their interminable meetings, the recognized stanzas of one song will be helped out, when they have been exhausted, by additional stanzas remembered at random from other songs. That communal necessity for keeping up singing has more reason in a religious song than in a secular, for it is often thought best to continue one tune till certain "sinners" have "come through." But the usage is common in secular songs as well, and we see it illustrated in this one under discussion. Here the variation appears chiefly in the

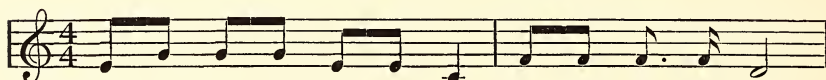
chorus, which may take the refrain of a religious song, as in one given me in Texas, or of a familiar dance-song. The raccoon and possum song, as reported by one collector, has a chorus found in various camp-meeting songs:

Po' MOURNAH!

Po' mournah, you shall be free,
In de mawnin', you shall be free,
Bress God, you shall be free,
When de good Lawd sets you free.

The same stanza appears with the chorus of an old dance-song, *Oh, dem Golden Slippers*, which is not strictly speaking a folk-song, though many consider it such, and its author has been said to be a Negro.

RACCOON UP IN DE 'SIMMON TREE



Pos - sum say to de raccoon, "Won't you shake dem 'simmons down?"

Raccoon up in de 'simmon tree,
Possum on de ground;
Possum say to de raccoon,
"Won't you shake dem 'simmons down?"

Chorus

Oh, dem golden slippers!
Oh, dem golden slippers!
Golden slippers I'se gwine to wear
Beca'se dey look so neat.
Oh, dem golden slippers!
Oh, dem golden slippers!
Golden slippers I'se gwine to wear
To walk de golden street.

Mrs. C. E. Railing, formerly of Richmond, gives a fragment.

De Raccoon up de 'simmon tree,
De Possum on de ground.
De Raccoon up de 'simmon tree,
"Shake dem 'simmons down."

Lydia Gumbel, of Straight College, New Orleans, sends a version sung among the Creole Negroes in Louisiana.

Oh, Bre'er Raccoon, up de persimmon tree,
Possum on de groun';
Bre'er Rabbit say, "You son of a gun,
Shake dem persimmons down!"

Mister Rabbit appears often in these folk-songs, as familiar a figure as in the tales Uncle Remus told, and the singer is as fond of him for his naïve, child-like ways and his cunning, as the old darky represented by Harris was. One wonders how the rabbit myth came into being, for in actual life the hare is never so resourceful in his schemes for escape, never so debonair in his insouciant gaiety, never so quick of repartee, as Uncle Remus or the folk-songsters would have us imagine. These qualities of intelligence and wit are superimposed upon slight basis. The rabbit in reality shows skill in getting through fences to green gardens, prodigious appetite for nibbling young plants most beloved of gardeners or farmers, and swiftness of foot in escaping pursuers. But of Gallic wit and American humor he shows no trace in real life. Why is he so beloved of Negro workers, of folk-tales and song? Perhaps because of his defencelessness and his mild ways. If he nibbles young plants, it is as a hungry fellow, not a malicious vandal. How is he to know cabbages were not planted for his delectation? One recent summer I watched a baby rabbit grow up in a Dorothy Perkins rose-tangle beside a Southern porch. He ventured forth when nobody was there but me, to play leap-frog with himself on the lawn, and to lunch off a row of nasturtiums along a circling stone wall. I never bothered him, and when the owner of the porch wondered what was happening to her nasturtiums, I breathed no word of explanation. A young rabbit "on his own," as this one was, has a hard time enough dodging hawks and hounds, so I surely would set no female gardener on his track.

The rabbit appears in an innocent and engaging rôle in a song given me by Mr. Dowd, of Charleston, South Carolina. This is in the dialogue form dear to the Negro song-maker.

MISTER RABBIT

"Mister Rabbit, Mister Rabbit,
Yo' ears mighty long."

"Yes, my lawd,
Dey're put on wrong!
Every little soul must shine, shine, shi-ine,
Every little soul must shi-ine, shine, shine."

MISTER RABBIT



"Mis - ter Rab - bit, Mis - ter Rab-bit, Yo' ears might - y long."



"Yes, my lawd, Dey 're put on . . wrong! . . Eve - ry lit - tle soul must



shine, shine, shi - ine, Eve - ry lit - tle soul must shi-ine, shine, shine."

"Mister Rabbit, Mister Rabbit,
Yo' coat mighty grey."

"Yes, my lawd,

'T was made dat way.

Every little soul must shine, shine, shi-ine,

Every little soul must shi-ine, shine, shine."

"Mister Rabbit, Mister Rabbit,
Yo' feet mighty red."

"Yes, my lawd,

I'm a-almost dead.

Every little soul must shine, shine, shi-ine,

Every little soul must shi-ine, shine, shine."

"Mister Rabbit, Mister Rabbit,
Yo' tail mighty white."

"Yes, my lawd,

An' I'm a-gittin' out o' sight.

Every little soul must shine, shine, shi-ine,

Every little soul must shi-ine, shine, shine."

Another song about this engaging young person was sent in by Wirt Williams, of Mississippi, as sung by Anna Gwinn Pickens.

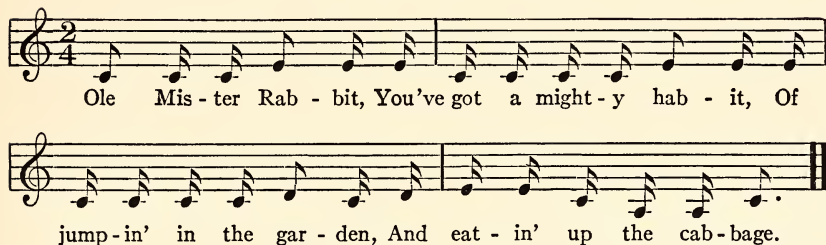
OLE MISTER RABBIT

Ole Mister Rabbit,
You're in a mighty habit,
Gwine in mah garden,
Cuttin' down mah cabbage.
Um-hum—um-hum.

Ole Mister Rabbit,
 Your hair look brown,
 You'se gwine so fas'
 You'se hittin' de groun'.
 Um-hum—um-hum.

Another variant is only slightly different:

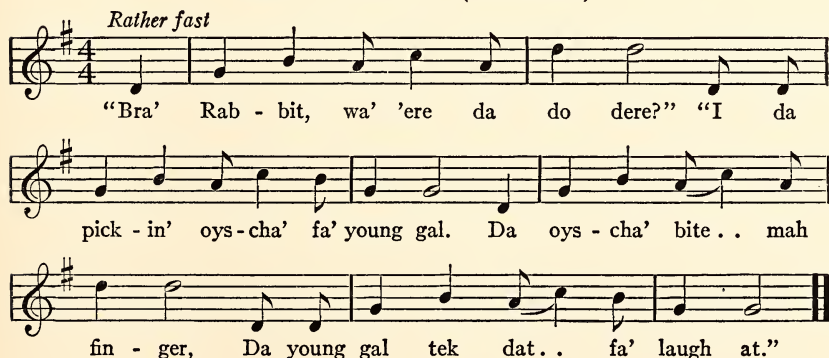
OLE MISTER RABBIT



Ole Mister Rabbit,
 You've got a mighty habit,
 Of jumpin' in the garden,
 And eatin' up the cabbage.

This fragment, given by Miss Emilie Walter, of Charleston, South Carolina, is in the *gullah* dialect:

BRA' RABBIT— (OYSCHA')



“Bra’ Rabbit, wa’ ’ere da do dere?”
 “I da pickin’ oyscha’ fa’ young gal.
 Da oyscha’ bite mah finger,
 Da young gal tek dat fa’ laugh at.”

Lydia Gumbel, of Straight College, New Orleans, sends a Creole song which shows Bre'r Rabbit in festive attire, and mood:

Met Mister Rabbit one night,
All dressed in his plug hat.
He turned his nose up in the air,
Said, "I 'se gwine to Julia's ball,
So good night, possums all."

The possum is another favorite with the darky as *pièce de résistance* for either a meal or a folk-song. The Negro is fond of singing about what lies nearest his heart, — or his stomach, — and there is no one dish more delectable to him than a fat possum planked with "sweet 'taters." In my book, "From a Southern Porch," I quote several "possum songs" at length, wherein the darky recounts the capture of the wily animal and gives detailed directions for cooking it. Here are new "possum songs" not included in that volume.

This first one comes from Texas, where it was sung by a group of Negroes working on the road. A friendly collector loitered near till he jotted down the words.

GREAT BIG NIGGER SITTIN' ON A LOG

Jakey went out a-huntin' on one moonshiny night.
He treed a possum up yonder out o' sight.
Tuck his little ax an' begin to chop,
"Look out, dere, coon! Somp'n's gwine to drop!"
In de mawnin' you shall be free,
Hoopy-doodle-doo, you shall be free,
When de good Lawd set you free.

Great big nigger sittin' 'hin' a log,
Hand on de trigger an' de eye on de hog.
Gun went bang, an' hog went zip!
Nigger run wid all his grip.
Po' mourner, you shall be free,
Hoopy-doodle, an' you shall be free,
When de good Lawd set you free.

My gal, she's de big town talk,
Her foot covers de whole sidewalk,
Her eyes like two big balls o' chalk,
Her nose is lak a long cornstalk.
Sister Mary, you shall be free,
In de mawnin' you shall be free.
Po' mourner, you shall be free,
When de good Lawd set you free.

The possum's fondness for muscadine, a delicious variety of grape growing wild in southern woods, sometimes called fox-grape, is commented on in the following stanza given me as sung by George Ragland, of Kentucky:

I met a possum in de road,
"Bre'r Possum, whar you gwine?"
"I bless my soul and thank my stars
To hunt some muscadine."

E. H. Ratcliffe, of Mississippi, remembered a stanza he had heard Negroes sing in his childhood, concerning the shy, reserved ways of the possum.

I met a possum in the road,
And 'shamed he looked to be.
He stuck his tail between his legs
And gave the road to me.

I gave in my "Southern Porch" a quatrain mentioning a possum, for which a correspondent sends me a match, as announcing the birth, not of a "little gal," but of a "little boy."

Possum up de gum-stump,
Coony up de hollow;
Little gal at our house
Fat as she kin wallow!

The possum figures in many other songs, but these are enough to illustrate his endearing young charms as the Negro sees them.

The natural companion for the possum is, of course, the coon, and the two are mentioned together in various folk-songs, as has already been seen. The coon has some songs in which he is celebrated alone, however, though he is not so dear to the colored heart as the possum.

W. R. Boyd, Jr., formerly of Texas, gave me a "coon" song which he remembered from hearing his father sing it in his childhood.

SETTIN' ON A RAIL

As I went out by the light of the moon,
So merrily singin' this here old tune,
Thar I spies a fat raccoon
A-settin' on a rail,
Settin' on a rail,
Settin' on a rail,
Ha-ha! Ha-ha, Ha-ha, Ha-ha!
Sleepin' mighty sound.

SETTIN' ON A RAIL



As I went out by the light of the moon, So
mer-ri-ly singin' this here old tune, Thar I spies a fat rac-coon A-
set-tin' on a rail, Set-tin' on a rail, Set-tin' on a
rail, Ha-ha! Ha-ha, Ha-ha, Ha-ha! Sleepin' might-y sound.

And up to him I slowly creeped,
And up to him I slowly creeped,
And up to him I slowly creeped,
And I cotch him by de tail,
And I cotch him by de tail,
And I cotch him by de tail,
Ha-ha! Ha-ha, Ha-ha, Ha-ha!
And I yank him off dat rail.

This is an old version of the song I have found, with no ascription of authorship and no copyright, a fact that indicates its age, at least, whether it be an old minstrel song or a genuine folk-song:

As I walked out by de light ob de moon,
So merrily singing dis same tune,
I cum across a big raccoon,
A-sittin' on a rail, sittin' on a rail,
Sittin' on a rail, sittin' on a rail,
Sleepin' wery sound.

I at de raccoon take a peep,
An' den so softly to him creep,
I found de raccoon fast asleep,
An' pull him off de rail, pull him off de rail,
Pull him off de rail, pull him off de rail,
An' fling him on de ground.

De raccoon 'gan to scratch and bite,
I hit him once wid all my might,
I bung he eye an' spile he sight,

Oh, I'm dat chile to fight, I'm dat chile to fight,
 I'm dat chile to fight, I'm dat chile to fight,
 An' beat de banjo, too.

I tell de raccoon 'gin to pray,
 While on de ground de raccoon lay,
 But he jump up an' run away,
 An' soon he out ob sight, soon he out ob sight,
 Soon he out ob sight, soon he out ob sight,
 Sittin' on a rail.

My ole massa dead an' gone,
 A dose o' poison help him on,
 De Debil say he funeral song,
 Oh, bress him, let him go! bress him, let him go!
 Bress him, let him go! bress him, let him go!
 An' joy go wid him, too.

De raccoon hunt so very quare,
 Am no touch to kill de deer,
 Beca'se you cotch him widout fear,
 Sittin' on a rail, sittin' on a rail,
 Sittin' on a rail, sittin' on a rail,
 Sleepin' very sound.

Ob all de songs I eber sung
 De raccoon hunt's de greatest one,
 It always pleases old an' young,
 An' den dey cry encore, den dey cry encore,
 An' den dey cry encore, den dey cry encore,
 An' den I cum agin.

The coon comes in as a table delicacy in a song sent by Mrs. Cammilla Breazeale, from Natchitoches, Louisiana.

My little yaller coon
 Done got back here so soon,
 Dat I ain't yet got
 De big fat coon
 For de 'tater an' de pone,
 To eat in de light of de moon.

Most of the wild or forest animals that the Negro mentions in folk-songs are those that he encounters here in America, animals native to the South. But sometimes he reverts to ancestral memories, perhaps, or indulges in imaginative excursions where he meets other creatures, not seen in his rounds here. But for the mention of

"seven-up" in the first stanza of the song given below, one might fancy it a possible atavistic throw-back. But African jungles did not know that lively game, so far as we have any information, so this must be a more modern poem. It is a Creole song sent to me by Worth Tuttle Hedden, who got it from Maude Fuller, of Straight College, New Orleans.

THE MONKEY AND THE BABOON

The monkey and the baboon
Playing seven-up.
The monkey won the money
And was scared to pick it up.

The monkey and the baboon
Running a race.
The monkey fell down
And skint his face.

The monkey and the baboon
Climbed a tree.
The monkey flung a cocoanut
Right at me!

A couple of other monkey fragments, tantalizing in their incompleteness, were given me by Mary Stevenson Callcott, of Texas.

Monkey married the baboon's sister,
Smacked his lips and then he kissed her.
Kissed so hard he raised a blister,
She set up a yell.

What do you think the bride was dressed in?
Green gauze veil and white glass breast-pin.

Monkey sitting on the end of a rail,
Picking his teeth with the end of his tail.

A general assembly of the wild animals is made in a song about Noah and his roll-call in the Ark. "Norah" and his Ark are familiar and fond themes to the folk-songster, and we see countless variations on the situation. But in this particular "arkaic" ditty, the emphasis is on the animals rather than on Noah, or his household, or his labors in constructing his famous vessel.

Did n't old Noah build him an ark,
 Build it out of hickory bark;
 Animals come in one by one,
 Cow a-chewing a caraway bun.

Chorus

Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelujah to de Lamb.
 Hallelu, Hallelu.
 Hallelu, Hallelu, Hallelujah to de Lamb.
 Hallelu, Hallelu.

Animals come in two by two,
 Rhinoceros an' kangaroo.
 Animals come in three by three,
 Bear a-huggin' a bumble-y bee.

Chorus

Animals come in four by four,
 Noah go mad an' shouted for more.
 Animals come in five by five,
 Thus the animals did arrive.

Chorus

Animals come in six by six,
 Hyena laughed at the monkey's tricks.
 Animals come in seven by seven,
 Said the ant to the elephant,
 "Who's you shoving?"

Chorus

Animals come in eight by eight,
 Noah hollered, "Go shut dat gate."
 Animals come in nine by nine,
 Noah hollered, "Go cut dat line."

Chorus

The creation of the animals, as well as their later convocation into the Ark, is told in a Creation song sung for me by Dr. Merle St. Croix Wright.

STORY OF CREATION

First He made a sun,
 Then He made a moon,
 Then He made a possum,
 Then He made a coon.

All de other creatures
 He made 'em one by one;
 Stuck 'em on de fence to dry
 As soon as they was done.

STORY OF CREATION

First He made a sun, Then He made a moon, Then He made a pos-sum,
 Then He made a coon. All de oth-er crea-tures He made 'em one by one;
 REFRAIN. *Quicker*
 Stuck 'em on de fence to dry As soon as they was done. Walk-ee-in, walk-ee-in,
 Walk in, I say. Walk in - to de par-lor And hear de ban-jo play.
Quicker
 Walk in - to de parlor And hear de Niggers sing, And watch de Nigger's fingers As he
Slower, as in beginning
 picks up - on de string. Zing, zing, zing, zing, Zing, Zing, Zing...

Refrain

Walk-ee-in, walk-ee-in,
 Walk in, I say.
 Walk into de parlor
 And hear de banjo play.
 Walk into de parlor
 And hear de Niggers sing,
 And watch de Nigger's fingers
 As he picks upon de string.
 Zing, zing, zing, zing,
 Zing, Zing, Zing.

Old Mudder Eve
 Could n't sleep widout a pillow,
 And de greatest man dat ever lived
 Was Jack de Giant-killer.

Old Noah, he was a mighty man
 An' built a mighty ark,
 And got all de critters in
 Jes' before dark.

'Long come de elephant,
 Noah, says he, "You're drunk."
 "Oh, no sir," said de elephant.
 "I'se stopped to pack my trunk."

The domestic animals come in for their share of attention also in Negro folk-songs. The horse, the mule, the dog, the cat, the pig, and so forth are celebrated suitably in song. Familiarity breeds not contempt, but comradeship, it would seem, and surely "critters" would render service more willingly if the songs sung in their presence, or to them, were about them as well.

John Trotwood Moore, of Nashville, Tennessee, contributes an ancient fragment about an old grey horse — not the famous "ole grey horse" that came "tearin' out o' de wilderness, down in Alabam'," but another, obviously from Tennessee.

Come down to Tennessee
 (Ride er ole grey horse).
 Yaller gal's de gal for me
 (Ride er ole grey horse).
 Kiss her under de mulberry tree
 (Ride er ole grey horse).
 Oh my, Nigger, don't you see,
 Better come to Tennessee?

The old grey horse from Alabam' had his match in the mare of similar color and speed, sung of in certain quarters.

The old grey mare come a-tearin' out o' the wilderness,
 Tearin' out o' the wilderness,
 Tearin' out o' the wilderness.
 The old grey mare come a-tearin' out o' the wilderness,
 Down in Alabam'.

The old grey mare, she ain't what she used to be,
 She ain't what she used to be,
 She ain't what she used to be.
 The old grey mare, she ain't what she used to be,
 Down in Alabam'.

Douglas Batchelor, formerly of North Carolina, insists that the old grey horse he knew came "trottin'" out of the wilderness; but maybe horses in North Carolina are less speedy. I have been told that army men have added stanzas to this "old grey mare," which no one seems willing to give me.

A little pony constitutes the inspiration for a song from Dorothy Renick, of Texas — a beast that must have been as difficult to turn as an awkward automobile in the hands of a woman driving it the first time.

I had a little pony,
I rode him down town.
And ev'ry time I turned him round,
Turn him on an acre ground!

Boots and shoe-line come down,
Lady shoe-line come down;
Boots and shoe-line come down,
Lady shoe-line come down.

Then there is the little pony I used to hear my mother sing about — an animal beloved of the slaves on her childhood's plantation.

I had a little pony,
His name was Jack;
I rid his tail
To save his back.

A certain folk-stanza occurs repeatedly in varying forms, the only elements that remain constant being a river and a horse — unstationary as they both might seem.

One says:

I went to the river
And could n't get across.
Jumped on a Nigger-back
And thought he was a hoss.

Mr. Dowd, formerly of Charleston, South Carolina, gives this version:

SISTER CYARLINE

I went to de river
An' I could n't get across;
Down by de river.
I jumped on a Nigger-back
An' thought he was a hoss.

Cyarline, O Cyarline!
Can't you dance de pea-vine?
Aunt Jemima, o-I-o!

Charles Carroll of New Orleans sings it after this fashion:

I went to the river
And could n't get across.
Jumped on an alligator
And thought it was a horse.

Mrs. Hatchell, New Orleans, knows this form:

I went to the river,
And could n't get across;
Paid five dollars
For an old blind horse.

A nonsense fragment about an antique equine was given by Mrs. W. D. Martin.

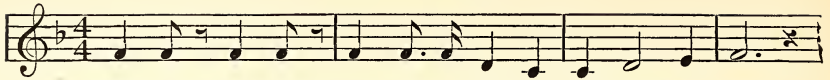
De old hoss kick
And a hippy-doodle.
De old hoss kick
And a hippy-doodle.
The old hoss kick hard in the stable,
And he could n't git his foot out
Because he was n't able!

The little pony whose rider chose a queer position for economic reasons had its running-mate in an old mule that was treated in like fashion:

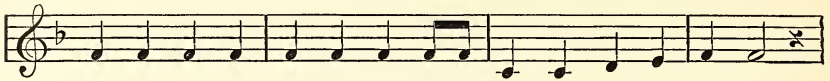
I had a old mule,
His name was Jack,
I rode on his tail to save his back.
The lightning roll, the thunder flash,
An' split my coat-tail clear to smash.

The mule seems an unpoetic subject, on the whole, and it would perhaps be dangerous to take *vers liberties* with him, for his feet, while perhaps not strictly metrical in their movement, have their own crude emphasis. But poets or "songsters" refuse to be fettered as to inspiration, and so the mule, too, has his celebrants in song. The lyric outburst given below was contributed by Mary Stevenson Callcott, of Texas. It is fervent and sincere in its emotion, one must confess.

WHOA, MULE!



Whoa, mule, whoa, mule, whoa, mule, I tell you, Whoa, mule, I say!



Tied a slip-knot in his tail And his head slipped through the col-lar.

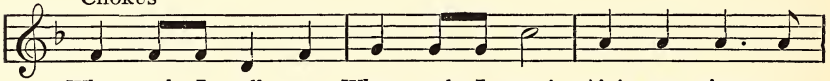


Lor - dy, lor - dy, save us, Hee - haw, hee - haw, hee - haw!



Lor - dy, lor - dy, save us! Whoa, mule, I say!

CHORUS



Whoa, mule, I tell you, Whoa, mule, I say! Ain't got time to



kiss you now, But don't you run a - way.

Whoa, mule, whoa, mule, whoa, mule, I tell you,
 Whoa, mule, I say!
 Tied a slip-knot in his tail
 And his head slipped through the collar.
 Lordy, lordy, save us,
 Hee-haw, hee-haw, hee-haw!
 Lordy, lordy, save us!
 Whoa, mule, I say!

Chorus

Whoa, mule, I tell you,
 Whoa, mule, I say!
 Ain't got time to kiss you now,
 But don't you run away.

What a spontaneous expression of romance and realism is found in a song sent from Mississippi by Wirt A. Williams! The "mulie" referred to here is not a mule, as urban readers might ignorantly suppose, but an ox without horns.

LAST YEAR WAS A FINE CRAP YEAR

Last year was a fine crap year
 On corn and peas and 'maters;
 My pa did n't raise no cotton and corn,
 But, oh, good Lord, the 'taters!

Chorus

Haw, Buck, haw, Buck, haw!
 Who made de back band? Say you don't know?
 Soon as I git my crap laid by
 I'se gwine home to Julie.

Last year I ploughed de horny ox,
 Dis year I ploughs de mulie.
 Soon as I git my crap laid by
 I'se gwine home to Julie.

Chorus

I know of no modern, sophisticated poets who metrically eulogize
 a hound or billy-goat — unless the one responsible for

You got to quit kickin' my dog around,
 I don't care if he is a hound,

be considered a case in point. But after all, why should not the
 faithful though unhandsome brute who companions the Negro's
 hours of idleness be lyricized, as well as, say, a bird or stag or some
 creature indifferent to his existence?

The unknown author of the song contributed by Mrs. Bartlett
 seems to have felt strongly on her subject. Mrs. Bartlett writes:
 "There is another that Mr. Bartlett used to delight the children
 with. I used to know a colored chambermaid at Hollins, named
 Penny, who said something like it, only her 'speech' had to do with
 a rabbit; but she used the same nonsensical interruptions and as-
 sumed the same expression of inspired idiocy that Mr. Bartlett
 deems fitting for the proper interpretation of *Ole Aunt Dinah*."

Ole Aunt Dinah — sick in bed,
 Eegisty — ogisty!
 Sent for the doctah — doctah said,
 Eegisty — ogisty!
 "Git up, Dinah, —
 Ring-ding-ah-ding — ah
 You ain't sick.
 Eegisty — ogisty!

All you need
 Ring-ding-ah-ding — ah!
 Is a hickory stick!"
 Egisty-ogisty — ring-ding-ah-ding — ah!

The dashes stand for peculiar "spittings and puffings with the lips, that defy expression. However, they are an important part of the rhythm of the incantation. There is another verse which I write out without attempting the gutterals and fanciful refrains, though they must be understood as accompanying it:

Ole Aunt Dinah went to town,
 Riding a billy-goat, leading a hound.
 Hound barked, billy-goat jumped,
 Set Aunt Dinah straddle of a stump.

This might be compared with the predicament of one Daniel Tucker, in the fragment given by Mary Stevenson Callcott and others:

Old Dan Tucker went to town,
 Riding a horse and leading a hound.
 The hound did bark, the horse did jump,
 And left Dan Tucker straddle of a stump.

Who knows what dateless tragedy in some colored farm was responsible for the outburst reported by Mrs. A. J. Smith, from Texas? At least let us rejoice that the comforts of literature are left to the singer, even if his dogs are dead.

JIMMIE-MA-RILEY-OH!

I looked down the road
 And I seed de dust a-risin'.
 Jimmie-ma-riley-oh!
 The big dog dead
 An' the little one a-pizened.
 Jimmie-ma-riley-oh!
 And when I get a new book
 I read it to the chillun.
 Jimmie-ma-riley-oh!

This suggests the version sent by Mrs. Richard Clough Thompson, of Arkansas, though the latter omits the dogs:

I look up de road and see de dust a-risin',
 Johnny kum a-rango way!
 Did you eber see a yaller gal lickin' 'lasses candy?
 Johnny kum a-rango way!

Hoover would give at least practical, if not poetic, approval of the fragment sung by Anne Gilmer, wherein the lowly pig has his meed of mention. She learned it from Negroes at Orange, Texas.

O-O-OH, SISTREN AN' BRED'REN

O-o-oh, . . . sis - tren an' bred - ren, Don't you think it is a
sin For to go to peel po - ta - toes An' to cas' a - way de
skin? De skin feeds de pigs, An' de pigs feeds you. . .
O-o-oh, . . . sis - tren an' bred - ren, Is . . not dat true?

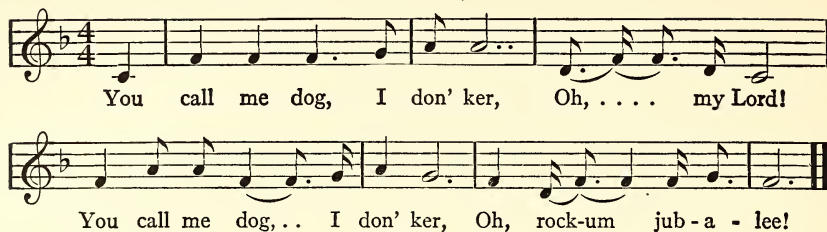
O-o-oh, sistren an' bred'ren,
Don't you think it is a sin
For to go to peel potatoes
An' to cas' away de skin?
De skin feeds de pigs,
An' de pigs feeds you.
O-o-oh, sistren an' bred'ren,
Is not dat true?

Miss Gilmer says that the Negro rendition of this is dramatic. The *O-o-oh* should be wound up with circular motion of the hand.

The cat appears less often in Negro folk-song than most of the "beasties," but does come in occasionally, as the "yaller cat" that Juba killed. *The Cat Came Back* is not a folk-song, but it is in oral circulation in the South, and has experienced some slight folk-changes.

A shout-song from the Tidewater district of South Carolina, given by Miss Emilie Walters, mentions the various animals in rather curious fashion. The idea seems to be that the singer's feelings will not be hurt by any metaphor likening him to a lower creature.

YOU CALL ME DOG, I DON' KER



You call me dog, I don' ker,
Oh, my Lord!

You call me dog, I don' ker,
Oh, rockum jubalee!

You call me cat, I don' ker,
Oh, my Lord!

You call me cat, I don' ker,
Oh, rockum jubalee!

You call me mule, I don' ker,
Oh, my Lord!

You call me mule, I don' ker,
Oh, rockum jubalee!

You call me snake, I don' ker,
Oh, my Lord!

You call me snake, I don' ker,
Oh, rockum jubalee!

This was used to teach very young children to "shout and clap," which was done in syncopated time as an accompaniment. The verses were endless, as every known and unknown biological specimen was introduced.

Mrs. Ratcliffe of Natchez has two felines in a fragment of folk-song she gave me:

Mary, she did dream a dream,
As she was floating down the stream.
When she woke, she gave a sigh,
The grey cat kicked out the black cat's eye!

Birds and fowls also enter into the biological folk-song of the Negro. Feathers, wild and tame alike, flit through the lines, for the Negro makes comrades of the creatures that come into his life. He shows this difference from the sophisticated poet in that he devotes

more attention to realism and less to sentimentalism, has more humor and less of the pathetic fallacy. He does not go into adjectival ecstasies over the song of the mocking-bird — or any other bird, so far as I know; nor does he choose the conventional effusions of comparison. A bird is to him not a goddess of the sky, but a human being, a creature not of moonlit magic but of sunshine actuality, not a thing to be worshipped from afar but to be hailed as comrade of the field. In other words, a bird, not a trim-Shakespeare, not a light-winged dryad of the trees, no unbodied joy, or glow-worm golden, or anything of the sort. The darky of the South deals with birds in his own familiar manner.

The jay-bird, that lovely thing with a rascal nature and a ribald tongue, is well enough understood by the black man who works in the open near him all day and is convinced that you never see jay-birds on Friday because that day they all spend in torment, carrying sand for the devil. So there is no mawkish admiration for his beauty, no misconception of his attitudinizing. When the Negro sings of him this is what he says:

Jay-bird sittin' on a hickory limb;
 He winked at me and I winked at him,
 And I picked up a rock an' hit him on the chin.
 And he said, "Now, look here, Mr. Wilson,
 Don't you do dat agin."

Chorus

Jim crack corn — I don't care,
 Jim crack corn — I don't care,
 Jim crack corn — I don't care,
 'Cause Massa's gone away.

Here the jay borrows for his own use the saucy chorus of an old Negro folk-song.

Or the audacious bird may be addressed as Mrs. Tom Bartlett reports, in a version which was one of her father's favorites. She writes: "In reading your book, 'From a Southern Porch,' I was reminded of two songs that suggested themselves very naturally after reading the classic, *Possum up a Gum-stump* that was one of my father's favorites, and *Raccoon up a Simmon Tree*."

Jay-bird settin' on a hickory limb;
 I picked up a rock an' hit him on the chin.
 "Good God, Nigger! Don't you do that again!"
 Whoo-jamboree, a-whoo-whoo!

Ole Massa and Mistis ridin' in a hack,
 That's what gives a Nigger the pain in the back!
 With a whoo-jamboree, a-who-who;
 A whoo-jamboree, a-who-who!

The Negro is not limited to the birds which poets usually lyricize, — the lark, the nightingale, the mocking-bird, — but he knows some the classic poets never heard of. He is bound by no traditions, but sings what pleases him. He is liberated from conventional concepts, first because he is born free of nature, and then because he makes his song for his own pleasure, not to please some crabbed editor shut up in a dark cell in Manhattan. He is not even interested in his audience, for he sings to himself in the field, and if the cotton rows or the rail fence dislike his metre, at least they say nothing about it. The Negro can see the dramatic values and the character interest in a bird not usually regarded with affection, as in the "Hawkie" reported by Wirt Williams from Mississippi.

HAWKIE IS A SCHEMIN' BIRD

Hawkie is a schemin' bird,
 He schemes all round the sky;
 He schemes into my chicken house
 And makes my chickens fly.

Chorus

Git along down town,
 Git along down town,
 Git along down to Vickburg town
 For to lay my 'baccar down.

Went up on de mountain
 To give my horn a blow;
 Thought I heard my sweetheart say,
 "Yonder comes my beau."

Chorus

Climbed up on a mountain
 To cut me a load of cane,
 To make me a barrel o' sorghum
 For to sweeten Liza Jane.

Chorus

Got a train in Cairo
 Sixteen coaches long;
 All I want dat train to do
 Is to fotch my gal along.

Chorus

What member of the Poetry Society of America would apostrophize a buzzard, I ask you? Yet the colored man of the field finds fellowship even there, as we see in a stanza reported by Professor W. A. Kern, of Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Lynchburg, Virginia.

Old King Buzzard floating high,
"Sho do wish old cow would die."
Old cow died, old calf cried,
"Oh mourner, you shall be free."

What camaraderie is shown in such lines as those to a woodpecker, sent in by Elsie Brown, of Asheville, North Carolina!

Peckerwood, peckerwood,
What makes your head so red?
You peck out in the sun so long,
It's a wonder you ain't dead.

A Negro on Howard Snyder's plantation in Mississippi summed up considerable of his philosophy of life, as well as of nature study, in stanzas which lack logical sequence but seem fervent and sincere.

Monkey settin' on de end uf a rail
Pickin' his teeth wid de end uf his tail.
Mulberry leaves un' calico sleeves,
All school teachers is so hard to please.

Red bird settin' up in de 'simmon tree,
Possum settin' on de ground;
Sparrow come along un' say,
"Shake dem 'simmons down."

De hen dip de snuff,
De rooster chew terbaccer,
De guinea don't chew
But strut her sulf.

Pigs under de table
Rats on de shelf.
I'm so tired uf sleepin'
All by my sulf.

The Negro is interested in the domestic fowls perhaps more than in wild birds, and drumsticks move him to song more spontaneously than feathered vocal cords, it would seem. He feels midnight inspiration at times, but not from rheumatic waiting to hear a nightingale warble. No, he goes in search of his thrills and finds them in

unpoetic places. For instance, there is the song about "my ol' friend, as cute as a mouse," who stole into the chicken house and lifted all the hens, which is in my "From a Southern Porch," and so should not be repeated here. But a similar song with a differing chorus, given by Louise Garwood, of Houston, Texas, may appropriately be given.

FRAGMENT FROM PORE MOURNAH

Creepin' in de henhouse on mah knees,
Thought ah heard a chicken sneeze!
'Twan't nothin' but a rooster sayin' his prayers,
Makin' a speech to de hens upstairs.

Chorus

Pore mournah, you shall be free,
In de mornin' you shall be free!
Pore mournah, you shall be free,
When de good Lawd sets you free!

Mah ol' Mistis promised me
When she dies she'd set me free.
She libed so long dat her head got bald;
Don't b'lieve old Mistis gwine die aytall.

Chorus

As ah was goin' down de road,
Wid a hahd team an' a heavy load,
Ah cracked dat whip an' de mule he sprung,
But de ole hoss busted de wagon-tongue!

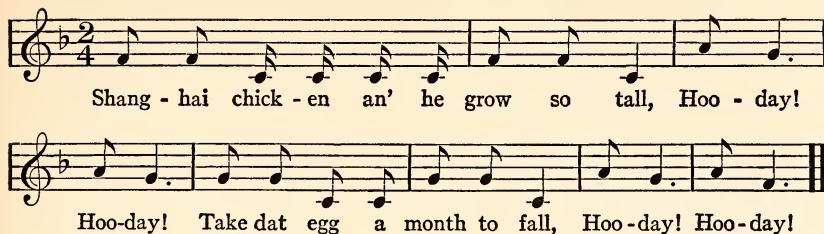
The license, poetic and otherwise, associated with "hen-houses" is illustrated by the variations which oral circulation has given to the song *Dar's a Lock on the Chicken-house Door*, which Professor Kittredge tells me is a comparatively modern stage-piece.

And of course every Southerner knows:

Chickens in de bread tray,
Scratchin' out de dough.
Granny, will yo' dog bite?
No, chile, no!
Granny, will yo' dog bite?
No, chile, no!

Then there is the ambitious chicken in the stanza given me by an old colored cook in Waco:

SHANGHAI CHICKEN



Shanghai chicken an' he grow so tall,
 Hooday! Hooday!
 Take dat egg a month to fall,
 Hooday! Hooday!

Other fowls have their tribute of praise, even if chickens do come first. The ditty concerning one Aunt Patsy and her old grey goose, which appeared in the first chapter of this volume, has its variants as well. The owner of the unfortunate goose appears diversely as Aunt Nancy, Aunt Abby, and so on, but the goose remains constant, always old and always grey, and its sad fate ever the same. Professor Kittredge writes me, concerning this lament: "This is borrowed from the whites. My grandfather, born in New Hampshire in 1798, used to sing it, 'Tell Aunt Dinah,' etc." But I am reluctant to surrender this favorite to the whites — especially the Yankees! Lois Upshaw, of Dallas, Texas, gives a version with a little additional tune.

GO TELL AUNT TABBIE

Go tell Aunt Tabbie,
 Go tell Aunt Tabbie,
 Go tell Aunt Tabbie,
 The old grey goose is dead.

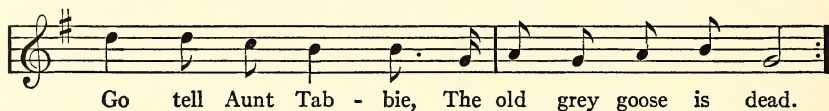
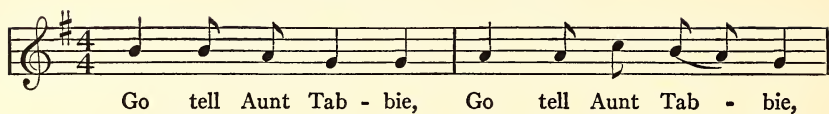
The one she was a-savin',
 The one she was a-savin',
 The one she was a-savin'
 To make a feather bed.

Chorus

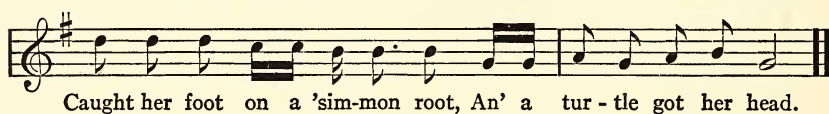
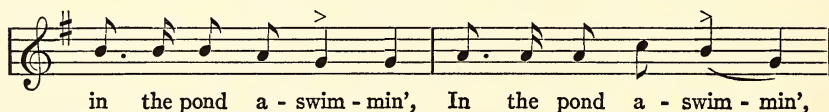
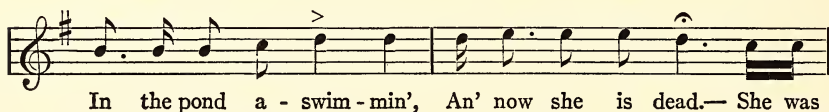
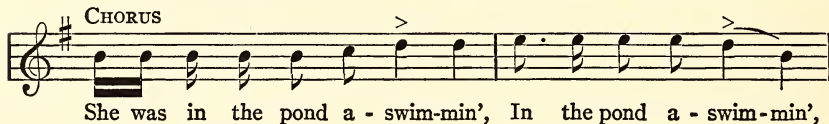
She was in the pond a-swimmin',
 In the pond a-swimmin',
 In the pond a-swimmin',
 An' now she is dead;

She was in the pond a-swimmin',
 In the pond a-swimmin',
 Caught her foot on a 'simmon root,
 An' a turtle got her head.

GO TELL AUNT TABBIE



CHORUS



The turkey, ungraceful though beloved fowl, scrambles through a somewhat repetitious song contributed by Miss Emilie Walters of Charleston, South Carolina, as sung years ago by the Negroes of that section.

ROCK TO SEE DE TURKEY RUN

Rock to see de turkey run,
 Run, run, run, run, run, run.
 Rock to see de turkey run,
 Run, run, run, run, run, run.
 Rock to see de turkey run,
 Run, run, run.

There are various other examples, as the song

I had a little rooster
 And my rooster pleased me,

which goes on for some length. And there is the round about the rooster who would persist in crowing before day — an annoying enough habit, as anyone will concede. Too, there is the guinea, who appeared in the lullaby where “the guinea’s on her nest.” I have heard snatches of an entertaining barnyard song chanted by an old Negro in Abilene, where the rooster crows, “Preacher’s comin’ tomorrow!” and the other fowls respond characteristically; but I have not been able to get it.

So catholic are the Negro’s interests in nature that he sees rhyme-worthy inspiration even in reptiles, from which most poets shudder away. True, Milton mentions one serpent of distinction, but on account of his diabolic nature, which raised him to dignity. He did not write of the snake as a snake. Now, the darky can appreciate the essential reptilian qualities and respect the cleverness of even the picaresque rattler. There is one memorable rattlesnake that writhes its way through many variants of an old quatrain, as in the second stanza of a song given by Elizabeth Dickinson, of Birmingham, Alabama.

THERE WAS AN OLD NIGGER, HIS NAME WAS DR. PECK

There was an old Nigger, his name was Dr. Peck;
He fell in de well an’ broke his neck.
De cause ob de fall was all his own,
'Case he orter look atter de sick
An’ let de well alone!

Chorus

You shall be free, mourners,
You shall be free,
When de good Lawd set you free.

As I was goin’ through de old cornfield,
A rattlesnake bit me on de heel.
I turned right round for to run my best,
An’ run my head right in a hornet’s nest.

Chorus

The bullfrog, too, springs into notice in these old folk-songs. Various basso stanzas announce his personality and actions, as the one given by Anne Gilmer, of Orange, Texas, which was learned from Negro nurses.

BULLFROG

Bull - frog jumped in de mid - dle ob de spring, An' I
 ain't a-gwine to weep no mo'... He tied his tail to a
 hick - 'ry limb, An' I ain't a-gwine to weep no mo'...

CHORUS

Fare ye well, my la - dies, I'll jine dat heaven-ly band, Where dere
 ain't an - y weep-in' an - y mo'... Fare ye well, my la - dies, I'll
 jine dat heavenly band, Where dere ain't an - y weep-in' an - y mo'...

Bullfrog jumped in de middle ob de spring,
 An' I ain't a-gwine to weep no mo'.
 He tied his tail to a hick'ry limb,
 An' I ain't a-gwine to weep no mo'.

Chorus

Fare ye well, my ladies,
 I'll jine dat heavenly band,
 Where dere ain't any weepin' any mo'.
 Fare ye well, my ladies,
 I'll jine dat heavenly band,
 Where dere ain't any weepin' any mo'.

He kicked an' he r'ared an' he could n't make a jump,
 An' I ain't a-gwine to weep no mo'.
 He kicked an' he r'ared an' he could n't make a jump,
 An' I ain't a-gwine to weep no mo'.

Chorus

The bullfrog that E. H. Ratcliffe, of Natchez, Mississippi, remembered must have been in a rampageous mood.

The bullfrog jumped from the bottom of a well,
 And swore that he was just from hell;
 He tied his tail to a hickory stump
 And he r'ared and he pitched but he could n't make a jump.

Other reptilian folk appear in a song given by Josephine Pankey of Little Rock, Arkansas, which was sung by slaves before the war and was "fiddled" for the Negro dancers.

OLD DAN TUCKER

Oh, Daniel Tucker on the railroad track,
 Pinnin' the engine to his back,
 Trimmin' the corners of the railroad wheel,
 Give him the toothache in his heel.

Chorus

Oh, Sambo, pore boy,
 Oh, Sambo, pore boy!
 The frog wanted to come,
 But he did n't have the chance.

The cricket played the fiddle,
 An' the tadpole danced.
 The frog wanted to come,
 But he did n't have the chance.

Chorus

I sympathize with the disappointment of the frog and wonder what ill fate it was that kept him back. I have an affectionate interest in frogs and toads, and still grieve for my pets, Nip and Tuck, twin little toads in "From a Southern Porch." But the most famous frog is he that has a ballad all his own, recorded here in an earlier chapter, describing his wooing.

Fish seem not to have been caught much in folk-song, but I have found at least one stanza, a fragment sung years ago by the Negroes in Angelina County, Texas.

Catfish runnin' down de stream,
 Yes, my Lawd, I'll meet you.
 Run so hard he could n't be seen,
 Yes, my Lawd, I'll meet you.

Insects, too, have their shrill little part in this biological orchestration. The cricket fiddler mentioned above is not by himself, for there are various others, as the flea I quoted in my "Southern Porch,"

as quick at repartee as at hopping, and the bedbug from that same volume, not so gifted as the June bug and the lightning bug — but arriving at his objective “jes’ de same.” There is the “grass-mo whopper settin’ on a sweet potato vine” in the same Porch *milieu*, picked from his attractive setting by “Mr. Turkey Gobble-wobble,” who came walking up behind him in an unsportsmanlike manner. Since the music was not given in the former volume, I will add it here. A different form of it appears in a spiritual sent by Lucy Dickinson Urquhart, of Lynchburg, Virginia.

ZACCHEUS CLIMBED THE SYCAMO’ TREE

Zaccheus climbed the sycamo’ tree,
 Few days, few days!
 Zaccheus climbed the sycamo’ tree,
 Few days, get along home.
 Oh, he’s way up yondeh — oh, he’s way up yondeh,
 Oh, he’s way up yondeh in dat sycamo’ tree.

Zaccheus climbed his Lord fo’ to see,
 Few days, few days!
 Zaccheus climbed his Lord fo’ to see,
 Few days, get along home.
 Oh, he’s way up yondeh — oh, he’s way up yondeh,
 Oh, he’s way up yondeh, in dat sycamo’ tree!

Mrs. Urquhart says: “The following stanza may have been improvised by some less reverent mind. But that only goes to show that it is a real folk-song, in that it is a composite production.”

Grasshopper settin’ on a sweet ’tater vine,
 Few days, few days!
 Shangai rooster crope up behine,
 Few days, git along home.
 Oh, he’s way up yondeh — oh, he’s way up yondeh,
 Oh, he’s way up yondeh, in dat syc’mo’ tree!

Then there was the “po’ inch-worm” in the spiritual *Keep A-Inchin’ Along*, and the “inchin’ wurum” that cut down the “go’d vine” which had grown up to shade the luckless Jonah from the sun, in the chant from South Carolina.

Mississippi Negroes sing nonsensically,

Shoo fly, don’t you bodder me,
 Shoo fly, don’t you bodder me,

Shoo fly, don't you bodder me,
For I belongs to Company G.

I am told that this was originally a minstrel song.

In my childhood I have heard Texas Negroes sing a stanza based on the slang phrase "no flies on," meaning nothing to complain of in a person. I recall being shocked at their license, but I think they did not mean to be irreverent.

There's flies on me,
There's flies on you,
But there ain't no flies on Jesus.

A typical Southern picture of the old-time plantation, where the kitchen was in a building separate from the "big house," is given in a stanza contributed by Isabel Walker, of Richmond, Virginia. This was a favorite song of an old Negro, Laurence Newbill, now dead, who had been a family slave.

Milk and de veal
Six weeks old,
Mice and skippers
Gettin' mighty bold!
Long-tailed mouse
Wid a pail of souse,
Skippin' frum de kitchen,
To de white folks' house!

This is a variant of a stanza of *Keemo Kimo*, a banjo song found in George Christy and Wood's "New Song Book," 1864.

The blue-tailed fly is an insect that figures in folk-song, as the following, given by Mary Burnley Gwathmey, of Tidewater district, Virginia, attests:

DE BLUE-TAIL FLY

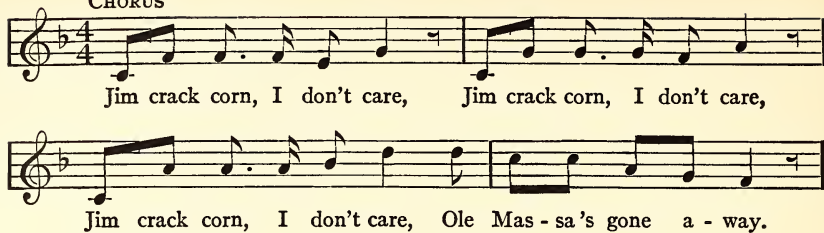
When I was young I used to wait
On Massa an' hand him de plate,
An' pass de bottle when he git dry
An' bresh away de blue-tail fly.

Chorus

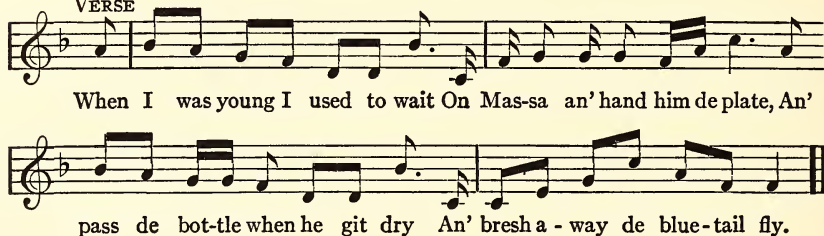
Jim crack corn, I don't care,
Jim crack corn, I don't care,
Jim crack corn, I don't care,
Ole Massa's gone away.

DE BLUE-TAIL FLY

CHORUS



VERSE



Den arter dinner Massa sleep,
 He bid dis Nigger vigil keep;
 An' when he gwine to shut his eye,
 He tell me watch de blue-tail fly.

Chorus

An' when he ride in de artemnoon,
 I foller wid a hickory broom;
 De pony being berry shy,
 When bitten by de blue-tail fly.

Chorus

One day he ride aroun' de farm;
 De flies so numerous dey did swarm;
 One chance to bite 'im on de thigh,
 De debble take dat blue-tail fly.

Chorus

De pony run, he jump an' pitch,
 An' tumble Massa in de ditch.
 He died, an' de jury wondered why;
 De verdic' was de blue-tail fly.

Chorus

Dey laid 'im under a 'simmon tree;
 His epitaph am dar to see:
 "Beneath dis stone I'm forced to lie,
 All by de means ob de blue-tail fly."

Chorus

Ole Massa gone, now let 'im rest;
 Dey say all t'ings am for de best.
 I nebber forget till de day I die,
 Ole Massa an' dat blue-tail fly.

Chorus

Major Beverly Douglass improvised this stanza years ago:

If you should come in summertime
 To ole Virginia's sultry clime,
 And in de shade you chance to lie,
 You'll soon find out dat blue-tail fly.

Chorus

Garnett Eskew, of West Virginia, sang some of it in a different way, as:

I won't forgit till de day I die
 How Master rode de blue-tail fly.
 Dat pony r'ar, dat pony kick,
 An' flinged old Master in de ditch.

These illustrate variants on the minstrel song, *Jim Crack Corn*, found in "The Negro Melodist," 1857, and elsewhere.

Even the mosquito has its song, as that sung by the Louisiana Negroes in the Creole patois, contributed by Mrs. George Dynoodt, of New Orleans.

LA PLUIE TOMBE

La pluie tom-be, Cra-peau chan-te, Oin, oin! oin, oin! oin,

oin! . . M'a pa - le baig - ner moin. . . La pluie tom-be, Ma-

rin-gouin crie, M'a pa - le noy - er moin. . . La pluie tom-be, Ma-

rin-gouin crie, M'a pa - le noy - er moin. Oin, oin! oin, oin! oin, . . oin! . .

La pluie tombe,
 Crapeau chante,
 Oin, oin! oin, oin! oin, oin!
 M'a pale baigner moin.
 La pluie tombe,
 Marin-gouin crie,
 M'a pale noyer moin.
 La pluie tombe,
 Marin-gouin crie,
 M'a pale noyer moin.
 Oin, oin! oin, oin! oin, oin!

This, roughly translated, says:

The rain falls,
 The frog croaks,
 Wee-wee! wee-wee! wee-wee!
 Tells me to come into the water.
 The rain falls,
 The mosquito cries,
 Tells me to drown myself.
 Wee-wee! wee-wee! wee-wee!

Then, of course, one recalls the boll weevil, most famous of insects, picaresque, determined, resourceful, which has an elaborate ballad all its own, *The Boll Weevil*, recorded in an earlier chapter of this volume. And there is the "bumberly-bee" that gathers honey all day long and "stows hit in de ground."

One might go on indefinitely giving these folk-songs wherein the Negro intimately addresses the live creatures about him, with affectionate understanding of their good points, but not blinded as to their shortcomings. He likes them. They interest him, and his poetry is of the things that honestly appeal to him, not of what he thinks a conventional public or white-collared editors expect him to praise. He may deal with his subjects impersonally, as figures in a universal comedy in which he is an observer. Or he may treat them subjectively, comparing his lot with theirs, as in the stanza I have heard my mother sing, and also given by May Terry Goodman, which will do to close with.

DEY ALL GOT A MATE BUT ME

Dere's de fox an' de hare, De bad-ger an' de bear, An' de
birds in de green-wood tree, An' de cun-nin' lit-tle rab-bits, All en-
gag-in' in deir hab-its, An' dey all got a mate but me.

Dere's de fox an' de hare,
De badger an' de bear,
An' de birds in de greenwood tree,
An' de cunnin' little rabbits,
All engagin' in deir habits,
An' dey all got a mate but me.

VIII

WORK- SONGS

THE Negro, by nature rhythmical, works better if he sings at his labor. He seems to lighten his toil, perhaps even to forget the fact that he is working, if he has a song to help him on. As a soldier can march with less fatigue if inspired by the music of a band, so a Negro's hoe or axe swings more easily to the beat of a ballad or the sighing swing of a spiritual, or any sort of song he chants at his task. He can work not only more pleasurably to himself, but more profitably to his employer, for he moves faster and accomplishes more if he sings. This is well recognized by those who employ bands of Negroes at various types of work, as on construction gangs, and the like, and the fact is taken advantage of. Singing is encouraged — not as an art, but as an economic factor in efficiency. Song leaders are chosen, formally or informally, their responsibility being to speed up the efforts of the workers. Sometimes these men are paid more than any of their comrades, and are required to do nothing but direct the songs.

Frances Gilchrist Wood has told me of such methods used twenty-five years ago in the phosphate mines in Florida. The song leader would be called a "Phosphate Jesse," and all he had to do was to inspire the singing. Under the thrill of music, the workers would compete madly with each other to see who could "lay the rest out," until all but one had dropped in exhaustion, almost denuded of clothes. Song leaders also directed the singing of Negroes in the turpentine camps in Florida, Mrs. Wood says. The men who worked at "box-chopping," or chopping the trees to let the turpentine run out into the boxes placed to receive it, had their own special songs.

There is a good deal of singing in tobacco factories in the South to-day, but less than formerly, since machinery has been substituted to do what once was done by hand. In the old days, the workers sang in chorus at their task; and now that the roar of wheels would drown out their voices, in some factories the machinery is stopped for brief periods during the day and the toilers rest themselves by singing. The colored employees of the Lorillard Tobacco Company, of Richmond, Virginia, have a chorus of one hundred and seventy-five voices, and they sing the old Negro folk-songs. But in former

days there was much more music during work hours. Judge Diggs of Lynchburg, Virginia, told me that in his town there used to be a large number of independent tobacco factories, at which the Negro workers sang a great deal; but these smaller plants have been taken over by a big combine, and machinery has driven out song.

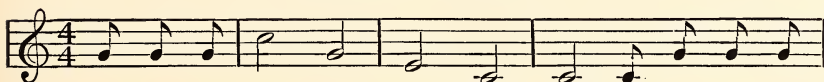
Early Busby says that the night shifts of employees at his father's brickyard in East Texas sang all night long at their task.

On the big plantations of the South, certain work, as corn-shucking, would be done by large bands of Negroes. Dr. John A. Wyeth told me of such occasions and the songs they called forth. On the old plantations there were square rail-pens for corn. The owner would have thousands of bushels of corn put on and then invite the Negroes on neighboring plantations to come in for an "infare." On top of the huge mound of corn the Negro leader of song would perch, while the others would be grouped all round the pyramid of yellow ears. As the workers husked, the leader would give out a line of song, which they would take up as a refrain.

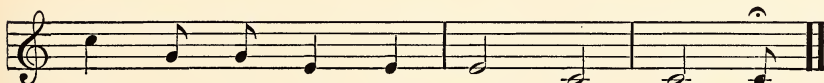
Oh, rock me gently, Julie!

The refrain would come in all round, —o-o-o-o-o,— a low swell of harmony, the cadence pitched to high feeling.

GRASSY ISLANDS



I'm gwine a - way to leave you, O-o-o-o-o! I'm gwine a -



way to the gras - sy isl - ands, O-o-o-o-o!

I'm gwine away to leave you,

O-o-o-o-o!

I'm gwine away to the grassy islands,

O-o-o-o-o!

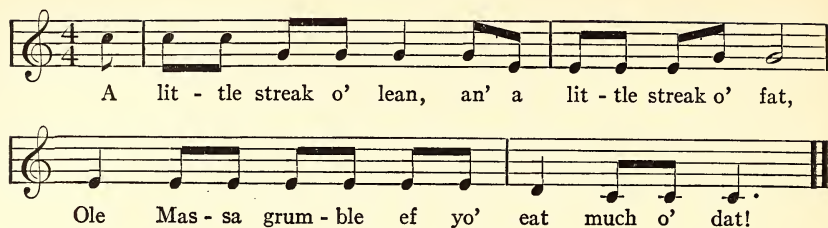
This last would be in a more lively tune.

The Negroes had unusual liberties on corn-shucking nights, and the event was one of hilarity and revelry.

Again the leader would sing, and the others follow, with some couplet such as this:

A little streak o' lean, an' a little streak o' fat,
Ole Massa grumble ef yo' eat much o' dat!

WORK-SONG



This has reference to weekly rations for a Negro on the old plantations, which were three and one-half pounds of bacon and a peck of meal, with vegetables grown on the place.

Such customs have continued even in recent times. Samuel Derieux, of South Carolina, whose recent death was a loss to Southern literature, told me of an occasion when Negroes came from miles around to his grandfather's plantation to shuck corn which had to be taken care of promptly after a fire had destroyed a big barn. The Negroes worked and sang all night, improvising inimitable harmonies from a few lines, whose words seemed nonsensical. Mr. Derieux said that when a gang of Negro workmen sing in unison they sometimes achieve extraordinary effects. He heard one gang of convicts working on the road, a chain-gang, singing a song of which he remembered only a fragment, but he recalled the marvellous part-singing and the harmonics evolved:

CITY OF REFUGE

Mr. Derieux could not remember the words for the first part of the tune, but only for the chorus.



Chorus

You better run,
You better run,
You better run to de City of Refuge,
You better run!

The basses would go to impressive depths, while the tenors and baritone would curl all round the heavier tones in improvised runs and quavers.

Mr. Derieux told of the singing of one Jake, who had what one folk-song calls "a ponstrous voice," and who was a famous song leader. Jake ran a boot-legging joint in the bushes near a certain "baptizing pond" in South Carolina, and when the crowds assembled for a baptizing he did a rushing business. On one occasion a white man who had come to attend the ceremony called Jake aside and requested refreshment.

"Yessir, boss," Jake replied, "but you have to wait awhile. My time be baptized next. After that I 'tend to you."

The customer was acquiescent, and so, after Jake emerged from the water and changed to dry clothes, he hastened to go on breaking the dry law.

Mr. Derieux said that he had lived near a convict camp in South Carolina and gone often to listen to the prisoners sing as they worked. A certain band of life-termers, who had been together for a long time, had sung together so much that they were in fine voice, and had wonderful harmony of part-singing. They sang all day Sunday, as they had nothing else to do.

Mr. Derieux described the iron cage that was moved about for the gang to sleep in at night — something like a Pullman car, only very different as to comfort and looks. The convicts would be chained to the cage on Sunday, but allowed certain freedom of movement. They sang all day. He vividly recalled fragments of their songs.

O, Lawd, ain't dey rest fo' de weary one?

One star in de east,
One star in de west.
And I wish dat star was in mah breast!

Let us cross ober de ribber,
Let us cross ober de ribber,
Let us cross ober de ribber,
An' rest.

Come across, Moses,
Don't get lost.
Spread yo' rod an' come across.
Jesus, Jesus died on de cross.

These convicts sang, while the hard-faced guards watched them ceaselessly and the bloodhounds lay beside them.

Dr. Boyd, of Nashville, Tennessee, an elderly man very prominent in religious work among his race, discussed with me the various types of work-singing among the Negroes. He said that the music and the words changed in every state, and to know the reasons for the change one would have to know the history of industrial conditions in each locality. He said that in Virginia the singing was more like that of a choir. In tobacco factories there would always be a leader, who would lead in singing, and a marvellous sort of group-singing resulted. In South Carolina the work was chiefly done out of doors, — as in rice-fields, and so forth, — where the laborers sang corn-songs. In turning the water through the rice, the leader would start off with a song, and the other laborers would follow as they came up to him. In Mississippi the Negroes sang as they worked hoeing or picking cotton in the fields, sometimes near together and sometimes scattered. In Louisiana the workers in the sugar-cane fields varied as to their singing, the cane cutters singing one way and the haulers another. In Texas, which was a new country, the singing was made up of almost all types.

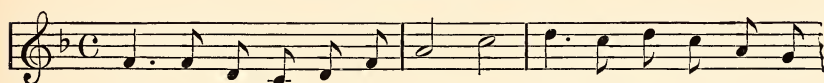
The cotton-field has heard much of this communal singing, as any Southerner knows. J. E. Morrow reports a scene from Texas:

"A number of 'hands' were in a cotton patch, and they constantly sang as they went down the rows. Groups of kindred spirits would sing one song together, or each sing a stanza alone, as fancy suggested. One of the favorites was this. One of the groups in the cotton patch — and the fastest — had for its leader an old man. He was apparently tireless, or so engrossed with his singing that he never slacked exertion. His favorite was the first stanza in this song. As he sang, the others added their contribution, with the following composite result.

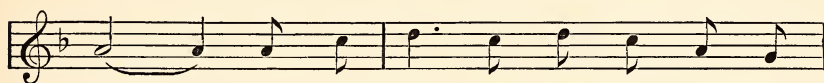
"Would n't drive so hard but I needs de arns,
Would n't drive so hard but I needs de arns.
Snatchin' an' a-crammin' it in my sack,
Gotter have some cotton if it breaks my back.
Would n't drive so hard, but I needs de arns,
Would n't drive so hard, but I needs de arns."

The workers on the sugar plantations in southern Louisiana have their songs, as one given me by Alvin Belden, of New Orleans. The "row" referred to here is the long line of young cane, though it might as well be a row of cotton or corn.

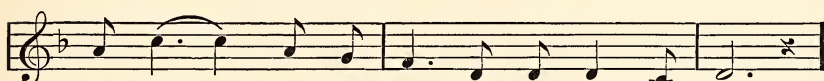
ROW AFTER ROW



I'm a - think-in' of you, hon - ey, Think-in' 'case I love you



so, An' my heart keeps thump - in' an' a -

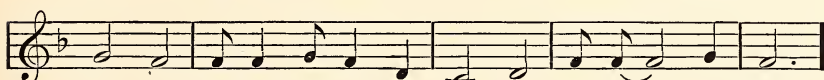


thump - in', . . . As I hoe down row af - er row.

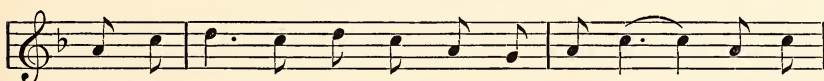
CHORUS



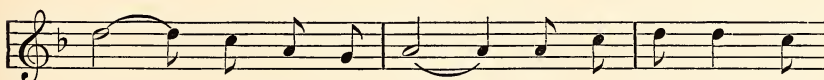
Row af - ter row, my ba - by, Row af - ter row, my



ba - by, Row af - ter row, my ba - by, Row af - ter row.



When I think of her the rows get short - er, . . . For I



find . . . my work is through; So I keep on a -



hoe - in' an' a - hoe - in', . . . Think-in' of Miss Lin - dy Lou.

I'm a-thinkin' of you, honey,
 Thinkin' 'case I love you so,
 An' my heart keeps thumpin' an' a-thumpin',
 As I hoe down row after row.

Chorus

Row after row, my baby,
 Row after row, my baby,
 Row after row, my baby,
 Row after row.

When I think of her the rows get shorter,
 For I find my work is through;
 So I keep on a-hoein' an' a-hoein',
 Thinkin' of Miss Lindy Lou.

Chorus

The rhythmic possibilities of the washboard in the hands of a Negress are all but illimitable. There are many "rubbing songs," but one example, a Creole song from Louisiana given by Mrs. George Deynoodt and Mrs. La Rose, of New Orleans will serve.

TOUT PITIT NEGRESSE

Tout pi - tit Ne - gresse en bas bay - ou, A -
 pe la - ver chi - mi - se ye' ma - ma! A, al - la, mam -
 selle, les blanchiseuses! A, al - la, mam - selle, les blanchiseuses!

Tout pitit Negresse en bas bayou,
 A-pe laver chimise ye' mama!
 A, alla, mamselle, les blanchiseuses!
 A, alla, mamselle, les blanchiseuses!

Tout pitit Negre en bas bayou,
 A-pe frotter culotte ye' papa!
 A, alla, monsieur, les blanchisseurs!
 A, alla, monsieur, les blanchisseurs!

This says (in English):

A very little Negress down on the bayou
 Washing shirts, oh, mama!
 Oh, lady, the washerwomen!
 Oh, lady, the washerwomen!

A very little Nigger boy down on the bayou,
 Scrubbing underclothes, oh, papa!
 Oh, man, the washerman!
 Oh, man, the washerman!

There are various occupational songs that interest the collector and reveal the Negro's habit of making his work something more than mere machine movements — characterizing it, so to speak, giving it dramatic values. If that spirit could be carried over into all industry and even professional work, perhaps there would be less labor unrest than at present. Work is dignified when it is shown to be important enough to have a song addressed to it, when it is lyrically apostrophized. The Negro has little of the detached, impersonal attitude toward life or any aspect of it, but thinks and speaks subjectively. Even the street cries in the South are musical, as Harriet Kershaw Leiding has shown in her interesting booklet about Charleston, "Street Cries of an Old City." So, in New Orleans, the chimney-sweep announces himself by a weird cry, half wail and half chant, which can scarcely be imitated, but which is very impressive: *Ramonee la chemine latannier!* And Miss Emilie Walter has given me the cry of the watermelon vendor in South Carolina: "Barka-lingo, watermelon! Barka-lingo, watermelon!" with its musical intonations and echoing fall.

In Texas, especially at Waco, I am told, the bootblacks sing at their work, songs passed from one to another, or improvisations, which they call "shine reels," and which serve not only to entertain the customer whose shoes are being polished, but to make less weary the waiting time for those who have not yet ascended the throne. The boys who black the shoes of the Baylor University students are, or used to be several years ago (I left Waco some years ago and cannot speak definitely now), adept at remembering or improvising these reels. Early Busby gave me one recently that he recalled having heard sung at these bootblack establishments.

SHINE REEL



"Where wuz you, Sweet Ma-ma, When de boat went down?"



. . . "On de deck, Ba-by, . . . Hol-ler-in', 'Al-a-ba-ma boun'!"

"Where wuz you, Sweet Mama,
When de boat went down?"
"On de deck, Baby,
Hollerin', 'Alabama boun'!'"

James E. Morrow gives several of the shine reels featured by these singers, of which the following is an example:

Yon'er goes my Nora, gittin' drunk ergin,
Yon'er goes my Nora, gittin' drunk ergin.
Oh, Miss Sudie!
She's got good booty,
Di'mon' rings and fine clo'es too,
But dat Nigger ain't gonna get
Nothin' from me.
Oh, dat woman can't friss me.
Yon'er goes my Nora, gittin' drunk ergin!

Mr. Morrow says: "The Negro who sang this song was shining my shoes, and when I asked him to give another verse, he stopped. A little substantial persuasion, however, brought forth another, which he timed to the strokes of his shining cloth as it was drawn across my shoes.

"Another Negro boy had a different shine reel, for they all have something of the sort. He was shy and would sing but one.

"I went to de ribber an' my gal went, too,
Stepped in de boat an' de boat went through.
Down de ribber we went, singin' an' er-huggin' an' er-kissin',
She say, 'You can't lose me, Charlie.'"

Work-songs of the Arkansas Negroes have been collected by Mrs. Richard Clough Thompson, of Pine Bluff, who sends some of them for this volume. She gives a woodchopper's song, which must be impressive, intoned in the solitude of the woods, as the chopper wields his shining axe to bring down one of the big trees. The song of the Negro is more philosophic in its acceptance of inevitability than is that of the poet of *Woodman, Spare That Tree*, and its solemn tones have harmonious accompaniment in the ringing sound of the axe as it strikes the tree trunk.

WOODCHOPPER'S SONG

Ole Mister Oak Tree, yo' day done come!
Zim-zam-zip-zoom!
Gwine chop you down an' cahy you home!
Bim-bam-biff-boom!

Buhds in de branches fin' anodder nes'!
 Zim-zam-zip-zoom!
 Ole Mister Oak Tree, he gwine to hees res'!
 Bim-bam-biff-boom!

White folks callin' for day wahm wintah fiah!
 Zim-zam-zip-zoom!
 Lif' de axe, Black Boy, hyah, hyah, hyah!
 Bim-bam-biff-boom!

Mrs. Thompson says: "It is difficult to represent the musical sounds of the refrain, which are like hissing, humming, whistling, and long-drawn-out crooning tones emphasized by the blows of the axe."

Mrs. Thompson also sends a spinning-song, a favorite of the Negro women in the days when spinning was done at home, by hand.

SPINNING-SONG

Spin, ladies, spin all day,
 Spin, ladies, spin all day.
 Sheep shell corn,
 Rain rattles up a horn,
 Spin, ladies, spin all day,
 Spin, ladies, spin all day,
 Spin, ladies, spin all day.

In her record of slavery days, called "When I Was a Little Girl," Anna Hardeman Meade gives a song that "Nervy" used, to make butter come, when the churning proved a long and tiresome task. This is in the nature of an invocation as well as an apostrophe, since churns may be hoodooed so effectually that the butter will never come unless some special means be used to lift the evil charm. At the old plantation Penultima Nervy used to sing:

Come, butter, come!
 De King an' de Queen
 Is er-standin' at de gate,
 Er-waitin' for some butter
 An' a cake.
 Oh, come, butter, come!

The pickaxe is a good musical instrument in the hands of a Negro man — or, at least, it serves as tuning-fork to line out the metre. Clare Virginia Forrest contributes this fragment of a work-song, which she says was sung by Negroes working on the roads in Norfolk, Virginia.

Oh, dis pickaxe am too heavy,
 Dis pickaxe am too heavy,
 Dis pickaxe am too heavy,
 Too heavy for my strength!

Professor Samuel Wolfe, of Columbia University, sang for me the following, which he heard a group of Negroes singing as they made a tennis court. The foreman of the gang sang the lines, and others gave the antiphonal "Lawd, Lawd!" This evidently originated as a mine song.

I'm a minder,
 I'm a minder,
 In de col' ground.
 Lawd, Lawd, Lawd, Lawd!
 I'm a minder,
 I'm a minder,
 In de col' ground.
 Lawd, Lawd, Lawd, Lawd!

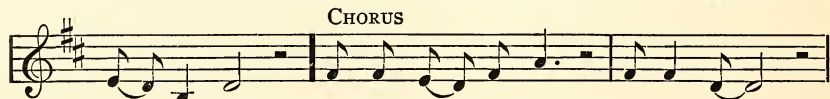
The rhythmic swing of the pick and its emphatic stroke to indicate a cæsura, or the end of a line, makes this group-singing an impressive thing. In the songs which follow, the dash shows the point at which the pick is raised or brought down, and represents an emphatic *Ugh!* or grunt, at the end of a musical phrase. Even these grunts that the Negro gives are harmonious with the song, and not a discord, as one might suppose, the musical intonations being surprisingly varied.

Samuel A. Derieux reported to me several work-songs, which he heard gangs of Negroes sing. When he was a rodman helping in construction works, he would hear roving Negroes sing at their construction jobs.

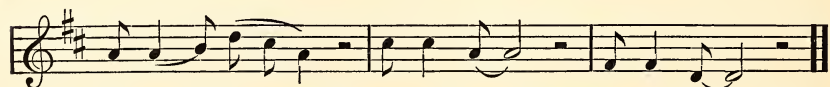
WORK-SONG



Oh, . . ba-by, *Ugh!* what you gwine to do? *Ugh!* Three C Rail-road *Ugh!*



done run through! *Ugh!* Me and my pard-ner, *Ugh!* him and me! . *Ugh!*



Him and . . me-e-e *Ugh!* him and me! . *Ugh!* Him and me. . *Ugh!*

Oh, baby, — what you gwine to do? —
Three C Railroad — done run through! —

Chorus

Me and my pardner, — him and me! —
Him and me-e-e — him and me! —
Him and me! —

Oh, baby, — what you gwine to do? —
Seaboard Air-line — done run through! —

Chorus

Oh, baby, — what you gwine to do? —
B and O Railroad — done run through! —

Chorus

Each stanza celebrates the completion of some railroad or public work, so that a list of them would give a history of construction work in the South, where these roving bands of Negroes had been employed. There are endless possibilities for stanza subjects, as one would suppose.

Mr. Derieux said that he heard a paid gang of Negroes working on a road at Greenville, South Carolina, when wages were a dollar a day. They sang an antiphonal chant,

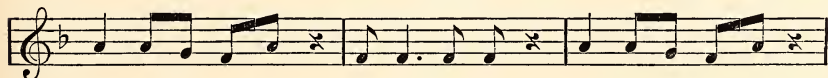
Million dollars —
Million days! —

Dr. Oren More, of Charlotte, North Carolina, gave Miss Gullledge a work-song that he had heard Negroes singing in a brickyard and clay-pit in South Carolina, when he was ten years old. The first part is the same as *I've Been Working on the Railroad*, and was sung by Negroes working with picks at what they called a "pick party."

WORK-SONG



Thought I fell in Ugh! ten foot o' wa-ter, Ugh! Thought I fell in Ugh!



ten foot o' wa-ter, Ugh! Thought I fell in Ugh! ten foot o' wa-ter, Ugh!



O - ver my head, . . . Ugh! o - ver my head. . . Ugh!

Thought I fell in — ten foot o' water, —
 Thought I fell in — ten foot o' water, —
 Thought I fell in — ten foot o' water, —
 Over my head, — over my head. —

Jay bird sat on — a hick'ry limb, —
 Jay bird sat on — a hick'ry limb, —
 Jay bird sat on — a hick'ry limb, —
 Over my head, — over my head. —

Jean Feild, of Richmond, gives a work-song she has heard from Virginia Negroes:

WORK-SONG

Help me drive 'er, Ugh! Help me drive 'er,
 Ugh! Help me drive 'er, Ugh! uh, home! Ugh!

Help me drive 'er, —
 Help me drive 'er, —
 Help me drive 'er, — uh, home! —

Little Mary, —
 Little Mary, —
 Little Mary, — uh, home! —

To de mountain, —
 To de mountain, —
 To de mountain, — uh, home! —

The most famous of these work-songs is a ballad relating the exploits and the fate of one "John Henry." Tradition among the Negroes has it that the hero of this was a big, handsome Negro, a steel-driver on the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad. He did his work with sledge and hand-drill, and resented the intrusion of machines to compete with hand work. He boasted that he could work faster than any steam-driller, and won in the contest staged, but died as he laid down his triumphant hammer.

John Harrington Cox has made a study of the origin and variants of this ballad, the results of which are found in his volume, "Folk-Songs of the South," which the Harvard University Press has just issued. His researches have yielded extremely valuable material, re-

vealing the manner in which a ballad may spring into being and grow by accretion, while it is circulated orally over a large territory. Professor Cox was lucky enough even to find a photograph of John Henry on the scaffold.

Lucy Dickinson Urquhart, of Lynchburg, sends this version of the hammer work-song. She says of it: "You know how Negroes working on the roads, in a quarry, or some work of that sort, all lift their picks or hammers together, singing, and come down together, letting their breath out in unison, with a sort of long grunt. Dashes are used here to indicate the grunts. The tune to this is the first part of *Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing*."

Ef I had 'bout — fo'ty-five dollahs —
All in gol', yas — all in gol' —
I'd be rich as — ol' man Cahtah —
Wealth untol', yas — wealth untol'.

Dis ol' hammah — kill John Henry —
Kill him daid, yas — kill him daid —
Knock de brains out — of mah pahdner —
In his haid, yas — in his haid.

I'm gwine back to — South Ca'lina —
Fah away, yas — fah away. —
I'm gwine see my — Esmeraldy —
I cain't stay, no — I cain't stay.

Mrs. Urquhart says, further: "There used to be an old salt works near here, where Negroes worked, stripped to the waist, raking the salt out of the boiling brine. They sang together after this fashion while they worked. But the song given above was to the accompaniment of hammers."

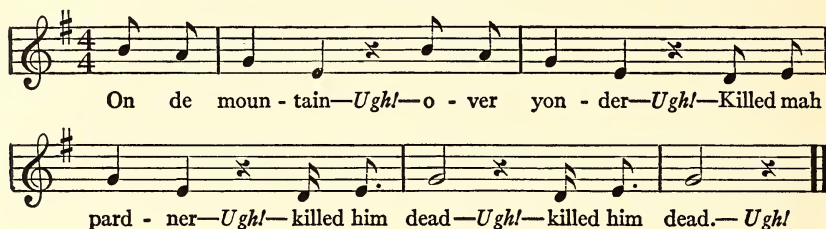
Wirt A. Williams, from Mississippi, sends a variant known among the Negroes in his state, which suggests another sort of tragedy committed with a hammer:

Dis is de hamma killed John Henry,
Killed 'im daid, killed 'im daid.
Busted de brains all outen my partner,
In his haid, yes, in his haid.

Ef I had 'bout forty-five dollars,
All in gold, yes, all in gold,
I'd be rich as old man Cyarter,
Wealth untold, yes, wealth untold!

Edwin Swain says that the Negroes in Florida years ago sang a hammer work-song which gives at least a mountain setting to the fatality, though it does little to clear up the mystery otherwise.

WORK-SONG



On de mountain — over yonder —
 Killed mah pardner — killed him dead — killed him dead. —
 Wid mah hammer — killed mah pardner —
 Over yonder — killed him dead — killed him dead. —

Evelyn Cary Williams, of Lynchburg, sends a version taken down from the singing of Charles Calloway, of Bedford County, Virginia, a Negro worker on the road.

NINE-POUND HAMMER

Nine-pound hammer —
 Kill John Henry —
 But 't won't kill me, babe, —
 'T won't kill me!

If I live —
 To see December —
 I'm goin' home, love, —
 I'm goin' home.

I'm goin' back —
 To the red-clay country —
 That's my home, babe, —
 That's my home.

Joseph Turner, of Hollins, Virginia, has a variant a little more mixed:

WORK-SONG

Nine-pound hammer, nine-pound hammer, nine-pound hammer,
 Can't kill me, can't kill me, can't kill me;
 Nine-pound hammer can't kill me!

Oh, my papa and my mamma think I'm dead, think I'm dead,
 Oh, my papa and my mamma think I'm dead!

Who shot Ida? who shot Ida? who shot Ida
 In de laig?
 Who shot Ida? who shot Ida? who shot Ida
 In de laig?

One wonders who was Ida, who sent a bullet her way, and what she had to do with John Henry. She and her wounded "laig" obscure the tradition here, and raise all sorts of questions. Contemporary legends are as fascinating and elusive as those of past centuries, and we are faced with various mysteries in this epic career of John Henry.

Wirt A. Williams furnishes another song from Mississippi, which introduces John Henry as a corpse, but only to dispose of him quickly and pass to other problems, such as the difficulty of dealing with women-folk and the dangers of stealing chickens.

JOHN HENRY'S DEAD

John Henry's dead,
 And de las' words he said,
 "Never let your honey
 Have her way."

'Way back, 'way back,
 'Way back in Alabama, 'way back.

"If you let her have her way,
 She'll lead you off astray,
 Keep you in trouble
 All your days."

'Way back, 'way back,
 'Way back in Alabama, 'way back.

"De chickens in my sack,
 De bloodhounds on my track,
 Going to make it to my shanty
 If I can."

'Way back, 'way back,
 'Way back in Alabama, 'way back.

John Henry has "died more deaths than one" in legend; for, while some of the songs about him represent him as expiring of a hammer, others show his demise to be intimately connected with a rope

around his neck — the other end being held in the sheriff's hands. He is reported to have murdered another Negro over twenty-five cents, — or over a woman, — or over a card quarrel, and to have paid the penalty for it.

Ex-Governor McCorkie of West Virginia wrote to Mr. Cox about Hardy: "It was about 1872 that he was in this section. This was before the day of steam-drills and the drill work was done by two powerful men who were special steel-drillers. They struck the steel from side to side, and sang a song they improvised as they worked." He also says that John Hardy (*alias* Henry) was the most famous steel-driller ever in his section, and one of the handsomest men in the country, "black as a kittle in hell," he was called. Such romantic characters present puzzles to the law, but they lend romance to folk-lore, and John Henry is a very real person to the southern Negro who sings of him.

Here is a hammer-song that has to do with a more ancient event than John Henry's untimely taking-off. It is a spiritual adapted to use as a work-song, for the antiphonal questions and responses mark the rhythmic strokes of the hammer — which tool here is given power of thought and speech.

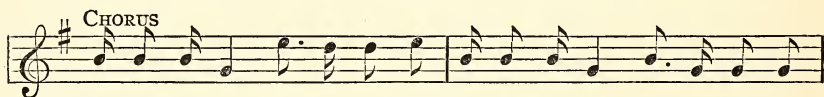
NORAH



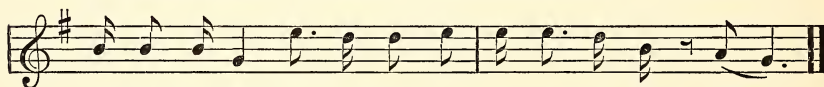
Norah was a hundred and twenty years build-in' de ark of God,



And ev - 'ry time his ham - mer ring, No - rah cried, "A - men!"

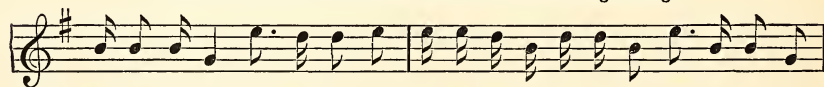


Well, who build de ark? No-rah build it. Who build de ark? No - rah build it.



Who build de ark? No - rah build it, Cut his tim - ber down.

In the second chorus there is one extra line in beginning:



Well, who build de ark? No-rah build it. Hammer keep a-ringin', said, "Norah build it!"

Then first chorus

Norah was a hundred and twenty years buildin' de ark of God,
And ev'ry time his hammer ring, Norah cried, "Amen!"

Chorus

Well, who build de ark?
Norah build it.
Who build de ark?
Norah build it.
Who build de ark?
Norah build it,
Cut his timber down.

Fust thing dat Norah done,
Cut his timber down.
Second thing dat Norah done,
Hewed it all around.

Norah was a hundred and twenty years buildin' de ark of God,
And ev'ry time his hammer ring, Norah cried, "Amen!"

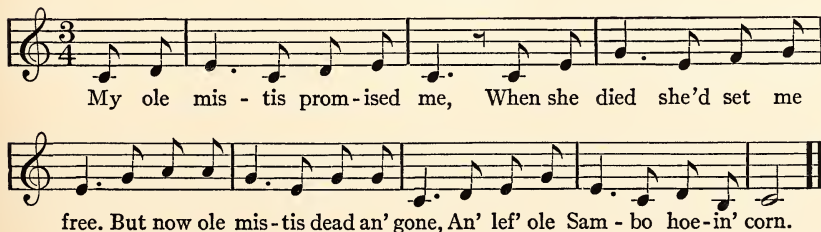
Chorus

Well, who build de ark?
Norah build it.
Hammer keep a-ringin', said, "Norah build it!"
Well, who build de ark?
Norah build it.
Who build de ark?
Norah build it.
Who build de ark?
Norah build it,
Cut his timber down.

Some of the problems of the *ante-bellum* Negro with respect to his work are shown in his folk-songs. The pathos with which a slave would yearn toward the hope of ultimate freedom, freedom possible only upon the will of the master, and liable to be denied by circumstance as well as greed, appears in variants of an old song.

Garmet Eskew gave me the following version, which is very old:

MY OLE MISTIS



My ole mis - tis prom - ised me, When she died she'd set me
free. But now ole mis - tis dead an' gone, An' lef' ole Sam - bo hoe - in' corn.

My ole mistis promised me,
 When she died she'd set me free.
 But now ole mistis dead an' gone,
 An' lef' ole Sambo hoein' corn.

Chorus

Oh, Johnny, get de hoecake, my dear,
 Oh, Johnny, get de hoecake.

My ole marster promised me
 When he died he'd set me free.
 But he libed so long an' died so po',
 He lef' ole Sambo hoein' de same old row.

This tune is like *I Am Coming to the Cross*. Which came first?

Lucy Dickinson Urquhart sends this one that her grandmother used to sing, as she learned it from the slaves. Here the chorus of *The Blue-tailed Fly* comes in, as it has a habit of doing, bobbing up in places where it does not belong.

My ol' master promised me
 When he died he'd set me free.
 Now ol' master dead and gone
 An' lef' dis Nigger a-hoein' up corn.

Chorus

Jim crack corn, I don't care,
 Jim crack corn, I don't care,
 Jim crack corn, I don't care,
 Ol' massa's gone away.

My ol' missis promised me
 When she died she'd set me free.
 Done lived along twel her head got bald,
 Don't believe ol' missis gwine to die at all.

Chorus

In this version and the one given next, the old darcy is nameless; he voices anonymous woes, none the less poignant because not specifically related to a name and place. The other is one that Mr. Bartlett sings, calling it *Po' Mona*.

My ole misitis said to me,
 "When I die I'se goin' to set you free."
 Teeth fell out and her haid got bald,
 Clean lost the notion of dyin' at all!

Chorus

Po' Mona, you shall be free,
 Gooba-looba, Nigger, you shall be free.
 Keep a-shoutin', Nigger, you shall be free,
 When the good Lawd sets you free.

Some folks say that Niggers don't steal,
 But — I found three in my cornfield;
 One had a shovel and one had a bell,
 And t'other little Nigger went runnin' like ——

Chorus

A more proper version of the last two lines runs:

One had a shovel and one had a hoe,
 And if that ain't stealin', well, I don't know!

Chorus

If you want to go to Heb'n, I tell you what to do,
 Jes' grease yo' feet with mutton soo'.
 When the devil gets after you with them greasy hands,
 Jes' slip right over in the Promised Lan'!

Chorus

Mrs. Bartlett says: "I suppose 'Mona' should be more correctly 'Mourner,' but I spell phonetically."

John Trotwood Moore, of Nashville, librarian of the State Library of Tennessee, contributes a slightly different stanza, wherein the victim of fate appears as one Bre'r Washington.

My ole marster promised me
 Ef I broke de record he'd set me free.
 My ole marster dead and gone,
 He lef' Bre'r Washington hillin' up corn.

A somewhat sentimentalized reflection of slavery, stressing both work and food as the Negro viewed them, is in an old-time song sent in by Mrs. Bartlett, in the old days. Virginia, it will be remembered, was considered a happier, more considerate setting for slavery than certain other states. To be sold from Virginia and taken "down south" was considered a cruel blow.

'WAY DOWN IN OLE VIRGINIA

'Way down in ole Virginia
 Where I was bred and born,
 On the sunny side of that country
 I used to hoe the corn.

Like childhood's happy moments,
 When I was going away,
 I strayed away from the old place,
 And I could n't stay away!

Chorus

And I could n't,
 And I would n't,
 And I could n't stay away!
 And I could n't,
 And I would n't,
 And I could n't stay away!

Well, my ole mistis, she was good and kind,
 She was good and kind to me.
 She fed me awful good meat and bread
 And sometimes hominy.
 Well, my ole mistis, she was good and kind,
 She was good and kind to me.
 She fed me awful good meat and bread
 And sometimes hominy.

Chorus

Well, my ole master, he was good and kind,
 He was good and kind to me.
 He fed me awful good meat and bread
 And sometimes hominy.
 Well, my ole master, he was good and kind,
 He was good and kind to me.
 He fed me awful good meat and bread
 And sometimes hominy.

Chorus

Judge W. R. Boyd, of Texas, remembers much of the slave-life in the South, and recalls vividly the songs the Negroes on the plantations used to sing, not only at their labor, but as they went to and from their work. For instance, he says that the slaves used to give a peculiar singing call, something between a yodel and a chant, as they went to their work in the early morning. My mother also has told me of this, and has spoken of its weird, uncanny effect of eerie, remote pathos.

Hoo ah hoo! Hoo ah hoo! Hoo ah hoo!
 Hoo ah hoo! Hoo ah hoo! Hoo ah hoo!
 Hoo ah hoo! Hoo ah hoo! Hoo ah hoo!
 Hoo ah hoo! Hoo ah hoo! Hoo ah hoo!

Judge Boyd says that about sunset the Negroes on the plantation, before the war, would sing as follows:

Oh, Miss Liza, oh, mah darlin'! — hoo ah hoo!
 Gwine away to leave you — hoo ah hoo!
 Gwine away to-morrow — hoo ah hoo!
 Ain't you mighty sorry? — hoo ah hoo!

Oh, Miss Liza, oh, mah honey! — hoo ah hoo!
 Comin' back to see you — hoo ah hoo!
 Won't you be mah honey? — hoo ah hoo!
 Gives you all mah money — hoo ah hoo!

Oh, Miss Liza, oh, mah lovie! — hoo ah hoo!
 Don't you know ah lub you? — hoo ah hoo!
 Come to me, mah baby! — hoo ah hoo!
 Don't you want to marry? — hoo ah hoo!

Freedom as well as slavery has its perplexities and complications, and work has not become rosy for the Negro now, simply because he is paid wages instead of clothes and keep. He works for somebody else much as he did in earlier times, if his folk-songs are to be believed. Howard Odum gives a song in the *Journal of American Folklore*, illustrating this aspect of the Negro's life.

AIN'T IT HARD TO BE A NIGGER?

Well, it makes no difference
 How you make out yo' time,
 White man sho' bring a
 Nigger out behin'.

Chorus

Ain't it hard, ain't it hard,
 Ain't it hard to be a Nigger, Nigger, Nigger?
 Ain't it hard, ain't it hard?
 For you can't git yo' money when it's due.

Nigger an' white man
 Playin' seven-up,
 Nigger win de money,
 Skeered to pick 'em up.

If a Nigger git 'rested
 An' can't pay his fine,
 Dey sho' send him out
 To de county gang.

NEGRO FOLK-SONGS

A Nigger went to a white man,
 An' asked him for work;
 White man told de Nigger,
 "Yes, git out o' yo' shirt."

Nigger got out o' his shirt,
 An' went to work;
 When pay-day come,
 White man say he ain't work 'nuff.

If you work all de week,
 An' work all de time,
 White man sho' to bring
 Nigger out behin'.

A Negro at J. H. Williams's gin at Natchez, Louisiana, was overheard singing to himself as he looked at a bale of cotton:

Here sits de woodpecker
 Learning how to figger,
 All for de white man
 And nothing for de Nigger!

A similar sentiment of ironic comparison is expressed in an old song sent me by Judge Boyd, who says that it was sung by slaves before the war.

Monday mornin' 'way 'fo' day,
 White folks got me gwine.
 Sad'day night when de sun go down,
 True lub in my mind.

Chorus

Oh, ho, Miss Mary, oh, ho, mah darlin',
 Hi, hi, Miss Mary, oh, ho, mah honey!

Little bees suck de blossoms,
 Big bees eats de honey.
 Niggers make de cotton an' corn,
 White folks 'ceive de money.

Chorus

Certain reactions to the hardships of labor as the black man sees them are in a song given by Mary Lee Thurman, of Washington, through the courtesy of Mary Boyd, of Richmond.

HEAR DEM BELLS!

All day I works in de cotton an' de corn,
 My feet and my hands are sore,
 Waiting for Gabriel to blow his horn,
 So I won't have to work any more.

Chorus

Hear dem bells — oh, don't you hear dem bells?
 Dey's ringing out de glory of de dawn.
 Hear dem bells — oh, don't you hear dem bells?
 Dey's ringing out de glory of de dawn.

I sings an' I shouts wid all my might
 To drive away de cold;
 An' de bells keep a-ringin' in de gospel light,
 Tell de story of de Lamb is told.

Chorus

I goes to church in de early morn,
 De birds all a-settin' in de tree,
 Sometimes my clothes gets very much worn,
 'Case I wear dem out at de knee.

Chorus

The darky in the song fragment sent me by Mrs. Cammilla Brea-zeale, of Louisiana, was evidently in a mournful and resentful mood. His razor sounds alarmingly bellicose.

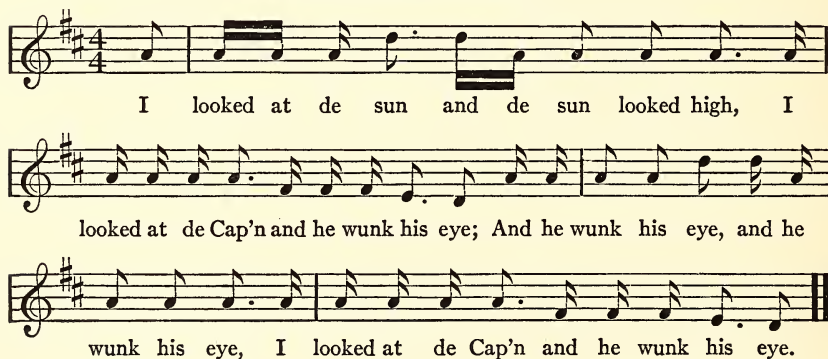
Workin' on de levee,
 Yes, I am,
 Wid my razor in my hand.
 Don't love nobody —
 Nobody loves me.

The Negro is considered to be temperamentally indifferent to the value of time, evidently feeling with Browning that time is for dogs and apes — and, he might add, white folks. *He* has eternity. Yet he on occasion feels a sense of the importance of passing hours, as in the stanza given by Betty Jones (through the courtesy of Professor J. C. Metcalfe, of the University of Virginia), where he looks at his watch — the sun.

Look at the sun,
 See how he run —
 God Almighty 'll catch you
 With your work undone!

The Negro is not eager to work overtime, as a song heard by Professor W. H. Thomas, and included in a paper read before the Texas Folk-lore Society, will attest. Professor Thomas calls this the *Skinner's Song*. "Skinner is the vernacular for teamster. The Negro seldom carries a watch, but still uses the sun as a chronometer; a watch would be too suggestive of regularity. Picture to yourself several Negroes working on a levee as teamsters. About five o'clock you would hear this:

SKINNER'S SONG



I looked at de sun and de sun looked high, I
looked at de Cap'n and he wunk his eye; And he wunk his eye, and he
wunk his eye, I looked at de Cap'n and he wunk his eye.

"I looked at de sun and de sun looked high,
I looked at de Cap'n and he wunk his eye;
And he wunk his eye, and he wunk his eye,
I looked at de Cap'n and he wunk his eye.

"I looked at de sun and de sun looked red,
I looked at de Cap'n and he turned his head;
And he turned his head, and he turned his head,
I looked at de Cap'n and he turned his head."

The Cap'n here referred to is the boss, who must give the signal before the Negroes can stop work for the day.

The Cap'n and the time element are brought together in another song heard by Professor Thomas, the title of which is touching in its suggestive anxiety: *Don't Let Your Watch Run Down, Cap'n!*

The struggle between love and the cruel necessities of enforced work are wailfully uttered in a song given by Evelyn Cary Williams, of Lynchburg, who took it down from the singing of Charles Callo-way.

WORK-SONG

Six months in jail ain't so long, baby,
 It's workin' on the county farm.
 Got my pick an' shovel now, baby,
 Yo' true lub is gone.
 Who's gwine to be yo' true lub, baby,
 When I'm gone?
 Who gwine to bring you chickens, honey,
 When I'm workin' on the county farm?

Mr. Jack Busby, in North Carolina, overheard another songster singing, as he ploughed, a ditty concerning the contrasts of his life:

Hardest work I ever done
 Was ploughin' round a pine;
 Easiest work I ever done
 Was huggin' dat gal o' mine.

J. E. Morrow, of Texas, says of another work-song he sends: "A convict was riding one of the mules to a road-grader. As he moved along he would burst into song:

"I'se gwine to stan'
 In my back do',
 An' I'se gwine ter hab —
 Let de Debbil blab! —
 Dat gal wid de blue dress on.
 Oh, swing dat gal wid de blue dress on,
 Swing, you Niggers, swing!

"As he sang the last line, the team turned about, and I could not decide whether he was giving instructions to other drivers or whether that was the last of his song. Anyway, it came in with the tune and he sang no more."

The tendency of workers to loaf on the job when the boss is not by is revealed in their song. The Negroes dearly love moments of relaxation, and snatch them regardless of regulations. For example, Elsie Brown reports a chant which workers in Tennessee used to sing when — lounging idly, in the absence of the foreman — they would see him coming and pass the word along musically:

Boss am comin',
 Boss am comin',
 Boss am comin'.

Mrs. Richard Clough Thompson says of an Arkansas work-song: "A group of Negroes had knocked off work and were idling along the road, when they spied their master coming, and, realizing that detection and punishment were inevitable, they began to improvise a song after this fashion:

"Stan' boys, stan',
 Dah's now no use a-runnin',
 Use a-runnin'.
 Look upon yondah hill
 An' see ol' massa comin',
 Massa comin',
 See 'im comin'.

"Bowie knife in one hand
 An' pistol in de tother.
 Stan', boys, stan',
 Brother stan' by brother,
 Stan' by brother.

"Oberseer wid his stick,
 Stick am comin' floppin',
 Floppin', floppin',
 Niggahs, ef you run away
 Ruckus bound to happen,
 Ruckus bound to happen.

"At the word one of the boys fell down and the rest gathered around him, so that the plantation owner and his overseer arrived to find the Negroes carrying with mournful faces a darky boy seemingly unconscious."

But not all the disadvantages are on the side of the colored man, as others of his songs suggest. The Negro is an optimist and has his own philosophy to comfort him. In contrasting his lot with that of the white man, he may have a mood to see that he is the fortunate one. He is less worried by income and inheritance taxes, and can himself perceive other advantages. At least, the Negro responsible for the song given me by Mrs. M. L. Riddle, of eastern Tennessee, felt that way about his life.

I'M A NACHEL-BAWN REACHER

De white man say de times is hahd,
 Nigger never worries, 'case he trust in de Lawd.
 No matter how hahd de times may be,
 Chickens never roost too high foh me.

I'M A NACHEL-BAWN REACHER

Fast

De white man say de times is hahd, Nig - ger nev - er

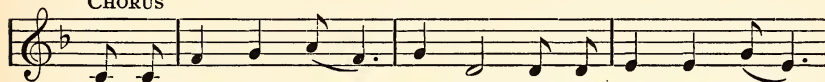


wor - ries, 'case he trust in de Lawd. No mat - ter how hahd de

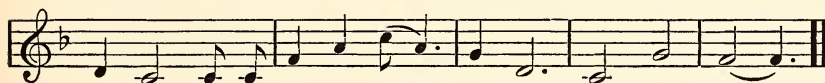


times may be, Chick-ens nev - er roost too high foh me.

CHORUS



I'm a nach - el - bawn reach - er, Jus' a nach - el - bawn



reach-er, Jus' a nach - el - bawn reach - er, Dat's no lie. . .

Chorus

I'm a nachel-bawn reacher,
 Jus' a nachel-bawn reacher,
 Jus' a nachel-bawn reacher,
 Dat's no lie.

Once I knew a man by de name of Freeze,
 Among de gals he was all de cheese.
 He was twice as frosty as his name,
 He ever lacked de letter dat never came.

Chorus

Alas, pore Freeze got in a fight,
 De coons drew deir razors an' carved him right.
 Dey parted his body from his breath somehow,
 It cuts no ice where he is now.

Chorus

I'm a nachel-bawn freezer,
 Jus' a nachel-bawn freezer,
 Jus' a nachel-bawn freezer,
 Dat's no lie.

The more restful aspects of colored existence are lyricized in these folk-songs, as well as the hardships and vicissitudes. Sometimes the Negro decides to strike — to leave off labor and take his ease, as in the outburst sent by Professor O. W. Kern, of Randolph-Macon Woman's College, Virginia.

Ain't gwine to work no more,
 Labor is tiresome shore.
 Best occupation am recreation,
 Life's mighty short, you know.
 No use to pinch an' save,
 Can't take it to your grave;
 Peter won't know if you're rich or pore,
 So ain't gwine to work no more.

Don't you worry, honey, ef the world goes wrong,
 Oh, baby, I love you.
 Don't you worry, honey, ef the year seems long,
 I'll be true.
 Every cloud you know must have a silver linin'
 Shinin' bright.
 Don't you mind a little trouble,
 Life is only just a bubble,
 All will come right.

If the Negro philosophizes that all's well in his part of the world, he feels he has a reason for it. The optimism of the singer of the following song, sent by Professor Kern, has its explanation in the last stanza. Who would not feel contented if assured of devoted love and easy living at once?

DAT'S ALL RIGHT

Sometime soon, it ain't gwine to be long,
 My honey's gwine to wake up, an' find me gone.
 All up an' down dis ole railroad track
 My honey's gwine to watch for me to come back.

Chorus

Dat's all right, dat's all right,
 Dat's all right, babe, dat'll be all right.
 I'll be with you right or wrong.
 When you see a good thing, shove it along.
 Dat's all right, babe, dat'll be all right.

Went down to my honey's house, 'bout four o'clock;
 Knocked on de door, an' de door was locked.

Turned right around an' I shook my head;
I looked in de window, an' my honey was dead.

Chorus

Dere ain't no use in my workin' so hard,
For I got a gal in de white folks' yard;
She brings me meat an' she brings me lard,
Dere ain't no use in my workin' so hard.

Chorus

Some Alabama Negroes have the same tuneful reaction to this situation, for Harriet Fitts contributes a song of much the same spirit, sung by old Aunt Maria, which even adds the consolation of religion to the material blessings. Truly, a comforting concept of life, for those who can accept it!

AIN'T NO USE O' MY WORKIN' SO HARD

Ain't no use o' my workin' so hard, darlin',
Ain't no use o' my workin' so hard, darlin';
I got a gal in de white folks' yard.
She kill a chicken,
She bring me de wing;
Ain't I livin' on an easy thing,
Honey babe?

Chorus

Shout, you mourners, an' you shall be free,
Shout, you mourners, an' you shall be free,
When de good Lawd set you free.

Nigger an' a rooster had a fight;
Rooster knocked de Nigger clean out o' sight.
Nigger say, "Rooster, dat's all right;
I git you at de chicken-coop to-morrow night."

Chorus

In Texas, also, something of the same idea prevails, if one may judge from the stanza reported by Roberta Anderson. This likewise ends with evangelistic fervor of assurance.

Oh, my gal's de queen o' de cards,
She wucks down yonder in de white folks' yards,
Brings in money every day,
Thinks I'm wuckin', but I ain't built dat way;
It's too hard!
Oh, you shall be free
When de good Lawd set you free!

A like easy philosophy is expressed in another song of economic adjustments:

Me 'n' my baby an' my baby's frien'
Can pick mo' cotton dan a cotton gin.
Oh, sugar babe, darlin' man!

I got a baby an' a honey, too,
Honey don't love me but my baby do.
Oh, sugar babe, darlin' man!

Boat's up de ribber an' she won't come down,
B'lieve to mah soul she's water-boun',
Oh, my ragtime Liza Jane!

Me'n' my wife an' a bob-tailed dog
Crossed de ribber on a hollow log.
She fell in, dog did, too.

Middlin' er meat an' er bucket o' lard,
I got a gal in de white folks' yard.
I'se er-livin' easy, God knows I'm er-livin' high!

Charles Carroll reports that twenty years ago he saw a group of Negro prisoners being taken to a convict farm, near Hearne, Texas, and heard them sing,

I got a gal, her name is Maude,
Lives right over in de white folks' yahd;
Cooks dat turkey, brings me some,
I ain't ever gwine to want for nothing.

Surely that was optimism shown under difficulties. Maude must have had to exert herself to justify their belief in her, but let us hope she was equal to the emergency.

Professor Thomas, of Agricultural and Mechanical College, Texas, has likewise heard the song of the Negro who is the equivalent for "squawman" with respect to material support. He calls it the *Song of the Fortunate One*.

The reason why I don't work so hard,
I got a gal in the white folks' yard;
And every night about half-past eight
I steps in through the white man's gate;
And she brings the butter, and the bread and the lard.
That's the reason why I don't work so hard.

Of course, the southern housewife views such a situation less pleasantly, but she is not composing folk-songs about it, so her attitude is negligible.

Some races are by nature musical, while others are not. The Negro is instinctively a creature of rhythm and harmony, though prevented by circumstances and his own inertia from cultivating his talent; while noteworthy individuals of the present day show the possibilities of development when ambition is added to that native gift. But the Negro, even when he makes not the least effort to improve his voice, finds in it great pleasure. It can cheer his lonely hours, and enliven his communal labor, not only reconciling him to the necessity for work, but, in a measure at least, making of that time a joy. Yet now he is singing less at his work than formerly — I do not know why. Perhaps it is because machinery has taken the place of hand work, and stills song with its noise, or perhaps he has come to look down upon the simple joy of singing and has not yet reached the appreciation of the value of that song.

Professor Thomas, in his discussion of the plantation Negro of Texas and his song as he has observed them, gives an economic interpretation of this folk-singing which is interesting, though I am not sure that I agree with him in his conclusions. I quote some disconnected sentences to suggest his ideas.

"The class I am treating of is the semi-rural proletariat. So far as my observation goes, the property-holding Negro never sings. You see, property lends respectability, and respectability is too great a burden for any literature to bear, even our own. . . .

"A great change has come into the Negro's economic life in the past two decades. Its causes have been two. He has come into competition with the European immigrant, whose staying qualities are much greater than his; and agriculture has been changing from a feudalistic to a capitalistic basis, which requires a greater technical ability than the Negro possesses. The result is that he is being steadily pushed into the less inviting and less secure occupations. . . . The Negro, then, sings, because he is losing his economic foothold. This economic insecurity has interfered most seriously with those two primal necessities — work and love."

IX

RAILROAD SONGS

THE Negro, an imaginative being, delights to personify the things that enter into his life. As in his work-songs he may hold dialogues with his hammer or his hoe, may apostrophize the tree he is cutting down, or the butter in the churn, so he makes a dramatic figure out of such a thing as a railroad train. That appeals to him for various reasons. Its rhythmic turn of wheels inspires a rhythmic turn of phrase in a folk-song. Its regularly recurring noises are iambic or trochaic like the Negro's patting of foot or clapping of hand — not dactylic or anapaestic, like some sounds in nature, the galloping of a horse, for example. The Negro's spontaneous songs are almost wholly in two-quarter or four-quarter time, rarely with the three syllable foot. Perhaps that instinct harks back to the beat of drums in jungled Africa, or perhaps it merely satisfies some inexplicable impulse in the Negro soul.

The Negro has no dragon in his mythology, but he sees a modern one in an engine and train — a fierce creature stretching across the country, breathing out fiery smoke, ruthless of what comes in its path. It is a being diabolic and divine, or at least a superman in force and intelligence. It gratifies his sense of the dramatic with its rushing entrances and exits, as it feeds his craving for mystery, with its shining rails that may lead anywhere, to all imaginable adventure. The Negro, while often outwardly lethargic, is restless of heart; is it because he feels that he has never found his true place in life? And so the engine with its dynamic energy, its fiery dissatisfaction, which, if ill directed, may result in dangerous explosions, fascinates him, and he loves to sing about it. He rides it in imagination more often than in reality. He delights in unconventional methods of transportation, and he speaks with easy intimacy of railroad magnates, as when he sings:

Jay Gooze said befo' he died,
Goin' to fix his trains so
The bums could n't ride.

He thinks of a train as one whom he knows, sometimes a friend, sometimes an enemy, but always a real being. He may admire the

engine's notable achievements, as in the song given by Edwin Swain, sung by the Negroes in Florida, and referring to a special called the "Alligator."

RAILROAD SONG

Jes' lemme tell you whut de 'Gator done:
Lef' St. Louis at half-pas' one.
'Rived Port Tampa at settin' ob de sun.
Gee! whoo! Tearin' up some dust!

Or if he wishes to express an idea of speed and ease of motion, he may compare a person's gait — perhaps actual, perhaps figurative — to that of his favorite train, as in the fragment reported by Professor W. H. Thomas, of Texas:

Run so easy and he run so fast,
Run just like the Aransas Pass.
Oh, baby, take a one on me!

The coming of a train may mean only the pleasurable excitement of a journey, in prospect or merely imagined, as in a fragment sung by Negroes in Angelina County, Texas. This, like many secular songs of the Negro, ends with religious enthusiasm.

Better git yo' ticket,
Better git yo' ticket,
Train's a-comin'.
Lord-ee-ee, Lord-ee-ee!
Um-um-um-um-um-um-um.

Hold your bonnet,
Hold your shawl,
Don't let go that waterfall.
Shout, Sister Betsy, shout!

The colored man may express a secret connection between himself and the train, as in the repetitious ditty given by Lemuel Hall, of Mississippi:

Don't you leave me here,
Don't you leave me here!
I'm Alabama bound,
I'm Alabama bound.

Don't you leave me here!
Ef you do de train don't run.
I got a mule to ride,
I got a mule to ride.
Don't you leave me here!

Or he may think of the railroad in terms of its relation to his sweetheart, present or absent. A song reported by Wirt A. Williams, of Mississippi, shows entrancing imagination on the part of the dusky lover.

Got a train in Cairo
Sixteen coaches long;
All I want dat train to do
Is to fotch my gal along!

The colored man who was heard singing by Professor Howard Odum was a bit more ambitious. It is feared a Soviet government would disapprove of his proposed exclusiveness.

Well, I'm goin' to buy me a little railroad of my own,
Ain't goin' to let nobody ride it but the chocolate to the bone.

"The chocolate to the bone" is the description of the brown-skinned woman with whom he is in love.

The sheer mystery or the romantic suggestiveness that a train or boat possesses has a thrill for the Negro, as for everyone, of course — but in a greater degree for him. The hint of illimitable distances, of unknown objectives, of epic adventure by the way, inspires him to admiration — and to song. Mrs. Tom Bartlett sends a specimen which shows this quality. Mrs. Buie wrote out the music for it.

THE MIDNIGHT TRAIN AND THE 'FO' DAY TRAIN



The midnight train and the 'fo' day train, Run all night
long! The mid - night train and the
'fo' day train, . . Run all night long!
They run . . . un - til the break of day.

The midnight train and the 'fo' day train,
 Run all night long!
 The midnight train and the 'fo' day train,
 Run all night long!
 The midnight train and the 'fo' day train,
 Run all night long!
 They run until the break of day.

It's the same train that carried your mother away;
 Runs all night long.
 It's the same train that carried your mother away;
 Runs all night long.
 It's the same train that carried your mother away;
 Runs all night long.
 It runs until the break of day.

This is another of the "family" songs, a stanza being devoted to each relative in turn, so that the singing can be protracted indefinitely.

Mrs. Bartlett says, "On the 'all night long,' right at 'all,' there occurs what the Negroes call a 'turn,' that is, a drop or a rise, either one — I can hardly describe it, but I am sure you are familiar with the change they make so often from a very high tone to a very deep, throaty tone. It is very pretty, and familiar to everyone who has heard Negroes sing."

The train may come in as cruel enginery of fate, to part a Negro from his beloved: a shining sword of fire, to cut the ties that bind one dark heart to another. The rails are steel, indeed, when the lover stands beside them and sees a train that leaves him behind but snatches away his "honey babe." Louise Garwood, of Houston, Texas, reports the tuneful grief experienced on one such occasion.

Well, ah looked down de railroad fuh as ah could see,
 Looked down dat railroad fuh as ah could see.
 Saw mah gal a-wavin' back at me.
 Saw mah gal a-wavin' back at me.

The Negro calls the train or the road by name, or by cabalistic initials, as if he were addressing an intimate friend. He omits the whimsical "Mister" or "Bre'er" by which he is wont to address an animal, and uses no honorary titles, as "Jedge" or "Colonel," or "Cap'n," which he confers upon a white man.

A permanent separation is bewailed in a fragment from Texas. There is real poetic poignancy in this stanza, it seems to me, as tragedy hinted but not told in detail.

Steam from the whistle,
 Smoke from the stack,
 Going to the graveyard
 To bring my baby back.
 Oh, my li'l baby,
 Why don't you come back?

Professor Howard W. Odum, in an illuminating article on "Folk-song and Folk-poetry as Found in the Secular Songs of the Southern Negro" (in the *Journal of American Folk-lore*, volume xxiv), gives a pathetic ditty.

Thought I heard dat K. C. whistle blow,
 Blow lak she never blow before.

How long has 'Frisco train been gone?
 Dat's train carried my baby home.

Look down de Southern road an' cry,
 Babe, look down de Southern road an' cry.

The train may on occasion serve as witness of the grief of a folk-songster — may not be responsible for it, perhaps unsympathetic toward it, but be an observer of it. The headlight of an engine can see a great deal — has looked down on many griefs. If it wept over all the woes it witnesses, the tracks would be flooded. One must concede that a railroad track is not a soft pillow, as doubtless the "maker" of a song sent from New Orleans decided. Gladys Torregano, of Straight College, contributed this, through the courtesy of Worth Tuttle Hedden.

SWEET MAMA

Sweet Mama, treetop tall,
 Won't you please turn your damper down?
 I smell hoecake burning,
 Dey done burnt some brown.
 I'm laid mah head
 On de railroad track.
 I t'ought about Mama
 An' I drugged it back.
 Sweet Mama, treetop tall,
 Won't you please turn your damper down?

Sweet Mama is a term addressed to a lover, not a maternal parent, and the oblique reference to a damper doubtless comments on the dark lady's warm temper.

The singer overheard by W. H. Thomas chanting his "railroad blues" had felt the thrill of Wanderlust, as suggested by a train; but the remembrance that he had no money for a ticket chilled him. Truly, to suffer from the "rolling blues" and have no wherewithal to appease one's spirit, is a hardship. To long for escape from loathed circumstance, yet have no ticket, no simple little piece of cardboard that is so trivial, yet indispensable, is tragedy indeed.

RAILROAD BLUES

I got the blues, but I have n't got the fare,
 I got the blues, but I have n't got the fare,
 I got the blues, but I'm too damned mean to cry.

Some folks say the rolling blues ain't bad;
 Well, it must not 'a' been the blues my baby had.

Oh! where was you when the rolling mill burned down?
 On the levee camp about fifteen miles from town.

My mother's dead, my sister's gone astray,
 And that is why this poor boy is here to-day.

The train is an unfeeling observer in a couple of other songs given by Professor Thomas. The first is a Freudian transcript of a wayward ducky's desire, his picaresque ambitions, which, in truth as well as in this dream, are like to end in disaster.

I dreamt last night I was walkin' around,
 I met that Nigger and I knocked her down;
 I knocked her down and I started to run,
 Till the sheriff stopped me with his Gatling gun.

I made a good run but I run too slow,
 He landed me over in the Jericho;
 I started to run off down the track,
 But they put me on the train and brought me back.

I don't know what the Jericho here referred to is, but Huntsville in the next song is a Texas town where a penitentiary is located, so the allusion is quite clear.

TO HUNTSVILLE

The jury men found me guilty; the judge he did say,
 "This man's convicted to Huntsville, poor boy,
 For ten long years to stay."

My mammy said, "It's a pity." My woman she did say,
 "They're taking my man to Huntsville, poor boy,
 For ten long years to stay."

Upon that station platform we all stood waiting that day,
 Awaiting that train for Huntsville, poor boy,
 For ten long years to stay.

The train ran into the station; the sheriff he did say,
 "Get on this train for Huntsville, poor boy,
 For ten long years to stay."

Now if you see my Lula, please tell her for me,
 I've done quit drinking and gambling, poor boy,
 And getting on my speers.

Rather a compulsory reformation, the cynical might observe; but perhaps the message might comfort "Lula" as indicating a change in mental attitude. The singer is reticent as to the nature of his offence against the law, but perhaps that detail seemed unimportant to him.

A railroad song given by Dr. Moore, of Charlotte, North Carolina, reveals a "dummy line" as the object of the songster's admiration, personified and credited with laudable exploits, as well as the witness of the Negro's own discomfiture. The dummy, it might be explained, is a small train running on a short track.

DE DUMMY LINE

Some folks say de Dummy don't run,
 Come an' lemme tell you what de Dummy done done:
 She lef' St. Louis at half-pas' one,
 An' she rolled into Memphis at de settin' of de sun.

Chorus

On de Dummy line, on de Dummy line,
 I'll ride an' shine on de Dummy line.
 I'll ride an' shine an' pay my fine,
 When I ride on de Dummy, on de Dummy, Dummy line.

I got on de Dummy, did n't have no fare;
 De conductor hollered out, "What in de world you doin' dere?"
 I jumped up an' made for de door,
 And he cracked me on de haid with a two-by-four.

Chorus

DE DUMMY LINE

Some folks say de Dummy don't run, Come an' lemme tell you what de
Dummy done done: She lef' St. Lou - is at half - pas' one, An' she
rolled in - to Mem - phis at de set - tin' of de sun.

CHORUS

On de Dum - my line, on de Dum - my line, I'll
ride an' shine on de Dummy line. I'll ride an' shine an'
pay my fine, When I ride on de Dummy, on de Dummy, Dummy line.

Another, which Mrs. Bartlett and Mrs. Buie contribute, has a more mournful suggestiveness. *Look Where de Train Done Gone* pictures a person left desolate beside the railroad track, following with yearning eyes a train that vanishes in the distance.

LOOK WHERE DE TRAIN DONE GONE

Look where de train done gone, . . Look where de train done gone. . . .

Look where de train done gone,
Look where de train done gone,
Look where de train done gone, oh, babe,
Gone never to return!

Say, gal, did you ever have a friend?
Say, gal, did you ever have a friend?
Say, gal, did you ever have a friend?
I has certainly been a friend to you!

Ain't got a friend in town,
 Ain't got a friend in town,
 Ain't got a friend in town, oh, babe,
 I ain't got a friend in town!

If I had a-lissen to what my mamma said,
 If I had a-lissen to what my mamma said,
 If I had a-lissen to what my mamma said, oh, babe,
 I would n't a-been layin' round!

I heard dat whistle when she blowed,
 I heard dat whistle when she blowed,
 I heard dat whistle when she blowed, oh, babe,
 I heard dat whistle when she blowed!

Blowed as she never blowed before,
 Blowed as she never blowed before,
 Blowed as she never blowed before, oh, babe,
 Blowed like my babe's on board!

I hope dat Katy train don't have a wreck,
 I hope dat Katy train don't have a wreck,
 I hope dat Katy train don't have a wreck, oh, babe,
 An' kill my darlin' babe!

Tomorrow's my trial day,
 Tomorrow's my trial day,
 Tomorrow's my trial day, oh, babe,
 I wonder what the judge's goin' to say!

If I had a-died when I was young,
 If I had a-died when I was young,
 If I had a-died when I was young,
 I would n't a-had this hard race to run!

Mrs. Bartlett says, "Of course you know that the Negroes don't really say 'a-lissen' and 'a-died,' but more correctly, as far as pronunciation is concerned, it should be 'uh-lissen' and 'uh-died.' But that looks unintelligible to anyone unacquainted with their soft speech. . . .

"*Look Where de Train Done Gone* is one of the most authentic 'blues.' The tune of the thing, as sung by the Negroes, is mournful enough to wring tears from the hardest-hearted. I believe I've been lucky enough to get it all for you. I send it as it was sung to me by Lottie Barnes, who also gave me the verses for *Frankie*.

"In *Look Where de Train Done Gone*, the first three lines are almost a monotone, until the mighty crescendo of the 'oh, babe!' is reached!

The effect is most unusual, and I wonder if any musician, even so experienced a one as Mrs. Buie, who wrote it down, could transcribe it correctly. I think the words are tragic enough, but as sung by these Negroes — !”

In some of his songs the Negro thinks of the railroad as a place to work, the setting of his experiences of daily toil. He enjoys working for the railroad, for it gives him a sense of suggestive distances, a feeling of an immediate way of escape, if flitting becomes desirable or necessary. He will struggle to get or hold a railroad job, as being less monotonous than other means of livelihood. In a stanza given me some years ago in Texas, the singer hints of such an effort that one Negro makes despite the disproportion between his size and that of the burden he has to lift. The tie referred to is, of course, the railroad tie. The Negro is evidently working on laying out a new line or replacing the ties of an old one.

Great big tie an' little bitty man,
Lay it on if it breaks him down!
If it breaks him down,
If it breaks him down,
Lay it on if it breaks him down!

A section-hand speaks of the difficulties of his job, in a song heard by Professor Thomas, of Texas, and reported by him in a paper read to the Folk-lore Society of Texas. Here the Negro shows his anxiety lest he work overtime, for he beseeches his boss, or “cap’n,” not to lose sight of the hour, not to let him work past the stopping time.

DON'T LET YOUR WATCH RUN DOWN, CAP'N

Working on the section, dollar and a half a day,
Working for my Lula; getting more than pay, Cap'n,
Getting more than pay.

Working on the railroad, mud up to my knees,
Working for my Lula; she's a hard ol' girl to please, Cap'n,
She's a hard girl to please;
So don't let your watch run down, Cap'n,
Don't let your watch run down!

Lula is a generic name for the black man's beloved. He disdains the counter terms of affection and invents his own. Readers of O. Henry will remember his use of a fragment of folk-song about “my Lula gal.” This song evidently dates back to a time when wages were smaller than at present.

Perhaps the best-known song of this type is the familiar *I've Been Working on the Railroad*, which is sung in many parts of the South. I do not know anything of its origin, nor have I been able to find anyone who does. Hinds, Noble, and Eldridge published an arrangement of it in 1900, under the title *Levee Song* (why Levee?), but they say they know nothing of its history or traditions. It may be a genuine folk-song or it may, as they suggest, have originated in some tramp minstrel show and been taken up as a folk-song. At any rate, it is colorfully expressive of the life of the Negro railroad "hand" in the South. The words, as I give them here, were contributed by Dr. Blanche Colton Williams, formerly of Mississippi.

I'VE BEEN WORKING ON THE RAILROAD

I've been working on the railroad,
 All the livelong day;
 I've been working on the railroad
 To pass the time away.
 Don't you hear the whistles blowing,
 Rise up so early in the morn'
 Don't you hear the cap'n calling,
 "Driver, blow your horn!" ?

Sing me a song of the city,
 (Roll them cotton bales!)
 Darky ain't half so happy
 As when he's out of jail.
 Mobile for its oyster shells,
 Boston for its beans,
 Charleston for its cotton bales,
 But for yaller gals — New Orleans!

Railroad traditions in the South have their heroes, who are celebrated in the Negro folk-songs. John Henry, or John Hardy, the famous steel-driller of West Virginia, about whom many ballads and work-songs have been made, is a notable example. A volume might be written about his legendary adventure; and the number of songs he has inspired would be extensive, indeed, as John H. Cox has shown in his study of the subject in his recent volume, "Folk-Songs of the South."

But he is not alone in this glory, for other Valhallic figures companion him in the Negro's songs—Casey Jones, Railroad Bill, Joseph Mica, and others rival him in the balladry of the rails. There have been current in the South many variants of the first, differing as to

local names, names of towns, or trains, but agreeing for the most part in the accident, the bravery of Casey, and the grief he left behind at his going.

I learned the history of this famous ballad only recently. Irvin Cobb was at my home one evening when a party was assembled to hear some of these folk-songs sung. He told us that *Casey Jones* was written by a Negro in Memphis, Tennessee, to recount the gallant death of "Cayce" Jones, an engineer who came from Cayce, Tennessee. He was called that in order to distinguish him from others of his name and calling, there being three engineers named Jones, one called "Dyersburg," one "Memphis," and one "Cayce," after the towns they hailed from.

Professor Odum gives the following version of *Casey Jones*, according to the Negro translation in an article spoken of before:

CASEY JONES

Ca - sey Jones was . . en - gi - neer;

Told his fire - man . . not . . to fear,

All he want - ed was . . boil - er hot;

REFRAIN

Run in Can - ton 'bout four o - 'clock.

Casey Jones was engineer;
Told his fireman not to fear,
All he wanted was boiler hot;
Run in Canton 'bout four o'clock.

One Sunday mornin' it was drizzlin' rain;
 Looked down de road an' saw a train.
 Foreman says, "Let's make a jump;
 Two locomotives an' dey bound to bump."

Casey Jones, I know him well,
 Tol' de fireman to ring de bell;
 Fireman jump an' say, "Good-bye,
 Casey Jones, you're bound to die."

Went down to de depot track,
 Begging my honey to take me back;
 She turn round some two or three times —
 "Take you back when you learn to grind."

Womens in Kansas all dressed in red,
 Got de news dat Casey wus dead.
 Womens in Kansas all dressed in black,
 Said, in fact, he was a crackerjack.

The music for *Casey Jones* was given me by Early Busby.

Casey had a double in Joseph Mica, or else the two are one, for their experiences as metrically rendered by the Negro are extremely similar. Names, you know, as in the case of "Franky," have a trick of changing nonchalantly in folk-song, so perhaps there is no real cause for confusion here.

The Mica song, also given by Professor Odum in the article referred to, belongs to Georgia and Alabama particularly.

Joseph Mica was good engineer;
 Told his fireman not to fear,
 All he want is water'n' coal;
 Poke his head out, see drivers roll.

Early one mornin', look like rain,
 Round de curve come passenger train,
 On powers lie ole Jim Jones,
 Good ole engineer, but daid an' gone.

Left Atlanta an hour behin';
 Tole his fireman to make up time,
 All he want is boiler hot;
 Run in there 'bout four o'clock.

Railroad Bill was a villain-hero of note in the South at some time, if any faith is to be put in the veracity of folk-songs — a person who seems to have cut a wide swathe in life as he does in song. He is, in

fact, like a big, wild engine himself, when, fired by "ole corn whiskey," he starts forth, to ride down any person or thing that interposes obstruction in his path. There is a movie rapidity of action and visibility of scene and characters about the stanza, for we fairly see Railroad Bill shooting the lights out of the brakesman's hand, and we see the policemen coming down the sidewalk two by two, "dressed in blue." We can guess at the emotional reactions of the brakesman, or of "ole Culpepper" — minor figures, of no interest in themselves, memorable in verse only because they encountered Railroad Bill. He it is who is the daring figure. What matter if the law did clutch him later on, and penalize him? He had had his glorious hour of corn whiskey and publicity. There are various Negro versions of Railroad Bill, the best that I have found being given by Professor Odum in the *Journal of American Folk-lore*.

IT'S LOOKIN' FER RAILROAD BILL

Railroad Bill mighty bad man,
Shoot dem lights out o' de brakeman's hand —
It 's lookin' fer Railroad Bill.

Railroad Bill mighty bad man,
Shoot the lamps all off the stan' —
An' it 's lookin' fer Railroad Bill.

First on table, next on wall,
Ole corn whiskey cause of it all —
It 's lookin' fer Railroad Bill.

Ole McMillan had a special train,
When he got there wus a shower of rain —
Wus lookin' fer Railroad Bill.

Ev'ybody tole him he better turn back,
Railroad Bill wus goin' down track —
An' it 's lookin' fer Railroad Bill.

Well, the policemen all dressed in blue,
Comin' down sidewalk two by two,
Wus lookin' fer Railroad Bill.

Railroad Bill had no wife,
Always lookin' fer somebody's life —
An' it 's lookin' fer Railroad Bill.

Railroad Bill was the worst ole coon,
Killed McMillan by the light o' the moon —
It 's lookin' fer Railroad Bill.

Ole Culpepper went up on Number Five,
Goin' bring him back, dead or alive,
Wus lookin' fer Railroad Bill.

Standin' on a corner, did n't mean no harm,
Policeman grab me by the arm —
Wus lookin' fer Railroad Bill.

Professor E. C. Perrow publishes several versions of this song in his article, "Songs and Rhymes from the South," in the *Journal of American Folk-lore* (volume xxv). Some hint of the time when this song may have originated is found in the second stanza of one that he gives:

Railroad Bill cut a mighty big dash,
Killed McMillan like a lightnin' flash,
An' he'll lay yo' po' body daown.

Railroad Bill ride on de train,
Tryin' to ack big, like Cuba an' Spain,
An' he'll lay yo' po' body daown.

Get up, ole woman, you sleepin' too late,
Ef Railroad Bill come knockin' at yo' gate,
He'll lay yo' po' body daown.

Talk about yo' bill, yo' ten-dollar bill,
But you never seen a Bill like Railroad Bill,
An' he'll lay yo' po' body daown.

The following is a version current among Mississippi Negroes, Professor Perrow says:

Railroad Bill said before he died
He'd fit all the trains so the rounders could ride —
Oh, ain't he bad, oh, the railroad man!

Railroad Bill cut a mighty big dash,
He killed Bill Johnson like a lightning flash —
Oh, ain't he bad, oh, the railroad man!

The name of the victim seems to vary, being in some sections McMillan, and in others Bill Johnson, but he was indisputably dead when Railroad Bill got through with him. Whatever he was called, he did not answer!

Railroad Bill was certainly a good workman, for not only did he shoot out the lantern from a brakesman's hand and shoot the lights out of Ole McMillan, or Johnson, — or both, — but he could hit a

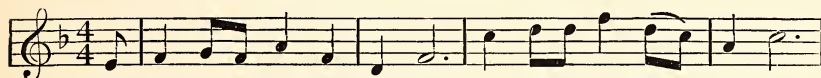
much smaller target as well; at least, the Mississippi Negroes so report, as Lemuel Hall tells me.

Railroad Bill got so fine
 He shot a hole in a silver dime.
 Railroad Bill, Railroad Bill,
 Railroad Bill got sore eyes,
 An' won't eat nothin' but apple pies.

The Negro sees in a train, not merely a temptation to travel, not simply a chance of a job, not only an engine of destruction or a force to tear him from persons he loves, not merely a witness of his joys and woes: he sees in it a symbol of spiritual life as well. The Negro is essentially religious, and his imagination is easily fired by the thought of eternity, the Judgment Day and the like, of destiny and doom. And so he frequently hitches them to his engine and starts another train of thought. The train may stand (or run, perhaps one should say) as the symbol of cheer, or of despair, according as the singer entertains hope of a fortunate outcome of the final testing.

An old song sent by Lincolnia C. Morgan, one of the Fisk Jubilee singers, and now supervisor of music in the Negro schools of Dallas, Texas, is of the first type.

THE TRAIN IS A-COMING



The train is a-com-ing, oh, yes! Train is a-com - ing, oh, yes!



Train is a-com-ing, train is a-com-ing, Train is a-com-ing, oh, yes!

The train is a-coming, oh, yes!
 Train is a-coming, oh, yes!
 Train is a-coming, train is a-coming,
 Train is a-coming, oh, yes!

Better get your ticket, oh, yes!
 Better get your ticket, oh, yes!
 Better get your ticket, better get your ticket,
 Better get your ticket, oh, yes!

King Jesus is conductor, oh, yes!
 King Jesus is conductor, oh, yes!
 King Jesus is conductor, King Jesus is conductor,
 King Jesus is conductor, oh, yes!

I'm on my way to heaven, oh, yes!
 I'm on my way to heaven, oh, yes!
 I'm on my way to heaven, I'm on my way to heaven,
 I'm on my way to heaven, oh, yes!

She makes comment on Negro songs in general:

"Analysis of the Negro folk-song shows a strict rhythm that is remarkable when we stop to consider that untutored minds with no musical cultivation gave them birth. There is an absence of triple time, due to the fact that these songs are usually accompanied with clapping of the hands, swaying of the body or beating of the foot. It is noticeable, too, that 'ti' and 'fa' do not often occur in these melodies, and there are many little 'turns' and 'curls' (which are injected by the singers in different places of the songs), which we cannot easily express in musical notes.

"I happened to be one of the Fisk Jubilee singers for several years, travelling in this country and abroad, and being daily associated with two of the original Jubilee singers, who had the training of the company in charge. From them I gathered a great many ideas about the proper rendition of these songs, and I have a great love and appreciation for them which I can hardly express.

"I send you two songs which I've never heard, only when my mother sang them to me years ago."

A couple of songs of the "gospel train" are given as sung by the Negroes in South Carolina, by Emilie C. Walter. The first is in the *gullah* dialect, and is sung in the rooms of those who are dying. Negroes in certain rural districts share this habit of song for the dying, with various primitive folk — a custom sympathetic in purpose, of course, but one wonders how often it has hurried off an invalid who might otherwise have pulled through!

DE GOSPEL TRAIN AM LEABIN'

De gospel train am leabin',
 An' I year um say she blow.
 Git yo' ticket ready,
 Dere's room for many a mo'.
 Git on bo'd, little chillun,
 Git on bo'd, little chillun,
 Git on bo'd [little chillun?],
 Dere's room for many a mo'.

DE GOSPEL TRAIN AM LEABIN'

De gos - pel train am leab - in', An' I year um say she
 blow. Git yo' tick - et read - y, Dere's room for man - y a
 mo'. Git on bo'd, lit - tle chil - lun, Git on bo'd, lit - tle
 chil - lun, Git . . on bo'd, Dere's room for man - y a mo'.

In the chorus, "Oh, run, Mary, run!" in the next, we have a suggestion of the haste of one who fears to be left behind. All who have ever raced to catch a train know the despairful thrill that Mary must have felt.

De gospel train am leaving,
 For my father's mansions.
 De gospel train am leaving,
 And we all be left behind.

Chorus

Oh, run, Mary, run,
 De gospel train am leaving.
 Oh, run, Mary, run,
 I want to get to heaben to-day.

Miss Walter says that this and others of the songs she has given she knows from having heard her old mammy sing them. Mammy Judie Brown was a remarkable character in her devotion to her white folks and her courage. During the time of reconstruction, her young master was killed by the Negroes in the riots of 1876, and her own life was threatened by the Negroes because she went into the house to take care of him when he was wounded. She said she was not afraid "of debbil or Nigger," and remained in the house all night with his dead body. The Negroes had threatened to take his body away, and so she stayed to protect it. When she went on her mission, she left her little girl in the kitchen with the cook, who was so furious

with Mammy Judie that she let the child sleep all night on the cold hearth. She would not put her to bed or give her any covering. But Mammy Judie stayed by her young master's body.

Fear of being left behind is more openly expressed in a train song from McClellanville, South Carolina, sent me by Lucy Pinckney Rutledge.

KEEP YORE HAND UPON THE CHARIOT

Oh, you better run, oh, you better run,
Oh, you better run, 'fore the train done gone!
Oh, keep yore hand upon the chariot,
An' yore eyes upon the prize.

For the preacher's comin' an' he preach so bold,
For he preach salvation from out of his soul.
Oh, keep yore hand upon the chariot
An' yore eyes upon the prize!

Miss Rutledge, who sends me the words for various songs, says: "The true pathos and weird beauty lie in the music — and how I wish I might be fortunate enough to be transported to you to-night and sing them every one to you! In the glad days of the long ago, my two brothers, my sister, and I used to constitute a quartette that gave much pleasure to the listeners as well as ourselves. To-night, as I write, across the stillness of the quiet village I can hear sweet and haunting strains from a colored church where a convention is held, and I wish you were here to share the real delight with me."

Another song from the same contributor describes a crowd of people left behind, in the last stanza, when the train has really gone:

REBORN AGAIN

Reborn, soldier, going to reborn again,
Oh, going to reborn again!
Reborn soldier, going to reborn again,
Oh, going to reborn again!

Chorus

Reborn again, reborn again,
Oh, you can't get to heaven till you're reborn again!
Oh, going to reborn again!
Oh, you can't get to heaven till you're reborn again!

Paul and Silas, dar in de jail;
Oh, going to reborn again!

One watch while de other pray;
Oh, going to reborn again!

Chorus

Never see such a thing since I been born,
Oh, going to reborn again!
People keep a-coming and de train done gone,
Oh, going to reborn again!

Chorus

The necessity of taking the gospel train when one has the chance is delicately implied in a song sung for me by Benjamin F. Vaughan, manager and first tenor of the Sabbath Glee Club of Richmond, Virginia, an organization that is doing much to express the beauty of the old spirituals.

The "maker" of this song felt that, since there was only one train on the line, one could not afford to miss it.

EVERY TIME I FEEL THE SPIRIT

Chorus (whole club singing)

Every time I feel the spirit moving in my heart,
I will pray.

Bass Solo

Upon the mountain my Lord spoke.
Out of His mouth came fire and smoke.

(Glee club sings *Chorus*)

Bass Solo

Ain't but one train on this line,
Runs to heaven and back again.

(Glee club sings *Chorus*)

Bass Solo

I looked all around me and it looked so shine,
Asked the Lord if it was all mine.

(Glee club sings *Chorus*)

A Holy Roller song sent me from Texas is specific as to the inclusion and exclusion of passengers on this important train. The list is rather astonishing, debarring as it does not only harlots and idolators, but "loafers." "No loafing allowed" around the celestial station! Nor can pipe-smokers come on — though, as nothing is said of cigarettes and cigars, we may suppose that they are not regarded as

offensive. But snuff-bottles and beer-cans must be thrown away as being uncleanly for this train. And all is seriousness here, for no "joker" is permitted aboard. The Holy Roller train will perhaps not be overcrowded, one fancies.

OH, BE READY WHEN THE TRAIN COMES IN

We are soldiers in this blessed war,
 For Jesus we are marching on,
 With a shout and song.
 Though the Devil tries to bother and deceive us.
 Oh, be ready when the train comes in.

Chorus

We are sweeping on to claim the blessed promise
 Of that happy home, never more to roam,
 Where the sunlight on the hills of endless glory.
 Oh, be ready when the train comes in.

We go into the highways and hedges;
 We will sing and pray every night and day
 Till poor sinners leave their sins to follow Jesus;
 Soon He shall come to catch away his jewels.
 Oh, be ready when the train comes in.

We see the land of Beulah lies so plain before us,
 From that happy home never more to roam.
 We have the victory through the precious blood of Jesus.
 Oh, be ready when the train comes in.

No harlot nor idolator, neither loafer,
 Will be counted in on this holy train;
 Nor pipe-smoker, neither joker are permitted
 On this great clean train.

Lay aside your snuff-bottles and beer-cans,
 Lifting holy hands to that promised land,
 Preaching everywhere the everlasting gospel
 To every nation and to every man.

Have both soul and body sanctified and holy,
 Then you live this life from sin and strife,
 Though ten thousand devils say you can't live holy.
 Oh, be ready when the train comes in.

A vivid picture of the train coming at Judgment Day appears in a song sent by Mrs. Clifton Oliver, of Dadeville, Alabama. She says: "This is more of a chant, sung very slowly, each sentence being sung

through the whole score. I've put just two sentences, to keep it from being so long, though they sometimes make this last almost an hour."

HE'S COMIN' THIS AWAY

Yonder comes my Lord,
Yonder comes my Lord;
 He's comin' this away,
 He's comin' this away.
Yonder comes my Lord,
Yonder comes my Lord;
 He's comin' this away,
 He's comin' this away.

Bible in His hand,
Bible in His hand;
 A crown upon His head,
 A crown upon His head.
Bible in His hand,
Bible in His hand;
 A crown upon His head,
 A crown upon His head.

He's come to judge the world,
He's come to judge the world,
 Livin' an' the dead,
 Livin' an' the dead.
He's come to judge the world,
He's come to judge the world,
 Livin' an' the dead,
 Livin' an' the dead.

Looks like Judgment Day,
Looks like Judgment Day;
 He's comin' this away,
 He's comin' this away.
Looks like Judgment Day,
Looks like Judgment Day;
 He's comin' this away,
 He's comin' this away.

Yonder comes that train,
Yonder comes that train;
 He's comin' this away,
 He's comin' this away.

Yonder comes that train,
 Yonder comes that train;
 He's comin' this away,
 He's comin' this away.

My mother's on that train,
 My mother's on that train;
 He's comin' this away,
 He's comin' this away.

My mother's on that train,
 My mother's on that train;
 He's comin' this away,
 He's comin' this away.

The stanzas are endless, one being given to each member of the family, father, baby, sister, brother, and so forth. Mrs. Oliver says, "I want to sing it one way, but I've tried three darkies of the old school and they all drop down to C."

A more sinister aspect of train-arrival is in another Holy Roller song from Texas. The little black train here represents Death, and the passengers for whom seats are reserved appear not to be crowding eagerly about the ticket-window. This train has no set schedule, but, like other public carriers, is uncertain in its time of arrival and departure. But a delay here brings forth no complaint against the management.

THE LITTLE BLACK TRAIN

God said to Hezekiah
 In a message from on high,
 Go set thy house in order
 For thou shalt surely die.

Chorus

The little black train is coming,
 Get all of your business right;
 Better set your house in order,
 For the train may be here to-night!

He turned to the wall and weeping,
 Oh! see the king in tears.
 He got his business fixed all right,
 God spared him fifteen years.

When Adam sinned in Eden
 Before the birth of Seth,
 That little sin brought forth a son,
 They called him conquering death.

Go tell the ballroom lady,
And filled with earthly pride,
That death's black train is coming;
Prepare to take a ride.

This little black train and engine
And little baggage-car,
With idle thoughts and wicked deeds,
Must stop at the judgment bar.

A poor young man in darkness
Cared not for the gospel light,
Until suddenly the whistle blew
From the little black train in sight!

"Oh! death, will you not spare me?
I've just seen my wicked plight.
Have mercy, Lord, do hear me,
Please come and help me get right."

But death had fixed his shackles
About his soul so tight,
Before he got his business fixed
The train rolled in that night.

The rich fool in his granary said,
"I have no future fears;
Going to build my barns a little larger
And live for many years.

"I now have plenty of money,
I expect to take my ease,
My barns are over-running;
No one but self here to please."

But while he stood there planning,
The God of power and might
Said, "Rich fool, to judgment come;
Thy soul must be there to-night!"

The Holy Rollers introduce impressive imagery into their songs, as in the one called *The Funeral Train*, and the directness of accusation is calculated to make attending "sinners" rather uncomfortable. This is reported as sung by Brother Josh Gray, but the seriousness of the language leads one to believe that there was no "joshing," about the fate of those on board that train.

THE FUNERAL TRAIN

The funeral train is coming, I know it's going to slack,
For the passengers all are crying and the train is crêped in black.

Chorus

You belong to that funeral train,
You belong to that funeral train,
You belong to that funeral train,
Oh, sinner, why don't you pray?

Yes, when I get up to heaven with God, I'm going to remain
Where death can never enter, and there won't be no funeral train.

Chorus

My friends, I want to tell you that you ought to try to pray,
For the funeral train is coming to take somebody away.

Chorus

This train that I am singing about has neither whistle nor bell,
But when you reach your station it will either be Heaven or Hell.

Chorus

There are many other railroad songs that might be given, but these are enough to illustrate the fondness the Negro feels for the track and the train. He seems to have overlooked the automobile in his folk-song, for I have found no instance of the auto-motive in any song. Perhaps that is because, in general, he has less intimacy with it — though now many Negroes drive cars for others, or possess their own. But Professor Thomas suggests that property-owning Negroes do not sing.

However that may be, at least we know that the colored man loves a train. He not only sings about it, but in his music imitates its rhythmic movement and its noise. Professor Odum has expressed this vividly in his article in the *Journal of American Folk-lore*, from which I again quote by permission of author and editor. The Negro can make his guitar or banjo, which he calls a "box," sound just like a train.

Of these train songs, Professor Odum says:

"This imitation is done by the rapid running of the fingers along the strings, and by the playing of successive chords with a regularity that makes a sound similar to that of a moving train. The train is made to whistle by a prolonged and consecutive striking of the strings, while the bell rings with the striking of a single string. As the Negroes imagine themselves observing the train, or riding, the

fervor of the occasion is increased, and when 'she blows for the station,' the exclamations may be heard: 'Lawd, God, she's a-runnin' now!' or, 'Sho God railroadin',' or others of a similar nature. The train 'pulls out' from the station, passes the road-crossings, goes up grade, down grade, blows for the crossing, meets the 'express' and the mail-train, blows for the side-track, rings the bell — the wheels are heard rolling on the track and crossing the joints in the rails. If the song is instrumental, only the man at the guitar announces the several states of the run. If the song is of words, the words are made to heighten the imagination, and between the stanzas there is ample time to picture the train and its occupants."

X

BLUES

THERE are fashions in music as in anything else, and folk-song presents no exception to the rule. For the last several years the most popular type of Negro song has been that peculiar, barbaric sort of melody called "blues," with its irregular rhythm, its lagging briskness, its mournful liveliness of tone. It has a jerky tempo, as of a cripple dancing because of some irresistible impulse. A "blues" (or does one say a "blue"? What is the grammar of the thing?) likes to end its stanza abruptly, leaving the listener expectant for more — though, of course, there is no fixed law about it. One could scarcely imagine a convention of any kind in connection with this Negroid free music. It is partial to the three-line stanza instead of the customary one of four or more, though not insisting on it, and it ends with a high note that has the effect of incompleteness. The close of a stanza comes with a shock like the whip-crack surprise at the end of an O. Henry story, for instance — a cheap trick, but effective as a novelty. It sings of themes remote from those of the old spirituals, and its incompleteness of stanza makes the listener gasp, and perhaps fancy that the censor had deleted the other line.

Blues, being widely published as sheet music in the North as well as the South, and sung in vaudeville everywhere, would seem to have little relation to authentic folk-music of the Negroes. One might imagine this tinge of blue to the black music to be an artificial coloring — printer's ink, in fact. But in studying the question, I had a feeling that it was more or less connected with Negro folk-song, and I tried to trace it back to its origin.

Negroes and white people in the South referred me to W. C. Handy as the man who had put the blueing in the blues; but how to locate him was a problem. He had started this indigo music in Memphis, it appeared, but was there no longer. I heard of him as having been in Chicago, and in Philadelphia, and at last as being in New York. Inquiries from musicians brought out the fact that Handy was manager of a music-publishing company, of which he is part-owner (Pace and Handy); and so my collaborator, Ola Lee

Gulledge, and I went to see him at his place of business, one of those old brown stone-houses fronting on West 46th Street.

To my question, "Have blues any relation to Negro folk-song?" Handy replied instantly:

"Yes — they are folk-music."

"Do you mean in the sense that a song is taken up by many singers, who change and adapt it and add to it in accordance with their own mood?" I asked. "That constitutes communal singing, in part, at least."

"I mean that and more," he responded. "That is true, of course, of the blues, as I'll illustrate a little later. But blues are folk-songs in more ways than that. They are essentially racial, the ones that are genuine, — though since they became the fashion many blues have been written that are not Negro in character, — and they have a basis in older folk-song."

"A general or a specific basis?" I wished to know.

"Specific," he answered. "Each one of my blues is based on some old Negro song of the South, some folk-song that I heard from my mammy when I was a child. Something that sticks in my mind, that I hum to myself when I'm not thinking about it. Some old song that is a part of the memories of my childhood and of my race. I can tell you the exact song I used as a basis for any one of my blues. Yes, the blues that are genuine are really folk-songs."

I expressed an interest to know of some definite instance of what he meant, and for answer he picked up a sheaf of music from his desk.

"Here's a thing called *Joe Turner Blues*," he said. "That is written around an old Negro song I used to hear and play thirty or more years ago. In some sections it was called *Going Down the River for Long*, but in Tennessee it was always *Joe Turner*. Joe Turner, the inspiration of the song, was a brother of Pete Turner, once governor of Tennessee. He was an officer and he used to come to Memphis and get prisoners to carry them to Nashville after a Kangaroo Court. When the Negroes said of anyone, 'Joe Turner's been to town,' they meant that the person in question had been carried off handcuffed, to be gone no telling how long."

I recalled a fragment of folk-song from the South which I had never before understood, but whose meaning was now clear enough.

Dey tell me Joe Turner's come to town.
He's brought along one thousand links of chain;
He's gwine to have one nigger for each link;
He's gwine to have dis nigger for one link!

Handy said that in writing the *Joe Turner Blues* he did away with the prison theme and played up a love element, so that Joe Turner became, not the dreaded sheriff, but the absent lover.

Here is the result as Handy sent it out, though folk-songsters over the South have doubtless wrought many changes in it since then:

You'll never miss the water till the well runs dry,
 Till your well runs dry.
 You'll never miss Joe Turner till he says good-bye.
 Sweet Babe, I'm goin' to leave you, and the time ain't long,
 The time ain't long.
 If you don't believe I'm leavin', count the days I'm gone.

Chorus

You will be sorry, be sorry from your heart (*uhm*),
 Sorry to your heart (*uhm*),
 Some day when you and I must part.
 And every time you hear a whistle blow,
 Hear a steamboat blow,
 You'll hate the day you lost your Joe.
 I bought a bulldog for to watch you while you sleep,
 Guard you while you sleep;
 Spent all my money, now you call Joe Turner "cheap."
 You never 'preciate the little things I do,
 Not one thing I do.
 And that's the very reason why I'm leaving you.
 Sometimes I feel like somethin' throwed away,
 Somethin' throwed away.
 And then I get my guitar, play the blues all day.
 Now if your heart beat like mine, it's not made of steel,
 No, 't ain't made of steel.
 And when you learn I left you, this is how you'll feel.

Loveless Love, which Handy calls a "blues" ballad, was, he said, based on an old song called *Careless Love*, which narrated the death of the son of a governor of Kentucky. It had the mythical "hundred stanzas," and was widely current in the South, especially in Kentucky, a number of years ago. Handy in his composition gives a general philosophy of love, instead of telling a tragic story, as the old song did.

Long Gone has its foundation in another old Kentucky song, which tells of the efforts a certain Negro made to escape a Joe Turner who

was pursuing him. Bloodhounds were on his trail and were coming perilously close, while he was dodging and doubling on his tracks in a desperate effort to elude them. At last he ran into an empty barrel that chanced to be lying on its side in his path, but quickly sprang out and away again. When the bloodhounds a few seconds later trailed him into the barrel, they were nonplussed for a while, and by the time they had picked up the scent again, the darky had escaped.

The theme as treated in the blues is shown on the following page, where I reproduce by permission the sheet, like a broadside, on which it appears. It is interesting to note that the chorus varies with some verses, while it remains the same for others.

Handy said that his blues were folk-songs also in that they have their origin in folk-sayings and express the racial life of the Negroes. "For example," he said, "the *Yellow Dog Blues* takes its name from the term the Negroes give the Yazoo Delta Railroad. Clarkesville colored people speak of the Yellow Dog because one day when someone asked a darky what the initials Y. D. on a freight-train stood for, he scratched his head reflectively and answered, 'I dunno, less'n it's for Yellow Dog.'" Another one of his blues came from an old mammy's mournful complaint, "I wonder whar my good ole used-to-be is!"

He says that presently he will write a blues on the idea contained in a monologue he overheard a Negro address to his mule on a Southern street not long ago. The animal was balky, and the driver expostulated with him after this fashion:

"G'wan dere, you mule! You ack lack you ain' want to wuck. Well, you is a mule, an' you got to wuck. Dat's whut you git fo' bein' a mule. Ef you was a 'ooman, now, I'd be wuckin' fo' you!"

The *St. Louis Blues*, according to its author, is a composite, made up of racial sayings in dialect. For instance, the second stanza has its origin in a Negro saying, "I've got to go to see Aunt Ca'line Dye," meaning to get his fortune told; for at Newport there was a well-known fortune-teller by that name. "Got to go to Newport to see Aunt Ca'line Dye," meant to consult the colored oracle.

Been to de Gypsy to get mah fortune tole,
To de Gypsy done got mah fortune tole,
'Cause I'se wile about mah Jelly Roll.
Gypsy done tole me, "Don't you wear no black."
Yas, she done tole me, "Don't you wear no black."
Go to St. Louis, you can win him back."

"LONG GONE"

Another "Casey Jones" or "Steamboat Bill"

EVERYBODY IS SINGING

"LONG GONE"

With These Seven Verses

EVENTUALLY you will sing "LONG GONE" with a hundred verses

First Verse:

Did you ever hear the story of Long John Dean,
A bold bank robber from Bowling Green,
Sent to the jailhouse yesterday,
Late last night he made his getaway.

Chorus:

He's long gone from Kentucky,
Long gone, ain't he lucky,
Long gone and what I mean,
He's long gone from Bowling Green.

Second Verse:

Long John stood on a railroad tie,
Waiting for the freight train to come by,
Freight train come by puffin' and flyin',
Ought to see Long John grabbin' the blind.

Chorus:

He's long gone from Kentucky,
Long gone, ain't he lucky,
Long gone and what I mean,
He's long gone from Bowling Green.

Third Verse:

They offered a reward to bring him back,
Even put bloodhounds on his track,
Doggone bloodhounds lost his scent,
Now nobody knows where Long John went.

Chorus:

He's long gone from Kentucky,
Long gone, ain't he lucky,
Long gone and what I mean,
He's long gone from Bowling Green.

Fourth Verse:

They caught him in Frisco and to seal his fate,
At San Quentin they jailed him one evening late,
But out on the ocean John did escape,
Cause the guard forgot to close the Golden Gate.

Chorus:

John's long gone from San Quentin,
Long gone and still sprinting,
Long gone I'm telling you,
Shut your mouth and shut mine, too.

Fifth Verse:

A gang of men tried to capture Dean,
So they chased him with a submarine,
Dean jumped overboard grabbed the submarine,
And made that gang catch a flyin' machine.

Chorus:

Now's he's long gone and still a swimmin',
Long gone with them mermaid women,
Long gone just like a fish,
My that boy's got some ambish.

Sixth Verse:

A vamp thought she had Long John's goat,
She took his watch and money right from his coat,
John stole all she had now she thinks he's a riddle,
He didn't leave her enough clothes to dust a fiddle.

Chorus:

He's long gone from Kentucky,
Long gone that guy is some lucky,
Long gone from this queen,
Long gone from Bowling Green.

Seventh Verse:

When prohibition said I'll lick John Barleycorn,
I never thought she'd do any harm,
But she's chased him strong, didn't stop to wait,
And blacked his eye in every state.

Chorus:

Now John's gone and he left me weeping,
Long gone but only sleeping,
But from the Drug Store we catch his breath,
Long gone and scared to death.

Copyright 1920—PACE & HANDY MUSIC CO., INC.
232 West 46th Street, New York:

I asked Handy to tell me something of his musical experience before he featured this novel form of song. He said that he was from Florence, Alabama, and that his two grandfathers had had a better chance at education than most of their race — the slaves not being taught as a rule, and most of them being unable to read or write. He said simply, "My father's father and my mother's father stole an education." His wife, who was in the office with us, whispered to me in an aside, "They learned to figure in the ashes!"

So the young boy started out with more chance than many of his race. He had an especial love for music, and he learned the folk-songs that are a part of the heritage of the old South, of the past that is forever gone — learned them from hearing his elders sing them, and he sang them till they became a part of his being. He said that his mother would not allow him to sing “shout” songs, but only the spirituals. The “shout” songs were lively religious songs introduced to give the Negroes something of the emotional thrill that they might have had from dancing, if that amusement had not been sternly forbidden in many sections. The church would hold “shouts,” when the benches would be pushed back and a lively tune played, and the worshippers would march up and down and around, their enthusiasm growing till they were all “patting and shouting.” There is as much difference between the “shout” songs and the spirituals as between the beautiful old hymns and the Billy Sunday type of revival song.

He had some instruction in vocal music in the public school, where his teacher, a Fisk student, devoted an hour a day to practice in singing. Handy turned his attention to music when he left school and got a job with a show, and worked up, till finally he had his own band.

It was in Memphis that he wrote his first blues. A three-cornered election for mayor was on, and one candidate, a Mr. Crump, hired Handy's band for election advertisement. They played a thing Handy wrote and called *Mr. Crump*, which won the enthusiasm of the crowd whenever it was played. (Whether it won the election for Mr. Crump, I do not know.) After the composer had played this unpublished music for over two years, he offered it for publication. Practically every music publisher in New York turned it down, with the criticism that it was not correct harmonically, that it did not conform to musical traditions. But Handy says that he felt that it was a true expression of Negro life, and so he finally brought it out himself, calling it the *Memphis Blues*. It made a great hit.

Handy said that at first he had trained his band to play only classical music, ignoring their racial music. On one occasion, after they had given a concert, some other Negroes came out and asked if there would be any objection to their playing some of their music. He told them to go ahead. They had a banjo, a guitar, and a fiddle, and they played some of the genuine old Negro folk-songs. The audience cheered vigorously and threw money to them on the stage, Handy observing that they got more for their brief performance than he and his band had received for the entire concert. That set him to

thinking of the values of the racial music of the Negroes, and he determined to develop his talents along the lines of Negro art.

I asked him if the blues were a new musical invention, and he said, "No. They are essentially of our race, and our people have been singing like that for many years. But they have been publicly developed and exploited in the last few years. I was the first to publish any of them or to feature this special type by name." He brought out his *Memphis Blues* in 1910, he said.

The fact that the blues were a form of folk-singing before Handy published his is corroborated by various persons who have discussed the matter with me, and in Texas the Negroes have been fond of them for a long time. Early Busby, now a musician in New York, says that the shifts of Negroes working at his father's brick-yard in East Texas years ago used to sing constantly at their tasks, and were particularly fond of the blues.

Handy commented on several points in connection with the blues — for instance, the fact that they are written, he says, all in one tone, but with different movements according to the time in which they are written. The theme of this modern folk-music is, according to Handy, the Negro's emotional feeling apart from the religious. As is well recognized, the Negro normally is a person of strong religious impulse, and the spirituals are famous as expressing his religious moods; but they do not reveal all his nature. The Negro has longings, regrets, despondencies, and hopes that affect him strongly, but are not connected with religion. The blues, therefore, may be said to voice his secular interests and emotions as sincerely as the spirituals do the religious ones. Handy said that the blues express the Negro's twofold nature, the grave and the gay, and reveal his ability to appear the opposite of what he is.

"Most white people think that the Negro is always cheerful and lively," he explained. "But he is n't, though he may seem that way sometimes when he is most troubled. The Negro knows the blues as a state of mind, and that's why this music has that name.

"For instance: suppose I am a colored man, and my rent is due. It's twenty dollars, and my landlord has told me that if I don't pay him to-day he'll put me and my things out on the sidewalk. I have n't got twenty dollars, and I don't know where to get it. I've been round to all my friends, and asked them to lend me that much, but they have n't got it, either. I have nothing I can sell or pawn. I have scraped together ten dollars, but that's positively all I can get and that's not enough.

"Now when I know the time has come and I can't get that twenty

dollars, what do I do? The white man would go to his landlord, offer him the ten, and maybe get the time extended. But what do I do? I go right out and blow in that ten dollars I have and have a gay time. Anybody seeing me would think I was the jolliest darky in town, but it's just because I'm miserable and can't help myself.

"Now, if a Negro were making a song about an experience like that, it would be a genuine specimen of blues."

Handy said that the blues were different from conventional composed music, but like primitive folk-music in that they have only five tones, like the folk-songs of slavery times, using the pentatonic scale, omitting the fourth and seventh tones. He says that while most blues are racial expressions of Negro life, the form has been imitated nowadays in songs that are not racial. While practically all the music publishers refused to bring out his compositions at first, now most of them publish blues.

He says that the blues represent a certain stage in Negro music. "About forty years ago such songs as *Golden Slippers* were sung. That was written by a colored man but is not a real folk-song. At about that time all the songs of the Negro liked to speak of golden streets and give bright pictures of heaven. Then, about twenty years ago, the desire was all for 'coon' songs. Now the tendency is toward blues. They are not, as I have said, a new thing, for they were sung in the South before the piano was accessible to the Negroes, though they were not so well known as now."

I asked Handy to tell me something about *Beal Street Blues*, one of his best-known expressions of life in the South.

"Beal Street is the colored thoroughfare in Memphis," he answered. "There you will find the best and the worst of the Negro life. There are banks there, and also saloons and dives. At the time the piece was written, Memphis was the most murderous city in the world. As the song says, 'Nothing ever closed till somebody had been killed.'"

"Is that true of Memphis now?" I inquired.

"Not so much so," he said slowly. "Since then an appeal has been made to the Negroes to close the saloons, and many of them complied. But the Monarch Saloon, the biggest there, is still open. It is owned by one of the three councilmen who control Memphis. It is a Negro saloon, and no white man is allowed to enter. It's caged about, so that no policeman can get in."

"Do you mean that that condition exists to-day?"

"Exactly!" he said with emphasis.

Handy spoke of a specimen of blues he had written which shows

something of the feeling of inequality of justice as between the black man and the white. He calls it *Aunt Hagar's Children's Blues*. "You know what I mean by that?" he asked.

"Oh, yes, I remember Ishmael," I assured him.

"I would n't wish to say anything that would reflect on my race," he said with a reverent pathos. "This is written to express what every Negro will understand, but which white people of the North could not. You know we sometimes speak of our race as Aunt Hagar's children."

It is not often that a student of folk-songs can have such authentic information given as to the music in the making, for most of the songs are studied and their value and interest realized only long after those who started them on their path of song have died or been forgotten. Rarely can one trace a movement in folk-song so clearly, and so I am grateful for the chance of talking with the man most responsible for the blues.

Even though specific blues may start indeed as sheet music, composed by identifiable authors, they are quickly caught up by popular fancy and so changed by oral transmission that one would scarcely recognize the relation between the originals and the final results — if any results ever could be considered final. Each singer adds something of his own mood or emotion or philosophy, till the composite is truly a communal composition. It will be noted in this connection that one of the songs given above announces of itself that, while it is first published in seven verses, people will soon be singing it in one hundred verses. (Negroes ordinarily speak of a stanza as a verse.) The colored man appropriates his music as the white person rarely does.

Blues also may spring up spontaneously, with no known origin in print, so far as an investigator can tell. They are found everywhere in the South, expressing Negro reactions to every concept of elemental life. Each town has its local blues, no aspect of life being without its expression in song. Here, as in much of the Negro's folk-song, there is sometimes little connection between the stanzas. The colored mind is not essentially logical, and the folk-song shows considerable lack of coherence in thought. Unrelated ideas are likely to be brought together, as stanzas from one song or from several may be put in with what the singer starts with, if they chance to have approximately the same number of syllables to the line. Even that requirement is not held to, for a Negro in his singing can crowd several syllables into one note, or expand one syllable to cover half-a-dozen notes. The exigencies of scansion worry him but slightly.

The Texas Negroes are especially fond of blues, and have, as I have said, been singing them for years, before Handy made them popular in print. W. P. Webb published, some years ago, in an article in the *Journal of American Folk-lore*, what he called a sort of epic of the Negro, in effect a long specimen of blues, which the singer called *Railroad Blues*, which stuck to no one subject, even so popular a one as a railroad, but left the track to discuss many phases of life. Fragments of blues float in from every side, expressive of all conceivable aspects of the Negro's existence, economic, social, domestic, romantic, and so forth.

Morton Adams Marshall sends an admirable specimen from Little Rock, Arkansas, — which, however, was taken down in southern Louisiana, — reflecting one black man's bewilderment over the problems of love.

DON' CHER LOOK AT ME, CA'LINE!

Don' cher look at me, Ca' - line,.. Don' cher look at
me! You done busted up many a po' nig-gah's haht, But you
ain't a-goin' to bust up mine! Oh, it's hahd to love, An' it's
might-y hahd to leave, But it's hahd - er to make up yo' mi-ind!

Don' cher look at me, Ca'line,
Don' cher look at me!
You done busted up many a po' niggah's haht,
But you ain't a-goin' to bust up mine!
Oh, it's hahd to love,
An' it's mighty hahd to leave,
But it's hahder to make up yo' mi-ind!

A fragment sent by Mrs. Cammilla Breazeale, of Louisiana, expresses an extreme case of depression, without assigning any cause for it.

Ah got de blues, Ah got de blues,
 Ah got de blues so doggone bad;
 But Ah'm too damn mean — I can't cry!

A good many of these fugitive songs have to do with love, always excuse enough for metrical melancholy when it is unrequited or misplaced. Mrs. Bartlett, of Texas, sends two specimens having to do with romance of a perilous nature. The first one is brief, expressing the unhappiness felt by a "creeper," as the colored man who intrudes into another's home is called.

FOUR O'CLOCK

Ba-by, I can't sleep, and nei-ther can I eat; . . Round your

CHORUS

bed-side I'm gwine to creep. Four . . o'clock, ba-by, four o'-

clock, . . I'll make it in a-bout four o'- clock.

Baby, I can't sleep, and neither can I eat;
 Round your bedside I'm gwine to creep.

Chorus

Four o'clock, baby, four o'clock,
 I'll make it in about four o'clock.

Mrs. Bartlett says of the next: "You will brand me as a shameless woman when you read this. I write it without a blush, however, and say that I have read as bad or worse in classic verse and fiction."

Late last night
 When the moon shone bright,
 Felt dizzy about my head.
 Rapped on my door,
 Heard my baby roar,
 "Honey, I'se gone to bed!"
 "Get up and let me in,
 'Case you know it is a sin.
 Honey, you have n't treated me right:

I paid your big house-rent
 When you did n't have a cent."
 "Got to hunt a new home to-night!"

Chorus

"Baby, if you 'low me
 One more chance!
 I've always treated you right.
 Baby, if you 'low me
 One more chance!
 I'm goin' to stay with you to-night!
 Baby, if you 'low me
 One more chance,
 I'll take you to a ball in France.
 One kind favor I ask of you,
 'Low me one more chance!"

Then this coon begin to grin,
 Hand in his pocket,
 Pulls out a ten.
 Then her eyes begin to dance,
 "Baby, I'll 'low you
 One more chance!"

My contributor adds, "Now that I have written it out, I am aware that there is a wide discrepancy between the first and second stanzas. Surely it was n't so much worse that Dr. Shaw blushed and faltered. I cannot account for the missing lines."

The central character in a ditty sent by Louise Garwood, of Houston, Texas, advocates adoption of more bellicose methods in dealing with the fair dark sex. No wheedling or bribing on his part!

Ef yore gal gits mad an' tries to bully you-u-u,
 Ef yore gal gits mad an' tries to bully you,
 Jes' take yore automatic an' shoot her through an' through,
 Jes' take yore automatic an' shoot her through an' through!

A similar situation of a domestic nature is expressed in a song given by Gladys Torregano, of Straight College, New Orleans, through the courtesy of Worth Tuttle Hedden:

A burly coon you know,
 Who took his clothes an' go,
 Come back las' night.
 But his wife said, "Honey,
 I'se done wid coon,

I'se gwine to pass for white."
 This coon he look sad,
 He was afraid to look mad;
 But his wife said, "Honey,
 I can't take you back.
 You would n't work,
 So now you lost your home."

Chorus

"Don't, my little baby,
 Don't you make me go!
 I'll try an' get me a job,
 Ef you'll 'low me a show.
 All crap-shooters
 I will shun.
 When you buy chicken,
 All I want is the bone;
 When you buy beer,
 I'll be satisfy with the foam.
 I'll work both night and day,
 I'll be careful of what I say,
 Oh, Baby, let me bring my clothes back home!

"Oh, Baby, 'low me a chance!
 You can even wear my pants.
 Don't you give me the sack.
 I'll be quiet as a mouse
 All round the house.
 Ef you'll take me back,
 Tell the world I ain't shook,
 I'll even be the cook.
 I won't refuse to go out in the snow."
 "Don't you tell, my little inkstand,
 Life dreaming is over.
 So there's the door,
 And don't you come back no more!"

Mrs. Bartlett contributes another that describes the woes of unrequited love, which, she says, was sung by a colored maid she had some years ago:

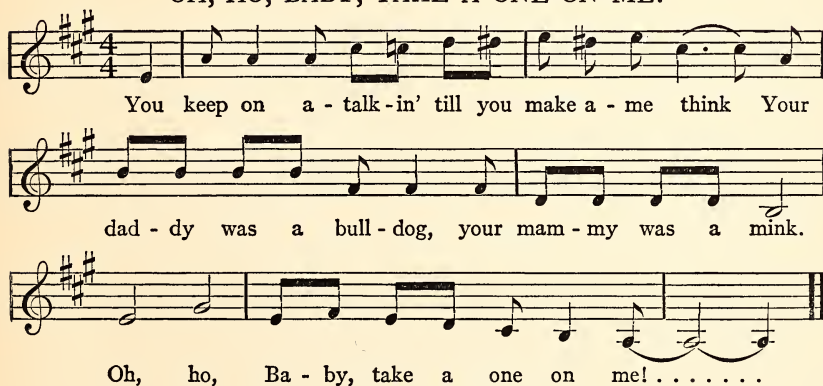
Ships in de oceans,
 Rocks in de sea,
 Blond-headed woman
 Made a fool out of me!
 Oh, tell me how long
 I'll have to wait!
 Oh, tell me, Honey,
 Don't hesitate!

I ain't no doctor,
 Nor no doctor's son,
 But I can cool your fever
 Till de doctor comes.
 Oh, tell me how long
 I'll have to wait!
 Oh, tell me, honey,
 Don't hesitate!

I got a woman,
 She's long and tall;
 Sits in her kitchen
 With her feet in de hall!
 Oh, tell me how long
 I'll have to wait!
 Oh, tell me, honey,
 Don't hesitate!

A brief song from Texas uses rather vigorous metaphors in addressing someone.

OH, HO, BABY, TAKE A ONE ON ME!



You keep on a - talk-in' till you make a - me think Your
 dad - dy was a bull - dog, your mam - my was a mink.
 Oh, ho, Ba - by, take a one on me!

You keep on a-talkin' till you make a-me think
 Your daddy was a bulldog, your mammy was a mink.
 Oh, ho, Baby, take a one on me!

You keep a-talkin' till you make me mad,
 I'll talk about your mammy mighty scandalous bad.
 Oh, ho, Baby, take a one on me!

Whiffin' coke is mighty bad,
 But that's a habit I never had.
 Oh, ho, Baby, take a one on me!

A Negro lover does not sonnet his sweetheart's eyebrows, but he addresses other rhymes to her charms, as in the blues reported by Professor W. H. Thomas, of Texas.

A BROWN-SKINNED WOMAN

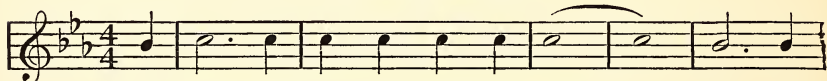


A brown-skinned wo - man and she's choc'late to de bone.

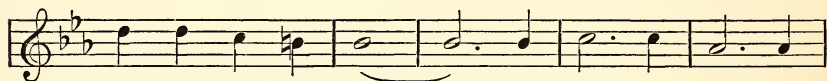
A brown-skinned woman and she's choc'late to de bone.
 A brown-skinned woman and she smells like toilet soap.
 A black-skinned woman and she smells like a billy-goat.
 A brown-skinned woman makes a freight-train slip and slide.
 A brown-skinned woman makes an engine stop and blow.
 A brown-skinned woman makes a bulldog break his chain.
 A brown-skinned woman makes a preacher lay his Bible down.
 I married a woman; she was even tailor-made.

The colored man in a song sent by Mrs. Buie, of Marlin, Texas, obviously has reason for his lowness of spirits. *Po' Li'l Ella* is a favorite in East Texas sawmill districts.

PO' LI'L ELLA



I'll tell you somep'n that bothers my mind: Po' li'l



Ella laid down and died. I'll tell you somep'n that



bothers my mind: Po' li'l Ella laid down and died.

I'll tell you somep'n that bothers my mind:
 Po' li'l Ella laid down and died.
 I'll tell you somep'n that bothers my mind:
 Po' li'l Ella laid down and died.

I would n't 'a' minded little Ella dyin',
 But she left three chillun.
 I would n't 'a' minded little Ella dyin',
 But she left three chillun.

Judge, you done me wrong, —
Ninety-nine years is sho' too long!
Judge, oh, Judge, you done me wrong, —
Ninety-nine years is sho' too long!

Come to think of it, it is rather long!

Howard Snyder heard one of the workers on his plantation in Mississippi singing the following song, which could not be called entirely a pæan in praise of life:

I WISH I HAD SOMEONE TO CALL MY OWN

I wish I had someone to call my own;
I wish I had someone to take my care.

I'm tired of coffee and I'm tired of tea;
I'm tired of you, an' you're tired of me.

I'm tired of livin' an' I don't want to die;
I'm tired of workin', but I can't fly.

I'm so tired of livin' I don't know what to do;
You're tired of me, an' I'm tired of you.

I'm tired of eatin' an' I'm tired of sleepin';
I'm tired of yore beatin' an' I'm tired of yore creepin'.

I'm so tired of livin' I don't know what to do;
I'm so tired of givin' an' I've done done my do.

I've done done my do, an' I can't do no mo';
I've got no money an' I've got no hoe.

I'm so tired of livin' I don't know what to do;
You're tired of me, an' I'm tired of you.

Other interests of the colored man's life besides love are shown in a song reported by Professor Thomas, of Texas. Note the naïve confusion of figures in the first stanza, "a hard *card* to roll."

JACK O' DIAMONDS

Jack o' Dia - monds, Jack o' Dia - monds, Jack o'

Dia - monds is a hard card to roll. . . .

Jack o' Diamonds, Jack o' Diamonds,
Jack o' Diamonds is a hard card to roll.

Says, whenever I gets in jail,
Jack o' Diamonds goes my bail;
And I never, Lord, I never,
Lord, I never was so hard up before.

You may work me in the winter,
You may work me in the fall;
I'll get even, I'll get even,
I'll get even through that long summer's day.

Jack o' Diamonds took my money,
And the piker got my clothes;
And I ne-ever, and I ne-ever,
Lord, I never was so hard-run before!

Says, whenever I gets in jail,
I'se got a Cap'n goes my bail;
And a Lu-ula, and a Lu-ula,
And a Lula that's a hard-working chile!

And so the blues go on, singing of all conceivable interests of the Negro, apart from his religion, which is adequately taken care of in his spirituals and other religious songs. These fleeting informal stanzas, rhymed or in free verse that might fit in with the most liberate of *vers-libertine* schools of poetry, these tunes that are haunting and yet elusive, that linger in the mind's ear, but are difficult to capture within bars, have a robust vitality lacking in more sophisticated metrical movements. One specimen of blues speaks of its own tune, saying "the devil brought it but the Lord sent it." At least, it is here and has its own interest, both as music and as a sociological manifestation. Politicians and statesmen and students of political economy who discuss the Negro problems in perplexed, authoritative fashion, would do well to study the folk-music of the colored race as expressing the feelings and desires, not revealed in direct message to the whites. Folk-poetry and folk-song express the heart of any people, and the friends of the Negro see in his various types of racial song both the best and the worst of his life.

AFTERWORD

I HATE to say good-bye to this book. Writing the last words in it would be a downright grief, if it were not for the fact that I am planning several — oh, perhaps many! — more volumes on Negro folk-songs, and am already deep in the material for them. There is so much fascinating stuff that could not be crowded into this collection, that I had to begin on the other groupings before these pages were finished. I shall be tremendously grateful to any reader of this book who will send me the words, or music, or both, of any song he may know or may be energetic enough to chase down. I recommend the pursuit of songs as a reducing exercise — and high good fun in the bargain. One may get a song almost anywhere, under any circumstances, if he is in earnest about it. I persuaded Arthur Guiterman to chant softly for me a folk-song at a dignified dinner of the Poetry Society once, while I caught it on the menu card. A few weeks ago I enjoyed a tuneful musical comedy with William Alexander Percy, but the songs I heard between acts were better still, Negro songs that Mr. Percy sang quietly, for me to take down on a programme. Cale Young Rice gave me one in an aside at a dinner at the Columbia Faculty Club one evening. I met DuBose and Dorothy Heywood at tea at Hervey Allen's this spring, when they mentioned a rare specimen of Gullah dialect picked up in Charleston — the chant of "Ol' Egypt a-yowlin' " howling in a lonesome graveyard. I begged to hear it, of course. They were modestly reluctant to howl in public at a tea, but they at last consented. It was extraordinary.

I have learned that you must snatch a song when you hear of it, for if you let the singer get away, the opportunity is gone. He will promise to write it down for you later, but that "later" rarely comes. Meanwhile, he is subject to all the chances of a perilous world, where he may be killed on any street corner, taking the song with him. No, the instant present is the only surety. Songs die, too, as well as people, so that the only surety of life extension is to write them down at once.

I hope that I may some time spend a sabbatical year loitering down through the South on the trail of more Negro folk-songs, before the material vanishes forever, killed by the Victrola, the radio,

the lure of cheap printed music. I envy the leisured rich who could take such a tour — yet never do. Why does not some millionaire endow a folk-song research? Surely the world would sing his praises!

I wish that more of our colleges and universities would take active interest in folk-song. Harvard has done more than any institution to encourage research, and the preservation of folk-lore among us, and it is impossible to estimate the debt that we owe to Professor Kittredge for the inspiration he has given to students and collectors throughout the country. Years ago Harvard gave John A. Lomax a travelling fellowship for the collection of cowboy songs, and has given Robert Gordon a similar appointment for research next year. Mr. Gordon expects to tour America in a hunt for folk-song of any kind available, and his quest will no doubt result in the gathering of much that will be of permanent value. The Texas Folk-lore Society is a lively and ambitious body, with several admirable volumes to its credit. The Virginia branch has collected many ballads, and the West Virginia organization has recently seen the results of its efforts brought together in John Harrington Cox's book, *Folk-Songs of the South*. The North Carolina Folk-lore Society has made a very large collection, and Professor Reed Smith is about to bring out a South Carolina collection. In other sections there is interest, but a general stimulus is needed if the material is to be collected in time and preserved.

DuBose Heywood tells of the work that the Charleston group is doing, in teaching the Negro children their racial songs. The white people go to the plantations, where they learn the authentic songs, and then teach them orally to the colored children — not writing them down at all, for they feel that oral transmission is the true method for folk-songs. The Sabbath Glee Club of Richmond, a band of colored singers, is doing an excellent work in preserving the old songs. Women's clubs throughout the South would do well to take up this important work before it is too late.

Some of the Negro colleges, as Fisk, Hampton, Tuskegee, and others, are doing valiant work along this line. Talley, of Fisk, has an extremely interesting book, *Negro Folk Rhymes*, and there are various collections of spirituals. But the possibilities are only touched as yet.

Of late there is awakened interest in Negro problems of education and service. Carnegie Hall was packed to the doors one evening not long ago with an audience eager to hear the glee clubs of Hampton and Tuskegee sing the old songs, and to listen to a plea for support to extend the usefulness of these great institutions.

The Negro's interest in the creation of his own literature and music is quickening, too. Recently I served as a judge in a short-story contest held by the Negro magazine *Opportunity* for the benefit of young Negro writers. About one hundred and twenty-five stories were submitted, coming from all parts of the country, many of them excellent in material or treatment. Among young Negroes of to-day there are capable novelists, poets, short-story writers, editors, as well as gifted musicians. Now that they have received a chance at technical training, the Negroes — who have produced the largest and most significant body of folk-song created in America — are writing their own poetry and music of a high order. They are genuine poets — “makers.” We should encourage their newer art, as well as help to preserve the precious folk-songs of the past.

The songs in this collection have aroused interest among many types of people. Europeans, who are closer to folk-art than are Americans, have been enthusiastic about them. Zuloaga was so pleased with them when he heard Miss Gullledge sing some of them one afternoon at my apartment, that he sat down on the piano bench beside her to follow them more closely, while Uranga smiled his pleasure. Stefannson said of the music, “It’s a good show.”

I have given informal talks on my quest for songs before various bodies — the Modern Language Association, the Poetry Society of America, the Graduate Women’s English Club of Columbia University, the Dixie Club of New York City, the Texas Club of New York, and others. The audience is always vastly more interested in the songs themselves, as sung by Miss Gullledge, than in my report of them, which is as it should be. The songs are the vital things.

My friends and acquaintances recognize that my particular form of insanity is on the subject of Negro folk-songs, and so they amiably humor my aberrations. Some of them are interested themselves, and when we get together we make ballads hum. Not long ago a group of us were together in Constance Lindsay Skinner’s apartment, discussing the topic. Margaret Widdemer and Louise Driscoll had sung some of the old English ballads, and I mentioned the Negro’s part in transmitting the traditional songs. Muna Lee gave me a variant of the *Hangman’s Tree*, as sung by the Negroes in Hinds County, Mississippi. Her poet-husband, Señor Louis Marin, laughingly contended that she had only one tune, to which she sang all the songs she knew. I confess that the tune she used was not the traditional one, but the words were in the line of tradition.

Hangman, hangman, wait a while,
 Wait a little while.
 Yonder comes my father — he
 Has travelled many a weary mile.

“Father, father, did you bring
 The diamond ring to set me free?
 Or did you come to see me hung
 Upon this lonesome tree?”

“No, no. I did not bring
 The diamond ring to set you free;
 But I come to see you hung
 Upon this lonesome tree.”

The other relatives follow in order, and then the last hope appears.

“Sweetheart, sweetheart, did you bring,” etc.

“Yes, yes, I did bring
 The diamond ring to set you free.
 I did not come to see you hung
 Upon this lonesome tree.”

Clement Wood (who sings Negro songs delightfully in his lectures on Negro literature) gave me some fragments.

Down in de place whar I come from
 Dey feed dose coons on hard-parched cawn;
 Dey swell up an' dey get so fat
 Dat dey could n't get deir heads in a Number Ten hat.

The chorus to this is the well-known *You Shall Be Free*.

Another bit that Mr. Wood gave is about a character that figures often in folk-lore, but less often in Negro folk-song:

Did you ever see de devil
 Wid his hoe and pick and shovel
 Jus' a' scratchin' up de ground
 At his ol' front do'?

That is from John Wyatt, a Negro peddler, seventy years old, from Tuscaloosa County, Alabama. The lines are like some I learned in Texas years ago from Dr. John T. Harrington:

Did you ever see de devil
 Wid his iron wooden shovel
 Tearin' up de yearth
 Wid his big toe-nail?

Professor Kittredge sent me some data about several of the songs, too late to include it easily in the earlier chapters, so I list it here. He writes of one song, *Cree-mo-Cri-mo-Doro-Wah*:

You're quite right as to the "antique nonsense jingle" character of this. See evidence in the *Journal of American Folk-lore*, xxxv, 396 (my note on *Frog and Mouse*). The Waco text ("'way down South") is a variety of the minstrel song discussed on page 399 of same volume. Copy of one version enclosed:

KEEMO KIMO¹

Celebrated Banjo Song

The only Authentic Version, as sung at George Christy and Wood's Minstrels. (Copyright secured.)

In South Carolina the darkies go,²
Sing song Kitty, can't you ki me O!
Dat's whar de white folks plant de tow,
Sing (&c.)
Cover de ground all over wid smoke,
Sing (&c.)
And up de darkies' heads dey poke,
Sing (&c.)

Chorus: — Keemo kimo, dar, Oh whar!
Wid my hi, my ho, and in come Sally singing
Sometimes penny winkle, lingtum nipcat
Sing song Kitty, can't you ki me O!

Milk in de dairy nine days old,
Sing (&c.)
Frogs and de skeeters getting mighty bold,
Sing (&c.)
Dey try for to sleep, but it ain't no use,
Sing (&c.)
Dey jump all round in de chicken roost,
Sing (&c.)

Chorus: — (as before.)

Dar was a frog liv'd near a pool,
Sing (&c.)
Sure he was de biggest fool,
Sing (&c.)

¹ George Christy & Wood's *New Song Book*, N. Y., cop. 1854, pp. 7, 8. The same, with music, also in sheet form, cop. 1854.

² *Go* is an error for *grow*.

For he could dance and he could sing,
Sing (&c.)
And make de woods around him ring,
Sing (&c.)

Chorus: — (as before.)

Of one of the children's game-songs, Professor Kittredge notes:

Mr. Banks he loves sugar, etc. A good bit of this song is certainly from the white folks. Cf. Halliwell, *Nursery Rhymes*, 1st ed., 1842, p. 11:

Over the water, over the lee,
Over the water to Charley.
Charley loves good ale and wine,
Charley loves good brandy,
Charley loves a little girl
As sweet as sugar candy.

There are varieties in plenty. Here is a version which my mother (born in Massachusetts in 1822) gave me about 1887 as known to her when a girl:

Charley, will you come out to-night?
You know we're always ready.
When you come in, take off your hat,
And say, "How do y' do, Miss Betty!"

Charley loves good cake and wine,
Charley loves good brandy,
Charley loves to kiss the girls
As sweet as sugar candy.

My aunt (about the same time) gave me a variant of the last two lines (known also to my mother):

Take your petticoats under your arm
And cross the river to Charley.

For another jingle that refers to the Pretender Charley, see Newell, *Games and Songs*, 1st ed., no. 121.

I Had a Little Rooster is an old *white* ditty.

Zaccheus. Cf. the rhyme in the New England Primer:

Zaccheus he
Did climb a tree
His Lord to see.

This I have often heard quoted by old people in New England.

Shoo Fly is a minstrel song. I well remember its popularity.

Come, Butter, Come! This is an old English butter charm. See the following version from Ady's book, *A Candle in the Dark*, 1659, p. 58, as quoted in Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, Hazlitt's ed., iii, 268:

Come Butter, come,
Come Butter, come,
Peter stands at the Gate,
Waiting for a buttered Cake;
Come Butter, come.

Ady says that the old woman who recited it said that it was taught to her mother "by a learned Church-man in Queen Marie's days!"

Professor Kittredge tells me that the Creation song, as given by Dr. Merle St. Croix Wright, was a famous minstrel piece, and not a real folk-song, as was also the case with the *Monkey's Wedding* and *Shoo Fly*.

This overlapping of minstrel-and folk-song is a very interesting aspect of this study of folk-song. Of course, many pieces thought to be authentic folk-songs are undoubtedly of minstrel origin, no matter how sincere the collector may be in his belief that they are genuine folk-material. On the other hand, may not folk-singing and change make a folk-song out of what was originally a minstrel-song? And certainly there are cases where the folk-song came first — where the folk-song was taken over in whole or in part and adapted to the minstrel stage. *Jump, Jim Crow* was a fragment of folk-song and dance before it was put on the stage and made popular as a minstrel-song. *Casey Jones* was a genuine Negro song before it became popularized by being changed and published. *'Tain't Gwine to Rain No Mo'* was a well-known Negro song, widely sung before the printed version brought it to the North.

Some aspiring scholar might write his doctor's dissertation on the inter-relation between folk-song and minstrel-song. That is only one of many aspects of the subject which might be carefully studied.

This has been, in truth, a folk-composition, for I have had the aid of numberless people in getting together the songs. For the material included in this volume, as well as for that which I have on hand to use in later volumes, I am indebted for help of one sort or another, direct or indirect, in the matter of information about sources, permission to quote from other collections (in a few cases), for inspiration and encouragement, as for words and music, to many persons. This research could not possibly have been carried on without such kindly assistance, and I am deeply grateful for it. The following is a list (I fear incomplete) of those who have aided me:

My heaviest debt of gratitude is to my friend, Ola Lee Gullledge, bachelor of music and professional pianist of Texas and New York, who has been invaluable in taking down the music and putting it in shape. I am under great obligations to Professor George Lyman Kittredge, who has read the proof of the book and given me helpful information and illuminating advice. I am indebted to Professor Ashley H. Thorndike, Professor James C. Egbert, and Professor Hyder E. Rollins for encouragement and assistance in the preparation of the book.

Others who have aided me are: Emily Abbott, Reverend and Mrs. E. P. Aldredge, Hervey Allen, Irl Allison, Roberta Anderson, Professor A. J. Armstrong, W. H. Babcock, Lottie Barnes, Mrs. Tom Bartlett, Reverend William E. Barton, Mr. and Mrs. O. Douglas Batchelor, Alvin Belden, Professor Frank Boas, Kate Langley Bosher, Dr. Boyd, Mary Boyd, Judge W. R. Boyd, Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Boyd, Jr., Arelia Brooks, Mary Louise Brown, Mrs. Camilla Breazeale, Hershell Brickel, Mrs. Buie, Dr. Prince Burroughs, Early Busby, Jacques Busbee, Juliana Busbee, the late George W. Cable, John Caldwell, Mary Stevenson Callcott, Betsy Camp, Dr. and Mrs. Charles C. Carroll, Dorothy and Virginia Carroll, Mrs. Harvey Carroll, Albert Cassedy, The Century Company, Central Texas College, of Waco, Texas, Mabel Cranfill, Dr. J. B. Cranfill, Mrs. Crawford, Robert A. Crump, Irvin Cobb, Mrs. Lucian H. Cocke, Mayor Cockrell, of Fort Worth, Texas, and Mrs. Cockrell, Miss Isabel Cohen, Lizzie W. Coleman, Professor John Harrington Cox, Charley Danne, Loraine Darby, Mrs. Landon Randolph Dashiell, Mrs. De La Rose, the late Samuel A. Derieux, Mrs. George Deynoodt, Elizabeth Dickinson, Reverend J. G. Dickinson, Harris Dickson, Judge Diggs, Mrs. D. M. Diggs, the Director of the Colored Y. M. C. A. in Fort Worth, Texas, Louis Dodge, Mr. Dowd, W. E. Doyle, Mr. and Mrs. Sparke Durham, Harry Stillwell Edwards, Garnet Laidlaw Eskew, John Farrar, Jean Feild, Harriet Fitts, Virginia Fitzgerald, Betty Foley, Clare Virginia Forrest, Maximilian Foster, Maud Fuller, Charles Galloway, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Gamble, Louise Garwood, Anne Gilmer, Meta Glass, Mr. Robert Gordon, Dorothy Van Doren, Hilton Greer, Lydia Gumbel, Louise Haight, Norman W. Harlee, Harper and Bros., Dr. J. T. Harrington, Isabel Harris, Will Harris, W. C. Handy, Albert Hart, Mrs. Hatchell, Mrs. Cammie G. Henry, Dorothy and DuBose Heywood, Worth Tuttle Hedden, of New York, Ruth Hibbard, Lucy Hicks, Mrs. Esther Finlay Hoevey, Hatcher Hughes, H. B. P. Johnson, Betty Jones, W. A. Jones, Professor W. A. Kern, Justin

Kimball, Leslie Lee Lacy, Mrs. J. O. La Rose, Lucy T. Latane, Maude Scarborough Latham, H. S. Latham, Louise Laurence, Muna Lee, Lippincott's Magazine, John A. Lomax, Thomas A. Long, Katherine Love, Esther Mackey, Talmadge Marsh, Sebron Mallard, Morton Adams Marshall, George Madden Martin, Mrs. W. D. Martin, Dr. F. C. McConnell, Dr. and Mrs. George W. McDaniel, Anna Hardaman Meade, Bertha Merion, Professor J. C. Metcalf, Mrs. Miller, Lincolnia C. Morgan, Dr. W. F. Moore, John Trotwood Moore, James Morrow, Dr. Rosalie Slaughter Morton, Glenn Mullin, ex-Governor Pat. M. Neff, Caroline Newcomb, William Wells Newell, Ella Oatman, Professor Howard W. Odum, Mrs. Clifton Oliver, the late Thomas Nelson Page, Josephine Pankey, Paul Quinn College, Waco, Texas, Arthur Peavy, Louree Peebles, William Alexander Percy, Professor E. C. Perrow, Clara Gottschalk Peterson, Anna Gwinn Pickens, Professor Louise Pound, Louise Clark Pynelle, Mrs. C. E. Railing, Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Ratcliffe, Dorothy Renick, Cale Young Rice, Caroline Richardson, Mrs. M. L. Riddle, the late Sally Nelson Robins, Crystal Ross, Lucy Pinckney Rutledge, Earl Saffold, Frances Sanford, Anne Scarborough, Mr. and Mrs. W. B. Scarborough, Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Culpepper Scarborough, Dr. Shaw, Mr. Robert Sibley, Mrs. Henry Simpson, the late Professor C. Alphonso Smith, Mrs. A. J. Smith, Howard Snyder, John Stone, Elizabeth Sullivan, Edwin Swain, Professor and Mrs. W. H. Thomas, Mrs. Richard Clough Thompson, Roy W. Tibbs, Dr. J. W. Torbett, Drushia Torbett, Gladys Torregano, Joseph A. Turner, Worth Tuttle, Lucy Dickinson Urquhart, Lois Upshaw, Benjamin Vaughan, Isabel Walker, Emilie Walter, Olive Watkins, Shepherd Webb, W. P. Webb, Decca West, Catherine West, Dr. Blanche Colton Williams, Marguerite Wilkinson, Evelyn Cary Williams, the late J. H. Williams, Louise Williams, Dr. Sidney Williams, Professor Wirt Williams, Professor Samuel Wofle, Francis Gilchrist Wood, Matthew Work, the late Dr. Merle St. Croix Wright, the late Dr. John C. Wyeth.

R01157 96030

PUBLIC LIBRARY, Houston, Texas

This book may be kept

THIRTY DAYS

**and may not be renewed. Fine for keeping
overtime is two cents a day.**

Not	for	circulation	
-----	-----	-------------	--

RO115796030 txr

T
091
.5
S285

SCARBOROUGH, DOROTHY
ON THE TRAIL OF NEGRO FOLK-
SONGS

89337

HOUSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

HOUSTON, TEXAS

Not for circulation

The borrower's library card should be
kept in this pocket

Library Bureau-87-6181

